

GENERAL SCIENCE

# Science in the Budget

Truman's plan would postpone the organization of any science foundation, urged by scientists of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

► THE ESTABLISHMENT of a National Science Foundation or its equivalent is recommended by President Truman in his budget message to Congress as a "central agency to correlate and encourage the research activities of the country."

"While freedom of inquiry must be preserved," the message says, "the federal government should accept responsibility for fostering the flow of scientific knowledge and developing scientific talent in our youth."

While again recommending the National Science Foundation to Congress, the President calls attention to the fact that the Scientific Research Board which he appointed under Reconversion Director Steelman in October is making a study of governmental research activities.

The Presidential message suggests that this report will be of service in "establishing a proper program for the new agency." The message also states that "it is assumed that no additional expenditures will be required during the fiscal year 1948."

If this procedure were followed, it would postpone the organization of any science foundation until the middle of 1948 or one and a half years hence.

This will come as a shock to many scientists who are now organizing under the leadership of the American Association for the Advancement of Science an intersociety committee to aid Congress in considering at the present session of Congress some sort of science foundation.

While national science foundation bills were failing to pass the last Congress, the military departments, particularly the Navy, stepped in and gave extensive grants for basic research to university and other laboratories.

The Office of Scientific Research and Development which did major war research will be almost completely liquidated by the middle of this year, the message points out.

While detailed figures are not given in the budget, intense prosecution of scientific research and development for

the National defense is contemplated in the recommended appropriations. This is one of the reasons for the high cost of the Army and Navy compared with the pre-war era, along with occupied areas, large forces, and extensive mechanized equipment that must be prepared.

Stock piling of strategic materials for any future war emergency will continue, with new purchases being made and large transfers from the RFC stocks to military stock piles.

Atomic energy expenditures in the year beginning next July 1 will be more than double the amount being expended this fiscal year, and this estimated expenditure of \$443,000,000 for next year is explained in part by the fact that during post-war days of the Manhattan District, now transferred to the civilian commission, replacements and maintenance needed were not made.

The message renews recommendations for federal supplements to equalize educational opportunities and standards in the states. The government's relationship to higher education should have serious consideration, the President says, and a commission is studying the matter.

*Science News Letter, January 18, 1947*

PHOTOGRAPHY

## Photo-Flash Unit Takes Fast Pictures

► AN ELECTRONIC photo-flash unit which fires photographic flashes faster than the average photographer can take pictures has been developed by the Navy.

The compact, light-weight unit is designed to operate at three-second intervals, firing 4,000 flashes without changing batteries. The new unit produces more than 10,000 flashes with a single bulb and consumes less electricity for 10,000 flashes than an average light bulb burning all day.

The electronic unit was developed by Brandt B. Conway of the Naval Research Laboratory Airborne Coordinating Group and the Research and Development Branch of the U. S. Naval Photographic Service, both at Anacos-

tia, D. C. Mr. Conway is on loan to the Navy from the Philco Radio Corporation.

Standard service model of the photographic flash unit will weigh 11½ pounds and will fire 1,500 times, though provisions have been made to use batteries enabling photographers to get 4,000 flashes without changing batteries.

Exposure time for the flash with the electronic unit is 1/10,000 of a second with the total light equal to a medium size flash bulb. The light is triggered either with a manual button or a synchronizer for electrical triggering.

Navy photographic research work is now underway to adapt the new unit to trivision, the Navy's third dimensional photography.

Commercial models of the flash unit will be available at a later date, the Navy said.

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PUBLIC HEALTH

## World in Better Health Than Expected After War

► "THE WORLD is in far better health today than we ever dreamed it could be so soon after the most widespread and devastating war in history," Dr. Wilbur A. Sawyer, internationally known health authority and director of the health division of UNRRA, declared.

UNRRA's health activities in Europe in connection with administration of the International Sanitary Conventions of 1944 have now been turned over to the interim commission of the new World Health Organization. WHO is also receiving from UNRRA some funds for carrying on these activities and UNRRA supplies still in European countries for controlling epidemics.

"Now that the main emergency is behind us," Dr. Sawyer stated, "the continuance of international disease control can confidently be left to the health departments in the countries themselves with the support of the new World Health Organization."

UNRRA health activities in China will be turned over to WHO on March 31.

"After World War I," Dr. Sawyer said, "there were tremendous epidemics of typhus fever, typhoid fever and other diseases. Following this war in which destruction and displacement of peoples was much greater and governmental health agencies were largely disrupted, there have been no major epidemics in Europe."