

whittled away." Prime Minister Wilson instantly repudiated the report; one newspaper reported that Wilson, himself a onetime university don, was believed to regard the suggestion on student opinion as "sheer lunacy."

Thus, the proposal for a private university, though under low-keyed discussion for several years, is coming to a head at a time when university-government relations are especially raw. In this circumstance, it might be thought that there would be considerable support for establishing at least one private institution under a system where all others are overwhelmingly dependent upon government funds. But, though support may be mustering—the declaration of 46 came out late in December—the present indications are that many academics and others have been put off, not so much by the concept of a private university, as by the peculiar formulation and views presented in the declaration of the 46 and in a follow-up document\* written by the man who is so far the project's chief public advocate, H. S. Ferns, professor of political science at the University of Birmingham.

Though the genesis of the proposal is stated mainly to be a distaste for what is deemed government interference in academic affairs, the proposed university turns out to be a strikingly utilitarian institution designed to prepare students to earn a living in a competitive industrial society, rather than teach or do research—which, after all, is what the government, with limited success, has been trying to get the universities to do anyway. As stated in Ferns's pamphlet, "To consider humane understanding and the cultivation of sensibility as the main purpose of university education with a view to denying its vocational and practical value in civilised living is a perverse aspect of decadence, and is based on a false view of human experience and of the consequence of educative effort. . . . There is a place in Britain for at least one university which is prepared to say what its students need to study in order to prepare themselves for a creative and responsible place in the modern world: to be governed in designing its programs by the demands of society and not by the demands of discovery on the frontiers of knowledge."

\**Towards an Independent University*, 31 pages, 5 shillings (60 cents) (The Institute of Economic Affairs, Eaton House, 66a Eaton Square, London, SW1, England). Included is the declaration signed by the 46 academics, "The Urgency of an Independent University."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### ● COLUMBIA TO STUDY NASA

**LAW:** A faculty committee at Columbia University is studying the implications of a federal law that could deny National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) research grants to schools that bar military recruiting on their campuses. The statute, part of the 1969 NASA authorization act passed on 3 July 1968, will be examined by Columbia's Committee on Externally Funded Research and Instruction, a faculty group established last October to insure that research funds from non-university sources do not violate Columbia's academic goals. The action over the NASA research statute was generated when students assailed military recruiting efforts on the Columbia campus last week. University officials estimate that Columbia derives about \$72 million a year from government sources, \$1.2 million of which comes from NASA.

### ● NSF INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS

**CHANGE:** The National Science Foundation (NSF) has broadened the base of its institutional grants for science programs, thus making a larger number of the less affluent universities eligible for the grants. NSF plans to change its method of calculating institutional grants by including university research awards of other federal agencies. (NSF's institutional grants for science are not awarded for a specific purpose and may be used by the university for any scientific project it chooses.) The institutional grants until now have been awarded to universities as a variable percentage of the total NSF grants given. The change in the NSF formula will now mean that institutions with substantial support from other federal agencies will probably receive larger NSF grants than in recent years, while those receiving grants primarily from NSF may be reduced. NSF officials told *Science* that the change in the formula, instead of the base, will make as many as 100 more institutions eligible for institutional grants.

### ● CONNECTICUT COLLEGES CO-

**ED:** Two Connecticut colleges have announced they will be coeducational next year. Trinity College and the Connecticut College for Women will admit undergraduates of the opposite sex for the first time next year.

### ● DOCTORS IN CITIES:

A university report shows that there are twice as many physicians per capita in New York City as there are in the United States as a whole. A report of the Urban Research Center of the City University of New York shows that there are about 28 doctors for every 10,000 persons in New York City as compared with 13 for each 10,000 for the whole nation. The report shows a general trend among physicians away from rural communities into densely populated areas.

### ● AUSTRALIA ASKS U.S. AID IN ATOMIC EXCAVATION:

The U.S. government has indicated that it will act on an Australian request that the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) be authorized to participate in a study of the possible use of nuclear explosives to build a harbor at Cape Keraudren, in northwestern Australia. The Australian government wants the U.S. to contribute nuclear material and technical knowledge; they plan to use the port for export of vast iron ore deposits in the undeveloped area. The U.S. officials say that U.S. participation in the project could give rise to some problems concerning the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which prohibits any nation from releasing nuclear particles into the atmosphere outside its own territory.

### ● NIH INSTITUTE OUTSIDE BE-

**THESDA:** A National Institutes of Health (NIH) environmental health research division was elevated recently to Institute status. Located at Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, the new National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) is the first and only NIH institute to be located outside of Bethesda, Md. Concern over selection of its site generated congressional debate in 1963–64 over the need to decentralize government health research facilities. Under its new status, NIEHS plans to continue its evaluation of environmental hazards, such as air and water pollution, and pesticides. NIEHS also plans to maintain research links with the neighboring medical schools of Duke University, University of North Carolina, and North Carolina State, and will support university-based research projects elsewhere. Congress appropriated \$17.8 million for its activities in fiscal 1969.