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films OF THE WEEK

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to the editor

Feeling the pinch

I was much heartened by your report (SN: 1/10, p. 44) that ecology is beginning to receive greater recognition. Then I received the listing of projects for superior secondary students to be funded in 1970 by the National Science Foundation.

It would appear that mathematics is the magic word at NSF. Twice as many pure math projects were funded as compared to any other pure disciplinary projects. Forty-three out of the 106 projects receiving support are either pure mathematics or math-connected.

The seventies are being billed widely as the environmental decade yet:

- One ecology (mathematics connected) project was funded.

- Two environmental science projects were funded.

- Three catch-all projects included ecology.

The total number of student spaces in these projects, available to the superior students who will be needed in ecology in this coming decade, is 123—even if we accept the totals in the "catch-all" programs.

In other words, less than 2 percent of the 4,100 available spaces for the disciplinary area about which it is said: "We either solve it soon or perish." Apparently NSF hasn't heard.

Some of us have been battling for 10 years to get ecology-based projects accepted. We thought that this might be the year that a crack appeared in the wall. It's disappointing.

Benton P. Cummings
Newark State College
Union, N.J.

(There may be some light at the end of the tunnel. Shifting priorities are evident in the 1971 Science Foundation budget (SN: 2/7, p. 144). Ed.)

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