

Institute doings

The recently enacted National Science Foundation was the subject of much discussion at the May 25th meeting of the Institute's executive committee. The subject was not a new one of course, but now the time was at hand for cooperation with an existing organization of the government.

First it was desirable to suggest to the President the names of persons suitable for appointment to the National Science Board. A letter making such suggestions was drafted and was promptly sent. Next it was in order to provide for a committee to be set up to advise the Institute on its relations with the National Science Foundation. Such a committee is now being appointed. It remains to be seen just what will be called for, but in carrying out its responsibilities in the field of physics, the NSF may want information which the Institute is uniquely fitted to provide. The Institute must be prepared to respond.

The executive committee authorized the staff to provide publishing assistance to the American Physical Society in getting out a thirty-year cumulative index of *The Physical Review*. The Society was at that time endeavoring to raise funds necessary to finance the project. Just as this goes to press, word has come that the Office of Naval Research has contracted to pay for the compilation of this index. The printing and distribution costs will be borne by the Society and it is hoped that these may largely be recovered from sales of the index. The Institute served in a similar capacity in connection with the Cumulative Index to Acoustical Literature and Patents, 1938-1948, which has been published by the Acoustical Society and is now available on order.

The desirability of making provision for student sections of the Institute, which had been under discussion at previous meetings, came at this meeting to the point of approval. The general features of a plan were adopted and only a few details remain to be ironed out. It is expected that the result can be presented in its completed form next month in this column. Inquiries from those interested in establishing such sections may be addressed to the undersigned.

Aside from these items selected from the agenda of the meeting, three other matters of interest may

be reported at this time. The first is that the Institute has been designated an organization to nominate a member of the United States National Commission of Unesco. The Institute selected Dr. I. I. Rabi of Columbia University for this appointment. Dr. Rabi is currently president of the American Physical Society. He attended the recent Unesco congress in Florence as an official U. S. delegate.

The second item concerns the operation of the AIP Placement Service Register. This year two such registers have been operated, the usual one at the APS February meeting in New York and an extra one at the APS meeting in Washington. Both were under the supervision of Donald E. Kirkpatrick of Queens College.

Although one can never obtain significant quantitative information on the end results of this activity, its value is attested by the interest shown by both applicants and employers. At New York there were 434 registrants, and 119 employers were represented with about 300 positions to fill. At Washington there were 370 registrants, and 133 employers were represented with again about 300 positions to fill. In the course of these two meetings it is estimated that formally or informally some 1500 interviews were arranged. The Institute is greatly indebted to the respective meeting committees and to the Columbia University physics department and the U. S. Department of Commerce for the arrangements and facilities.

The third item is one we must view with mixed feelings. The Government finds it desirable again to set up and maintain a roster of scientists against a possible national emergency. This is now a responsibility of the National Security Resources Board although provision for such an activity is a part of the National Science Foundation act.

For the moment a procedure is being worked out whereby the American Institute of Physics will operate, under contract with a government agency, the physics section of the Roster. Similarly other sections will be handled by appropriate organizations in their respective fields. The advantages of this method, as compared with the wartime centralization known to many members, should be appreciable. The aim will be to use information already in hand as far as possible and obtain and keep up to date other desirable information with a minimum demand on the time of physicists.

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