House would lie between this and \$35 million.

In his letter to Mr Fuqua, Dr Press points out that a study carried out last year for Mr Carter by NSF and the Department of Education demonstrated problems caused by the deterioration of science and engineering education that "are pervasive and complex and will require determined and concerted effort by all sectors of society for their solution". **David Dickson**

A brief respite

The *Glomar Challenger*, the work-horse of the Deep Sea Drilling Project, docked last week at Southampton in preparation for the next stage (Leg 81) of the project. The previous leg was spent in the Bay of Biscay, to determine the rifting and subsidence history of the continental margin. Leg 81 will be spent near Rockall, a few hundred miles to the west of Scotland, studying the variations of subsidence across the ocean-continent boundary.

Challenger on the crest of a wave

The Deep Sea Drilling Project is at present riding on a wave of enthusiasm for its scientific record, and has so far done well in President Reagan's financial obstacle race. *Glomar Challenger's* drilling operations are funded for at least another two years, with a 1982 budget of \$26 million. Of this, \$12 million will come from Britain, Germany, France, the Soviet Union and Japan, while the bulk of the United States contribution will be provided by the National Science Foundation.

Future plans are, however, less certain because of the debate within the foundation over the competing merits of *Glomar Explorer* — the converted ex-CIA submarine-dredger. Although vastly more expensive (its expected cost lies between \$500 million and \$1,000 million over ten years), the *Explorer* programme would be half financed by the oil industry on the strength of its considerable oil-hunting potential. The scientific issues are complex, however; and a decision from Congress on whether or not to fund initial *Explorer* development is expected in October.

Philip Campbell

EEC hormone legislation

First another report

Brussels

Progress of a sort was achieved by the European Community's agricultural ministers in Brussels last week when they discussed the problem of a total ban on hormone use in livestock breeding. They decided that Community law should ban stilbenes and thyrostatics as growth promoters in livestock breeding even though these hormones are already outlawed in all the member states.

And to serve as a figleaf for the lack of agreement on other growth promoters, it was decided to wait for a scientific report before dealing with the natural hormones oestradiol, progesterone, testosterone and the synthetic hormones trembolone and zeranol. A deadline of nine months has been set for this report but quite how it will help to solve what is essentially a political problem nobody is quite sure.

Details of how this scientific report will be compiled are also still hazy. Presumably, the same national experts who form the various scientific committees advising the European Commission on veterinary or nutritional matters will assess the present state of knowledge.

European consumer groups are planning to write to their ministers to demand that these experts are chosen for their impartiality. In fact, anyone nominated by a national government will have already contributed towards that government's position on hormones. The scientific report may therefore end up reflecting only the existing divisions of opinion.

The United Kingdom and Ireland are the strongest opponents of a blanket ban, but producers in other member states are lobbying effectively in the other direction. France, Denmark and Italy want legislation to be as severe as possible — and it was the ruling of an Italian court to ban veal sales which started the whole affair. The new French agriculture minister, Edith Cresson, stressed at the Council that France would not be bound by the conclusions of the scientific report. Belgium and Germany in theory already ban the use of all hormones.

Consumer groups are also incensed by the ministers' reluctance to thrash out the ways and means to enforce a ban of any kind. Natural hormones are notoriously difficult to detect and the various member states do not all have the same reputation for the effective policing of detectable substances.

What has been achieved is the right for any member country to prevent the entry from another EEC country of meat which contains hormones such as stilboestrol, diethylstilboestrol, dienoestrol and hexoestrol. And those member states with legislation which bans other hormones can carry on as before.

In nine months' time, the European

Community will still have to decide between a policy which favours the consumer approach of banning unless proved safe and one favouring the industry's attitude of carrying on until a substance is known to be dangerous to human health — which is the choice of the United States.

Jasper Becker

Third World development

Proper priorities

Washington

The US Agency for International Development (AID) is continuing to pick up the pieces following the failure of the Carter Administration to convince Congress of the need for a new Institute for Scientific and Technological Cooperation to act as a focus for research on the needs of Third World countries.

Earlier this month the agency announced that as part of a general reorganization, a new Bureau of Science and Technology was to be established. Furthermore the title of "assistant administrator for development support" will be changed to "senior assistant administrator for science and technology", a position that will have responsibility for the bureau.

One of the aims of this reorganization, according to agency officials, is to strengthen the research activities of AID which have in the past been of lower priority than more conventional technical aid programmes. This was one of the reasons quoted for establishing the Institute for Scientific and Technological Cooperation, a body which would remain under the same umbrella as AID, but operate independently with its own board of advisers.

The parallel between the goals of the ill-fated institute and the newly proposed bureau is strengthened by the fact that Mr Reagan's appointee to head the bureau, Dr Nyle Brady, had previously been successfully wooed by the Carter Administration as its proposed director for the institute. Dr Brady will have responsibility for the administration of a wide range of centrally-funded research and development programmes, some of which were to have been shifted from AID to the new institute.

The Carter Administration had originally proposed significant increases in research support for these areas which would have virtually doubled the AID budget for research and development to \$229.8 million in the fiscal year 1982. The Reagan Administration has reduced this dramatically to a request for \$134.5 million, with large cuts, for example, in support for agricultural research on food production in Africa.

Even with these cuts, however, AID officials point out that the Administration's request for science and technology programmes for 1982 is 40 per cent higher than the amount spent on