

A Communication Problem

For Department of Defense Scientists

Rapid expansion at all levels of research effort has greatly increased the difficulties of efficient communication in the sciences, and the personal contact provided by meetings has proved to be perhaps the most effective means of insuring that unnecessary duplication of research effort can be avoided at a time when scientific man-hours are recognized to be at a premium. The numbers of specialized meetings have grown steadily during the post-war period, and their value is suggested by the corresponding rise in the numbers of those who attend.

Until recently, scientists employed under the Department of Defense have been able to attend meetings relating to their work with a degree of freedom comparable to that of other scientists in other organizations. It is reliably understood, however, that as a result of a provision attached to the final version of the measure appropriating funds for the Defense Department, considerable delays are now encountered by scientists in the Services in obtaining authorization to attend scientific meetings. Public Law 488, which was approved last summer by the 82nd Congress immediately before adjournment and the opening of the major political conventions, has been found to include a Section 606, which states: "Appropriations contained in this Act available for travel shall not be available for expenses incident to attendance at meetings of technical, scientific, professional, or similar organizations without the approval of the Secretary of the Department concerned."

Defense Department scientists must, therefore, submit requests to attend a meeting several weeks before it is held, and in some instances, it appears, the request must be forwarded even before information has become available concerning the contents of the technical program for the meeting. One of the important purposes of scientific meetings, it has been pointed out, is to provide the specialist with a means of learning at first hand what is being done in his own field of interest; and since few scientists are sufficiently prescient to know precisely how interested they might be in a meeting before they see the program, it is not always possible to establish very long in advance whether or not the time and expense can be justified for attending a particular meeting.

Student Deferment

Manpower and the Military Draft

A warning that the present student deferment policy may be attacked by those who do not understand its basic purpose in terms of long-term defense planning has been sounded by M. H. Trytten, director of the Office of Scientific Personnel of the National Research Council, in his book *Student Deferment in Selective Service*, which was published last month by the University of Minnesota Press. Pointing out that "national

manpower policies must be formulated and applied in terms of the whole problem, not just a fragment of it, and in terms of a long tomorrow, not just a brief, visionless today," Dr. Trytten emphasizes the need for an effective integration of civilian and military activities. Continued functioning of the laboratory, the industrial plant, and the business organization is as vital to defense as is the functioning of the armed forces themselves, he states, and for this reason the college training of men to carry on these civilian activities is as important to national security as military training.

"Men of high ability constitute a national resource that is in short supply," Trytten writes. "In the situation that confronts us, we must take every care not to waste either our barely adequate store of high ability, through inept or sentimental allocation of it, or the time and cost of military training, through giving it to those who will not be able to make use of it if war comes because the nation must have their services in noncombat activities."

The net effect of student deferment on the available supply of military manpower is negligible, he continues, because the number deferred at any one time is less than five percent of any age group. Furthermore, it is assumed that the deferred student will ultimately serve in uniform unless his draft board decides that his special qualifications would make him more valuable to the country in some other capacity. Naming certain curriculums "essential" as a criterion for deciding which students should be deferred would be dangerous, Trytten asserts, since it is impossible to foresee the relative future roles of the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. In his opinion, singling out essential fields of study would only be justified in the event of an all-out mobilization for a war that threatened survival.

G-E Summer Program

For High School Teachers

Two hundred high school physics, chemistry, and mathematics teachers from twenty-four states will be granted fellowships for study this year under an expanded summer fellowship program underwritten by the General Electric Company. Fifty physics teachers will take part in the summer program at Case Institute of Technology, Cleveland, Ohio, and a like number of physics and chemistry teachers will study at Union College, Schenectady, N. Y. The G-E summer programs for mathematics teachers will be carried out at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, N. Y., and at Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana. Each college selects its candidates on the basis of their qualifications and credentials and conducts the six-week course, which can be taken for credit toward an advanced degree. Applications should be made to the colleges.

For Case and Purdue, applications are being accepted from teachers in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Applications