

Engineers' Headquarters

HOUSING problems also beset five of the nation's engineering societies, who have outgrown their 50-year-old headquarters building at 33 West 39th Street in New York City. The societies have for some time been planning a new headquarters building adequate for their present and future needs, a move that is expected to require the raising of some \$2.5 million of new funds, but they have not yet decided where it should be located.

A group of twenty-one prominent engineering educators and industrial leaders,¹ in a letter dated June 8, 1955, have urged that the choice of an appropriate location for the new engineering societies' headquarters be made on a national rather than a local basis, free from the inducements of various cities which have offered to contribute to the building fund if the societies would establish their headquarters in a particular city. The letter was addressed to United Engineering Trustees, Inc., titular owner of the present headquarters building, and to the American Society of Civil Engineers, the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, and the American Institute of Chemical Engineers.

"Most industries of the country," the letter stated, "benefit directly from the technologies included in your organizations. We are sure they will contribute gener-

ously to your building fund if your location is chosen on the broad-gauged basis suggested. If such a choice is made, a group of the undersigned will organize a large national committee, representing all sections, all technologies in your Societies, and a variety of industries, to conduct a nationwide drive for funds."

The letter noted that while some individual signers had already indicated a preference for various cities, they had agreed to forego their personal preference in the belief that the "long range interests of the societies in serving their professions and the nation are paramount and that national effectiveness of your operations is of controlling importance". The matter of local contributions, the letter said, is of secondary importance in the choice of location. The letter suggested that a "competent and independent management or engineering firm" be employed to study the problem and stated that some of the signers would underwrite the cost of such a study.

Defense Department Research

EXPANDED effort and increased expenditures of federal funds for scientific research in the Department of Defense have been recommended by a special subcommittee of the Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government (the "Hoover Commission"). In its 91-page report to the Commission, the subcommittee urged in particular that the level of basic research in the Defense Department be "significantly increased" above its present \$20 million level of annual expenditure—an amount described as being "indeed modest" in terms of the Department's present total expenditure of some \$1.4 billion annually for research and development. "The level of support of basic research by the Atomic Energy Commission [about \$40 million] is in better balance with its level of applied research and development than is that of the Department of Defense," the report stated.

The subcommittee, headed by Mervin J. Kelly, president of Bell Telephone Laboratories, also called for measures to prevent "unwarranted duplication" of research and development effort and urged that more research programs be placed in the civilian economy. On the basis of 1954 figures, the subcommittee suggested, such a policy would mean shifting some \$125 to \$150 million from the military to the civilian economy. The division would then be: military, about \$400 million; civilian, \$1 billion.

"The three military departments," the report said, "have not distinguished themselves in the initiation of radically new approaches to weapons systems." In this connection the subcommittee recommended that a standing committee of outstanding scientists be appointed by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Development to "canvass periodically the needs and opportunity for studies leading to radically new weapons systems".

¹ James F. Bell, Chairman, Committee on Finance and Technological Progress, General Mills, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota
 Detlev W. Bronk, President, National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D. C.
 Ralph J. Cordiner, President, General Electric Company, New York, New York
 James Creese, President, Drexel Institute of Technology, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 Jess H. Davis, President, Stevens Institute of Technology, Hoboken, New Jersey
 Lee A. DuBridge, President, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California
 T. Keith Glennan, President, Case Institute of Technology, Cleveland, Ohio
 Eugene G. Grace, Chairman of the Board, Bethlehem Steel Corporation, New York, New York
 Crawford H. Greenewalt, President, E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company, Wilmington, Delaware
 William H. Harrison, President, International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, New York, New York
 Livingston W. Houston, President, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York
 Frederick L. Hoyde, President, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana
 Kaufman T. Keller, Chairman of the Board, Chrysler Corporation, Detroit, Michigan
 Mervin J. Kelly, President, Bell Telephone Laboratories, Inc., New York, New York
 Horace P. Liversidge, Chairman of the Board, Philadelphia Electric Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 John L. McCaffrey, President, International Harvester Company, Chicago, Illinois
 Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., Chairman of the Board of Directors, General Motors Corporation, New York, New York
 Charles A. Thomas, President, Monsanto Chemical Company, St. Louis, Missouri
 Martin D. Whitaker, President, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
 Robert E. Wilson, Chairman of the Board, Standard Oil Company, Indiana, Chicago, Illinois
 John D. Wright, President, Thompson Products, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio