cratic State Committee of Scientists and Engineers for Kennedy, of which I was cochairman, was, I believe, the first and, at that time, the only group of its kind. . . . A few of the prominent names associated with the present Johnson committee were also supporters of the Kennedy committee.

I found that, in general, scientists were willing to lend their name and perhaps give a contribution, but that they avoided active politicking. . . . I wonder if this year will see a change in the essentially apolitical nature of most scientists. . . . In 1960 we could speculate that the scientific vote in New York state provided the slim margin of victory for Kennedy—a switch of less than 200,000 votes from the Democratic to the Republican column would have given New York state to Nixon, and he would have won the election by five electoral votes.

In any case, I feel that scientists should try to shape their political environment, and I wish the present committee well.

CYRUS ADLER
Manhattan Physical Research Group, Inc., 150 Broadway, New York 10038

Able Students Still Choose Science

The subtitle of Robert C. Nichols's article "Career decisions of very able students" (12 June, p. 1315) reports a declining interest in careers in science and engineering. The actual data, however, indicate that this is true for engineering but not for science, nor does Nichols make this claim in his own analysis. If we include mathematics among the sciences, we find (Table 4) that in 1958, 36.44 percent of male National Merit semifinalists chose one of these six fields: biology, chemistry, geology, mathematics, physics, and psychology; in 1963, 40.96 percent of the students chose these fields. There was an increase in biology, chemistry, psychology, and mathematics, and a decrease in geology and physics. The 6.57 percent decrease in physics was more than compensated by a 7.64 percent increase in mathematics. The data indicate some shifts in popularity of individual fields of science, but not a general decline of interest in science, as implied by the subtitle.

ERNST MAYR
Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

The Lunar Surface

In recent months it has become more and more common for scientists to discuss the surface of the moon as though it were in a state akin to the average back yard. A case in point is the report in *Science News Letter* (22 Feb. 1964) which quotes Thomas Gold, director of the Center for Radiophysics and Space Research, Cornell University, as saying that "the action of micrometeorites on the moon's surface cannot fail to produce at least a thin layer of finely pulverized material like dust."

Estimates of the number of meteorites weighing from 10 to 7000 pounds which strike the earth each year have generally agreed with those of C. C. Wylie, who estimated the numbers to be at least 6000 to 7000 [*Contrib. Univ. Iowa Obs.* **7** (1936), pp. 226–27]. Since Wylie's publication my own estimates, based on observations of fireballs, surface features, and weight of some 7000 meteorites in museum collections, observations of meteorite craters, and evaluation of the adequacy of field data, have been revised slightly upward from his.

On the earth most meteorites in this weight range produce no noticeable results, since during their passage through the atmosphere they are for the most part reduced to inconspicuous particles. On the atmosphereless moon, however, the results are quite different. A meteorite weighing only ten pounds, striking the lunar surface at a speed of 20 miles per second, would, according to Ralph Baldwin's estimates (*The Face of the Moon*, Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1948), create a crater 48 feet in diameter and 15 feet deep.

If the frequency of fall per unit area is the same on the moon as on the earth, then in the past half billion years 23.4 craters per acre (15,000 per square mile) have been formed on the lunar surface by meteorites of the 10- to 7000-pound range alone.

Meteoritic rubble of varying degrees of coarseness must reach to great depths on the surface of the moon, but it is evident that dust-like deposit created by the action of micrometeorites is a very minor constituent of this rubble. Hence, the lunar surface cannot be covered by a thin layer of dust alone.

H. H. NININGER
Meteorite Investigations, Sedona, Arizona