

TECHNOLOGY

No Takers for UN Rubles

A three-year accumulation of Russian funds for technical assistance to underdeveloped countries can find no open palms on this side of the Iron Curtain.

► THE UNITED Nations has \$3,000,000 to give away, but has been having trouble finding takers.

The money is a three-year accumulation of Russian rubles contributed by the Soviet Union to the UN technical assistance program to aid underdeveloped countries. The problem up to the present is that no country this side of the Iron Curtain has wanted to deal with Russian rubles, equipment or technicians.

Some of the Russian money may be used to buy Russian equipment and supplies for recipient nations during 1955. This comes at a time when the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee is currently debating the United States' contribution to the UN's "point four" program.

UN's point four receives contributions from member nations. An underdeveloped nation can then request aid in any or all of three ways: technical experts from the contributor nation, sending students to the contributor nation for technical studies, and/or purchasing supplies and equipment from the donor nation.

For the first two or three years of the technical help program, the Russians took a dim and hostile view of the UN's point four, branding it a tool of Western imperialism. In 1953, Russia reversed its stand and pledged 4,000,000 rubles or approximately \$1,000,000 to the program. This was followed by similar pledges of 4,000,000 rubles in 1954 and again this year.

Countries have heretofore been reluctant to accept the Russian contribution for several reasons: One is that the aid is in rubles, which are not as convertible as dollars or pounds and would find their greatest use behind the Iron Curtain. Asking for part of the Russian money would mean paying Soviet experts in rubles, buying Russian DDT, farm machinery or audio-visual equipment, or sending students to Russia for technical courses or trips.

Some nations evidently have doubts as to the quality of Russian equipment and doubts regarding the spare parts problem. Others fear that acceptance of Russian equipment will necessitate teams of Russian technicians to accompany or follow the equipment for installation and servicing.

It is understood that some countries will ask for the help this year and that it will be more than 90% for technical equipment and supplies. Very little use of Russian rubles is foreseen for inviting Russian technicians and experts to the countries, or sending study groups to Russia.

In the past, the United States has contributed better than 50% of the support of the UN's technical assistance program, con-

tributing \$13,800,000 in 1954. Last year, however, the Congress did not appropriate money for the program and expressly asked the President to refrain from making a pledge until the appropriation was passed.

Recently, President Eisenhower sent an emergency request for \$8,000,000 to the House for one-half of our projected 1955 contribution to the UN technical assistance program. Delay of the contribution has already caused planning to be delayed.

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ELECTRONICS

Liquid That Acts Like Semiconductor Found

► A LIQUID that conducts electricity by electrons as though it were wire has been discovered. This puts liquid for the first time in the same class in its handling of electricity as solid semiconductors, germanium and silicon, used in the wonderful transistor that is replacing vacuum tubes.

This achievement of Drs. G. M. Pound and Gerhard Derge of the Carnegie Institute of Technology shows that molten metallic sulfides conduct electricity by flow of electrons instead of by transport of charged atoms. This is what happens in ordinary metals. In the metallic sulfides the conductance increased with temperature, which is the reverse of ordinary metals.

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MEDICINE

Diabetes Risk Figured

► THE RISK of inheriting susceptibility to diabetes can now be calculated, Dr. Arthur G. Steinberg of the Children's Cancer Research Foundation, Boston, reports to *Eugenics Quarterly* (March).

About five percent of the population is susceptible, Dr. Steinberg figures, assuming that liability to diabetes is inherited via a simple recessive gene. When individuals get this gene in a double dose, they are genetically liable to the disease.

If both your parents have diabetes, then you and all your brothers and sisters will inherit susceptibility to the disease, according to tables compiled by Dr. Steinberg from investigations of family histories. The more distantly you are connected with your diabetic relatives, the less chance you have of acquiring the disease, since heredity is recognized as its basis. If only an uncle or

PSYCHOLOGY

Scientists Found to Be Good Judges of People

► PHYSICAL SCIENTISTS are good judges of people, but training in psychology is not an advantage. These are some of the conclusions made by Dr. Ronald Taft, of the University of Western Australia, on the basis of a review of over 80 researches made in this field.

Dr. Taft's review of published material on judgment of people was made when he was doing research at the Institute of Personality Assessment of the University of California.

These are the things that make a good judge of people, according to Dr. Taft's article appearing in the *Psychological Bulletin* (Jan.).

1. Age (This applies to children only. In adults, it apparently helps to be somewhere near the age of the individual being judged.)

2. High intelligence and academic ability.

3. Specialization in the physical sciences.

4. Talent in music, art and writing, and dramatic ability.

5. Knowledge of self and of the standing of self in comparison with others on various traits.

6. Good emotional adjustment.

7. Social skill. This seems to help only with predictions of how another person will act under given circumstances.

The following traits, Dr. Taft found, make poor judges of people:

1. A tendency to be neurotic or psychotic. (Such a person has a tendency to see his own weaknesses in others.)

2. Social dependence.

Training in psychology was found to be neither a help nor a hindrance in judging people. Neither men nor women are superior judges of people.

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aunt or first cousin has diabetes, then you run only a 20% risk of being genetically liable.

Diabetes is about twice as frequent among brothers and sisters of diabetic patients who have a diabetic parent as among brothers and sisters of such patients with unaffected parents, Dr. Steinberg concludes after studying large numbers of family histories. If a parent and a brother or sister of the non-diabetic parent have the disease, you run a 50% to 80% chance of inheriting susceptibility. If a diabetic has non-diabetic parents, then only one-fourth of the patient's brothers and sisters will be susceptible.

At the present time there is no method of predicting when a person who is genetically liable to diabetes will become diabetic.

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