NEWS IN BRIEF

• **SALE OF ATOMIC FUEL PLANTS CONSIDERED**: The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) may move to transfer the nation's atomic fuel processing plants to private industry. On AEC initiative, a small White House study group, which includes the President's Science Advisor Lee A. DuBridge, plans to look into the matter. The three gaseous diffusion plants, which are located in Oak Ridge, Tenn.; Paducah, Ky.; and Portsmouth, Ohio, are used to separate uranium isotopes 235 and 238 from raw uranium ore. Thus far the government has supplied all atomic fission material for commercial use; it has never allowed private operators to process their own nuclear fuel. AEC officials say that the AEC wants to sell the plants as part of its overall plan to eventually transfer atomic energy activities for peaceful purposes to private industry. The move to sell the plants, which are estimated to cost the government about $2.4 billion, is certain to meet with opposition in Congress, particularly from the Democrats. Representative Chet Holifield (D–Calif.) the influential chairman of the joint committee, and Senator Clinton P. Anderson (D–N.M.) have indicated that they may oppose the sale on the grounds that such a transfer would result in sharp increases for electrical energy users and a boost in government costs of developing atomic weapons.

• **YOUNGER TRUSTEES AT PRINCETON**: Princeton University's Board of Trustees, whose median age is more than 60, moved on 19 April to provide for representation of college students and recent graduates on Princeton's ruling board. The Trustees also moved to eliminate a stipulation that no graduate could be elected to the Board until he had been an alumnus for 10 years. The Board will be enlarged to a total of 40 trustees by adding four additional members to be elected by college upperclassmen and first- and second-year alumni. Princeton is the first major Ivy League institution to give students and recent alumni special voting representation. Now, 25 members of the Board of Trustees will be chosen by the board itself; nine by the alumni-at-large; and four for 4-year terms by the college upperclassmen and recent graduates. There are two ex-officio members.

the demand for change seems to be strongly linked to the cause of achieving greater equality of opportunity in higher education. But the focus of the report's criticism is the weakness of the mechanism for coordination, as the following excerpt indicates.

> . . . California's higher education structure is at once highly stratified and highly fragmented. No single agency has authority and responsibility for statewide policy development, the establishment of new institutions, the approval of new programs, or comprehensive financial planning. In past years each of the three public segments has been able to add enrollment, develop new programs and activities, build new facilities and budget available funds with little attention to similar activity and expansion in the other two segments.
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> New programs such as equal opportunity programs, computer assisted instruction, educational research and data processing centers are or will be established within each segment with little regard for what is being done within the other segments. Except for isolated informal arrangements between individual institutions with a strong common interest, the three segments are operated as if they were in three different states. The consequence is duplication of effort, needless competition and, most seriously, lost opportunities for productive cooperation in teaching, research and community service.

The ultimate power to allocate resources for higher education lies with the Governor and the legislature, but the framers of the Master Plan hopefully created a Coordinating Council for Higher Education to do just what its name implies. The council was established in 1961; it has done useful work in such areas as the allocation of federal funds and has served as a forum for discussion of high-level policy matters. But the council is essentially a voluntary body and, significantly, plays a small role in budget affairs. It is dominated by representatives of the three levels of higher education. The result is that it seldom takes a really ecumenical view.

The steam behind current criticism of the Master Plan is in part generated by differences suppressed in the compromise that made the Master Plan possible. The state colleges, in particular, have been restive in the role of "teaching" institutions in which they were cast. At the time of the agreement on the Master Plan the state colleges were rewarded by being freed from the control of the state board of education and given their own board of trustees. They were also given financial support and allowed greater initiative to help them make the transition from teacher-training colleges to institutions which could provide sound education in the liberal and applied arts, technology, and even engineering. College faculties were authorized to operate master's programs and perform research where it directly served the teaching function, but doctoral programs were proscribed, save where a state-college faculty could fashion an agreement for a "joint" doctoral program with a university department.

Limited graduate education has become the symbol of the "second class" status which is the state-college grievance. The argument is that heavier teaching loads, lower salaries, restrictions on research, and the generally lower academic horizons make it hard to attract and keep top faculty.

The university, with its higher per-student costs, in part at least attributable to the higher costs of graduate education, is made, in this view, to seem a haven of self-indulgent academic Bourbons.

This analysis is a biased one, but there is no question that the university is on the defensive. University president Charles J. Hitch gives the impression of a man forced to fight on several fronts. Hitch and the chancellors at the individual campuses preside over a community in which the need for changes in the university is widely acknowledged and where a fair amount of progress has been made. Some of the problems, however, involve the workings of the whole higher education system.

Although neither Hitch nor other ranking university officials proclaim it, the principle of mobility—particularly upward mobility—between the tiers of the higher education system decreed in the Master Plan doesn't really work very well. Hitch has been putting stress on giving ethnic and racial minorities greater access to the university—on winning approval, for example, of specific steps like raising the percentage of specially admitted students from 2 to 4 percent. He is also espousing programs to build "bridges" to community colleges and encouraging proposals for various sorts of "outreach centers" in the community.

A central difficulty in achieving his aims here and in other areas is money. Cutbacks in federal support because of the Vietnam war have coincided with a period of retrenchment in state financing. The university and the other segments of the higher education system are facing a third year of austerity budgets, which have drastically limited