

## NEWS AND VIEWS

### Only Specialists Need Apply

THE first physical evidence of the drive to get British scientists back from the USA was unveiled this week in New York. Management Selection Ltd, which the Ministry of Technology recruited earlier this year to lead the drive, opened an information and recruitment centre in Park Lane. The centre is intended to provide help and information for engineers, scientists and managers who wish to return to Britain. Other centres are planned for San Francisco and Toronto.

Simply writing to MSL or the ministry is absolutely no guarantee that a job will be found. Since the ministry started its campaign, 400 British scientists in the USA have written asking for jobs in Britain, but very few have yet been placed. No doubt part of the reason for this is the difficulty of arranging interviews (which should be simplified now the MSL office is open), but the real reason is simply that industry in Britain has few vacancies to fill. Employers are not interested in flying to New York to recruit chemists if they can find men as good in Manchester. In some areas—data processing, electronics, management services, and some branches of engineering—there are genuine shortages, but in others employers are easily able to fill their needs within Britain. In the first quarter of 1967, only half as many jobs were advertised as in the first quarter of 1966. In these circumstances, British scientists wanting to come back to Britain are deluding themselves if they expect to be offered jobs on the spot.

MSL is tackling the problem by first finding out from British companies what their needs are. It may then be able to find among those who go to the office in New York candidates who have the necessary qualifications and experience. So far several hundred companies have been contacted, and asked what they will be needing over the next twelve months. Their needs are not always obvious; chemical companies may well be more interested in statisticians than in chemists, and engineering firms may be looking for systems analysts rather than engineers. At the moment, apart from the special fields, it looks as if there are more applicants than there are jobs. With the number of annual vacancies running at about 25,000, against 40,000 a year ago, this is not surprising. Like everything else, recruitment on a large scale from the USA is likely to have to wait for the end of the squeeze.

### How Many Social Scientists?

THE Social Science Research Council, set up in 1965 as a result of the Heyworth Report, is the body which makes the awards for postgraduate research in social science in British universities. Estimates as to the likely number of eligible graduates are given each year to the Treasury, which then decides the proportion which will be given awards. The money required for these grants (about £630 each) is, surprisingly, not the only criterion; the number of people tied up

in academic research rather than let loose on the world is also taken into account. At present, the Treasury and the SSRC have agreed that about 50 per cent of those eligible should be given awards. Although the proportion is rising every year it is taking longer than the SSRC would like to reach the 60 per cent recommended by the Heyworth Report.

Several universities have recently complained that large numbers of their eligible students (first or upper second class degrees) are being refused grants. In a letter to the *Times* on September 9, Professor Meek of the University of Leicester gave figures for his department—only four of the thirteen applicants received awards.

The SSRC allocates awards to each university on the basis of previous figures. A reserve of about 10 per cent is held back until the summer, and further grants are given on the results of final examinations. Here again there seems to be a shortage of awards. The London School of Economics, for example, filled its original quota and applied for fifty-seven further awards, only seventeen of which were granted. It has been found in the past, however, that some awards that were granted were not taken up, when universities have over-estimated their own appeal. The SSRC takes this into account when the allocations are made.

### Pugwash Meets

THE latest Pugwash conference has ended after a week of discussion at Ronneby, Sweden. Members of the conference met in a mood of self-examination: indeed, the organizers took the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Pugwash movement to call a more comprehensive and larger conference (of about 200 members) than ever before, and to declare that one of its main purposes would be to review the aims and organization of the movement—to discuss its past achievement and to plan its future.

The history of the Pugwash conferences is remarkable. On an absurdly small budget—of about £4,000 a year—at its central office, under the dedicated and dynamic supervision of its originator and secretary-general, Professor J. Rotblat, the movement now has 22 national groups—some of them extremely active—and a continuing programme of international and national study groups and conferences.

What have been its achievements? At this conference one heard on all sides the conviction that they were considerable even though immeasurable and that the movement must continue. Although the conferences are private, reports of their proceedings are given to the press, to governments and to other interested institutions. Observers attend from many international organizations, such as the organs of the UN. But the main achievement is thought to be, in the now accepted jargon, its "fall-out" or "spin-off". Perhaps the most obvious fall-out is on the participants themselves, many of whom hold important advisory or even executive positions in their own countries. The unique feature of these conferences seems to be that the participants, bound by common commitment to science and scholarship—and by common habits of thought—find themselves discussing political issues with the familiar friendliness of ordinary scientific conferences. Regular Pugwashites will assert that they can detect changes in attitude between one