Federal Recruiting of Research Scientists

The news article "Young research workers sought for Washington area laboratories" [*Science* **128**, 1614 (1958)] stated that because of the great "need for productive and creative research personnel" the Civil Service Commission is seeking "more than 200 of the country's most capable young men and women." Although not explicitly stated in the article, it is clear from the Civil Service grades involved that this search is designed to attract those holding a bachelor's degree.

Because I do not feel that the bachelor's degree offers sufficient preparation for these capable people to make the best use of their talents in scientific research, I believe that it would be better both for the young people involved and for our nation if the "country's most capable young men and women" were to engage in full-time graduate study before accepting career employment in research. Surely these highly talented people can obtain scholarship and other financial assistance, if needed, to enable them to continue their studies.

In the past, the Federal Government has often hired research scientists by methods which have proven successful for hiring clerk-typists. The results from these methods have not always been satisfactory, so now, in the guise of "a new approach," research scientists are to be recruited by methods ("Research Scientist Examination") which have proven successful for hiring administrators ("Management Internship Examination"). Although this is indeed a step forward, it is still apparent that the Civil Service Commission does not recognize the need to hire research scientists by methods tailored to the specific problems involved.

The normal time to start a professional career in government service is after the award of the bachelor's degree. Apparently the Civil Service Commission feels that the start of a research scientist's career in the Government should also be at the bachelor-degree level and has planned its recruiting program accordingly. Clearly, it is not understood by the Civil Service Commission that a longer period of academic training is normally required by high-quality research scientists than by managers and administrators.

I suggest that "a new approach to the problem of recruiting . . . productive and creative research personnel" would be for the Civil Service Commission to actively seek to identify and attract into government employment the more promising young men and women who have recently received their advanced degrees, especially at the Ph.D. level.

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