News of Science

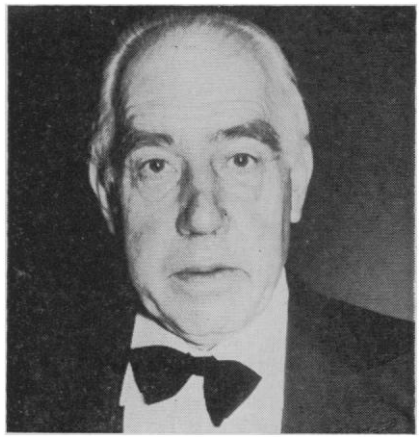
Bohr Wins $75,000 Atoms for Peace Award

Niels Bohr, Nobel prize winner and since 1920 director of the Institute for Theoretical Physics at Copenhagen, Denmark, has been named the first winner of the $75,000 Atoms for Peace Award. Bohr, one of the founders of modern atomic theory, was the unanimous choice of the board of trustees of Atoms for Peace Awards, Inc., according to its chairman, James R. Killian, Jr., president of Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Killian said of Bohr: "By his example he has inspired scientists everywhere to seek out science as an instrument for human welfare."

In a telegram to Killian, President Eisenhower commended the awards committee on its choice. The telegram said, in part:

"Seldom has a man dedicated himself more single mindedly to the search of knowledge for the benefit of mankind than has Professor Bohr in his half-century as a scientist and teacher. The distinction you have conferred on him will offer hope and encouragement to men everywhere in the world who hold that science can be made to serve the hopes of mankind and help bring peace to the world."

Professor Bohr won the Nobel prize in physics in 1922 for theoretical work on the structure of the atom and the basic concept of quantum physics. He played a role in the development of the atomic bomb.



Niels Bohr

The Atoms for Peace awards were established in 1955 through a grant of $1 million by the Ford Motor Company Fund. The awards are intended as a memorial to Henry and Edsel Ford.

Sloan Foundation Basic Research Program

With the approach of the second anniversary of the Sloan Foundation's Program for Basic Research in the Physical Sciences, first announced by Alfred P. Sloan in May 1955, it seems useful to review the plans and procedures of the program. The objectives of the program are to stimulate a greater national effort in truly fundamental research and to emphasize some of the conditions that are essential for such research. Those who designed the program recognize the need for focusing much more attention in the future upon the capability or creative potential of the investigator and upon the importance of giving to him the maximum degree of freedom if he is expected to work on the fringes of man's knowledge.

Perhaps the most nearly unique feature of the present program lies in the fact that research projects are neither solicited nor supported, and no mechanism has been established for the evaluation of research proposals. Instead, unencumbered grants are made available to selected individual scientists who satisfy certain conditions as outlined below. It is in the selection of these scholars that the foundation and its advisers exercise their major responsibility.

Who will be supported? Universities no longer hold a monopoly in the field of pure research. A few industrial laboratories have become world famous through their contributions to fundamental knowledge in the physical sciences. Traditionally, however, investigations directed toward a more profound understanding of natural phenomena have found their home in universities. Consequently, only persons who hold regular faculty appointments in recognized colleges and universities, and whose research interests lie in the basic physical sciences, are eligible for support under the Sloan program. The term "basic physical sciences," as employed here, includes: chemistry, mathematics, physics, and closely related disciplines (that is, astrophysics, geochemistry, and so forth).

In making selections, preference will be given to younger people who are in the early stages of their academic careers. However, occasionally a research grant will be made available to a more mature faculty member when an unusual situation arises. Although the program is essentially national in character, foreign scholars and particularly those associated with Canadian and Mexican institutions are not excluded.

Those responsible for selecting recipients will address themselves primarily to three questions: (i) In the opinion of distinguished scientists, has the candidate demonstrated real potential as a creative investigator? (ii) Do his accomplishments, to date, suggest promise of unusual opportunities for professional growth? (iii) Are his efforts to do fundamental research of his own choosing hampered by a lack of unencumbered funds?

How are candidates found and selected? The foundation has no intention of merely playing a judicial role in evaluating prospective candidates whose names are brought to its attention. It accepts the responsibility of *finding* persons considered to be most worthy of support.

To this end, a Program Committee, whose membership will ultimately be rotated, has been established. Five internationally known scientists—two chemists, two physicists, and one mathematician—constitute the present committee: A. C. Cope, of Massachusetts Institute of Technology; J. B. Fisk, of Bell Telephone Laboratories; K. S. Pitzer, of the University of California, Berkeley; Frederick Seitz, of the University of Illinois; and A. W. Tucker, of Princeton University.

This committee serves the foundation in a dual capacity. In the first place, its members, through their extensive associations with the nation's scientific leaders, aid in the search for potential candidates. Second, the committee serves in an advisory capacity and makes recommendations, through the program administrator, to the foundation's trustees.

Usually, nominations of candidates will be made by one of the nominee's own academic colleagues who is acquainted with his research ability and potential for growth; however, letters of nomination should not be restricted to members of the nominator's own departmental faculty or university. Such letters and other pertinent correspondence