countless numbers of animals in shallow water and provides attachment for vast quantities of algae.

This may seem much ado over two blades of grass, yet it is easy to overlook the contribution of organic material to the deep sea by a shallow-water plant. The influence of hurricanes should not be disregarded, either, for the amount of material washed ashore is probably equaled by the amount carried out and sunk in deep water offshore.

Since *Thalassia*, and a few related sea grasses, in some localities occupy large tracts of shallow-water sea bottom, it seems quite probable that a certain percentage of the energy requirement of West Indian deep sea organisms is met every year by masses of detached sea-grass blades. The amount would vary considerably, depending on weather conditions, but even in relatively calm years it is probably large enough to be of considerable importance.

DONALD R. MOORE
*Institute of Marine Science,*
*University of Miami,*
*Coral Gables, Florida*

## Tax Credit for Support of Research

Charles J. Flora [*Science* **138**, 1185 (1962)] has clearly stated the real tragedy of current federal support in the sciences. The National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health are to my knowledge the best run of any federal agencies, and the best designed to prevent abuses. However, the system seems to subvert its own purpose, as Flora shows.

Except for projects such as Mohole, oceanographic expeditions, accelerators, and conferences, I think the remedy lies in less direct federal support. One such arrangement would allow direct federal tax credit (up to some predetermined fraction of the individual's tax liability) for contributions to a college or university that are earmarked for research. Such a system would have many advantages over the present one. (i) It would diffuse the funds more widely, thus making them more generally available to scientific personnel in small colleges. (ii) The contributed dollar would have its full value at the institution and would not decrease by 50 percent or more in going through the federal bureaucracy. (iii) College research committees would disburse only the amounts actually needed by an investigator at a given time, as opposed to the current system of awards based on necessarily liberal estimates of possible future need. (iv) The highly trained scientists now involved in bureaucratic activities, review panels, proposal writing, report writing, and so on would be able to return to their scientific pursuits.

I think the end result would be a great saving in public funds, a vast increase in the amount and quality of research accomplished, and an increase in the number of people actually engaged in research.

The additional advantage of providing support for those rare individuals who are so far ahead of other workers in their fields that the "expert" panels can't understand, and will not support, them would be fortuitous, but might provide our nation with that most potent of weapons—original thought and research.

JACK BENNETT
*Department of Biological Sciences,*
*Northern Illinois University, DeKalb*