

## GENERAL SCIENCE

# Kennedy Urges Better Pay

A proposal to raise the pay scale may help keep top scientists, now leaving for higher pay in private industry, on Government jobs, William Small reports.

► **PRESIDENT** John F. Kennedy's proposal to raise the pay scale for top Government employees should help stem the flow of scientists and engineers now leaving public service for much higher pay in industry.

The proposed increases would bring salaries nearer those offered by universities, state and local governments and industry, the President said.

Pay scales as much as two or three times higher than the Government have already enticed many top-notch scientists and engineers into industry.

White-collar workers would receive raises ranging to 35%, but the raises would still keep salaries far below industry's standards, a Civil Service Commission spokesman told **SCIENCE SERVICE**.

Although many of the top scientists and engineers want to stay with the Government, "dedication goes just so far," the spokesman said.

More than 131,000 engineers and physical scientists are employed by the Federal Government. They are a part of the 1,640,000 employees that would be affected by the increase.

"We properly establish high standards for our public servants," the President said in his message. Unfortunately the Government does not pay sufficiently to keep the best men and women, he pointed out.

The lack of qualified personnel is widespread throughout Government, particularly in the upper grades.

In one Government installation 27 top scientists left their jobs in one year, 12 to universities and state governments, and all for pay differences. In some places, top positions remain unfilled because of low pay.

The top Government salary under most scales is \$18,500 a year. Many top positions are not filled because prospective employees would not consider less than \$25,000.

A comparison of salaries of Government employees and industry employees is remarkable, if not appalling. GS-16 workers, for example, receive between \$15,200 and \$16,200 while equivalent workers in industry receive at least \$20,000 with a median of \$25,900.

GS-18 employees receive a straight \$18,500 as opposed to a minimum of \$32,500 and a maximum of \$45,000, with an average of \$40,750 per year. And in industry, some workers receive more, much more.

A Congressional Act allows the very top Government workers to receive up to \$20,000 each year, but even this does not compare with private industry. Some cities even pay as high as \$35,000 for top personnel.

It is at the top grade where Government meets its greatest competition with industry, the President pointed out in his message.

Case after case in which these top positions and leaders in scientific fields left their jobs are seen in Congressional testimony. Many scientific agencies have been shopping for replacements for more than two years.

The President's pay raise proposal is expected to receive stiff opposition from many budget-cutting factions, but to keep good scientists in Government, Congress will have to act wisely and soon. The flow of scientists from Government to industry has been increasing, and will continue to increase yearly unless more pay is granted.

• Science News Letter, 81:147 March 10, 1962

## PUBLIC SAFETY

## Plan Better Vision Tests for Motorists

► **A THREE-YEAR PROJECT**, involving 25,000 Californians applying for drivers' licenses, will attempt to develop more effective vision tests for motorists.

The study will be conducted by a research team representing the University of California, Los Angeles, and the California

State Department of Motor Vehicles. As a major part of their study, the investigators will test four types of vision abilities that appear to affect driving, including a special "dynamic visual acuity" test developed at the Institute of Transportation and Traffic Engineering on the UCLA campus.

Prof. John H. Mathewson, assistant director of the Institute, explains dynamic visual acuity as "the ability to perceive a moving object, for instance, in a driving situation."

Supported by a \$175,000 grant from the U.S. Public Health Service, Prof. Mathewson, research psychologists Albert Burg and Slade Hulbert, and statistical research officer Ronald S. Coppin of the Department of Motor Vehicles have planned the following research program:

Starting in August, the research group will rotate a semi-permanent vision testing laboratory among major DMV offices, and visit smaller offices in a house trailer converted into a mobile laboratory.

At the laboratories, the volunteer will fill out a brief questionnaire listing such motorizing and personal factors as driving experience, amount and type of driving, age, sex, occupation, education and number of hours since getting up. He will then take a battery of four tests to check his static visual acuity, similar to the usual eye chart test, dynamic visual acuity, field of vision, and glare resistance and recovery.

The results of the tests will be sent to DMV headquarters in Sacramento, where they will be checked against the driving record of the applicant to determine what relationship, if any, exists between the various types of vision abilities and driving performance.

• Science News Letter, 81:147 March 10, 1962



**TRACKLESS TRAIN**—A 572-foot overland train, designed to move supplies over desert or arctic terrain, has been completed for the U.S. Army by R. G. LeTourneau, Inc., Longview, Tex. Each wheel of the train is powered with its own drive motor and gear. Gas turbine engines and generator sets in the two rear cars supply electricity.