

by uncooperative university departments. There are no cases of overlapping work, and if, as he hopes, the catalogue is revised annually, it will be valuable in avoiding unnecessary duplication in future. The council of the British Society for the History of Science is to decide whether the service is worth continuing. Nobody has yet worked out how much it cost to put together, so one possibility is that the next edition may be sold rather than given away.

BRAIN DRAIN

High Fliers

EFFORTS to interest British companies in some 300 British and European aircraft engineers being dismissed by the Boeing group in Seattle are meeting with little response. Management Selection Ltd (MSL), working under a Ministry of Technology contract to recruit Britons in North America, says that although at least some of the redundant engineers want to return to Britain, the reactions of the companies with which it has so far been in touch are of the form "We'll let you know". At the same time, Handley Page Ltd, which is independently trying to recruit about 200 aircraft designers and engineers, says that so long as its advertisements in Britain are successful, it is not going to look further afield.

The Boeing redundancies are part of a rationalization scheme in which 16,000 people will be laid off this year. Both technicians and executives are involved, according to MSL, and American companies are expected to descend on Seattle with firm offers of employment. MSL is placing advertisements in the Seattle press and may even send a representative to Seattle to make further inquiries.

The Handley Page situation is ironical because last year the firm dismissed more than 700 employees because of its financial difficulties. Now it wants more people to work on the Jetstream aircraft and on the conversion of its Victor bombers into tankers. The personnel department says that it does not want to pay agencies to hire staff.

MSL does ask for a fee equivalent to 10 per cent of an employee's salary if an appointment follows directly from one of its introductions. The other organization with a Ministry of Technology contract to bring back technically qualified emigrants—the Scientists Appointments Service run by the five British professional scientific institutes—charges companies £100 for a placing and is in any case about to go out of business. MSL nevertheless thinks that the lesson to be learned from its troubles in finding work for those who want to return to Britain is that the importance of the brain drain is not numerical, for companies can still find enough recruits at home. The real trouble is that the emigrants may be the brightest people, and this theory receives support from a survey published in the *Chartered Mechanical Engineer* (17, 13; 1970) of graduates from Imperial College, London.

Italy is also worried about "la fuga dei cervelli", and figures from the Department of Justice in Washington show that more than 10,000 technically qualified Italians went to the United States between 1945 and 1968, only 19 in 1945 but 690 in 1967. In the *Corriere della Sera* (January 14), Silvio Garattini claims that the net loss of researchers from Italy in 1965–67 alone was 2,629. But here again, "the qualita-

tive aspects are worse than the quantitative", and "those who go are almost always among the best". The explanation, says Signor Garattini, is the inadequate support for pure research, which in 1967 was allocated 43,700 million lire out of a total research budget of 279,500 million lire (about £186 million) and the belief among scientists that "their activities are a kind of luxury in which the country can indulge when the economy is going well, but which must be suddenly reduced the moment austerity threatens".

Miscellaneous Intelligence

TIME slips by. It is now six weeks since the Prime Minister told the House of Commons on December 11 of his plan to set up a Standing Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution. The intention was to have a body of experts "able to take up any problem relating to pollution so that the benefit of the best possible advice will be available to government departments responsible for executive action". The seriousness of this declaration would have been the more apparent if the announcement had been accompanied by at least the name of the chairman of the proposed commission. Now, it seems, the composition of the commission will be in limbo for at least another week. If things go on like this, people will start asking whether there has been a change of heart since the brave days of cyclamate fever in November and December. Has Mr Cledwyn Hughes begun to lose his *hwyl*? Or has the deliberate and sensible Mr Crosland, ostensibly in charge of what is called the battle against pollution, decided that there is hardly any battle to be fought? Are government departments—including the Cabinet Office—asking whether they really need Mr Wilson's advisory body? Or is it proving harder than anybody would have guessed to find people who are neither hawks nor doves yet willing to give up time for what threatens to be a permanent committee?

THE *World List* of universities and colleges put out by the International Association of Universities is a handy complement to its larger cousin, the *International Handbook of Universities* and to that magnificent reference book *The World of Learning*, the latest edition of which has just been published (Europa Publications, £9 10s). For those with leisure in the common room, there is sport to be had in picking out the universities which have been overlooked by one but included in another. The latest edition of the *World List* (1969, £1 10s) has cast its net widely, and includes the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College of Georgia, an institution which has presumably escaped the *World of Learning* by not having been included in the official list of institutions recognized by the American Council on Education. By contrast, there is nothing in the *World List* to show that the faculty of the Pacific Oaks College in Pasadena, California, has now grown to twelve, and that the library includes 13,000 volumes of various kinds. To both reference books, however, France is a considerable embarrassment—in many places, the reorganization is not yet complete. For the first time, both volumes deal adequately with Russian universities. The *World of Learning* has done especially well, although it is a puzzle that Kirov and Sverdlovsk should be more thoroughly documented than Kiev and Novosibirsk.