

NEWS IN BRIEF

● **MEDICAL INSTITUTE ESTABLISHED:** An Institute of Medicine within the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) has been formally activated with the appointment of Robert J. Glaser, vice president of the Commonwealth Fund in New York City, as its acting president. The Institute, successor to the NAS Board of Medicine, will conduct study programs relating to the delivery of health care and to medical education and research. Charter membership presently totals 29, and is expected to reach 100 by the end of the year. The number of voting members will be limited to 400, at least one-fourth of whom will be drawn from other branches of science, law, government service, and administration.

● **NOTES FROM SOUTH OF THE BORDER:** No volcano can erupt unrecorded if a AAAS member is in the vicinity. Franklin Marsh, a technical writer at the Goddard Space Flight Center, interrupted a vacation in Mexico to telephone *Science*, at his own expense, an account of renewed activity in the ancient Mexican volcanoes of Popocateptl and Ixtaccihuatl. The events, observed from the village of Jantatelco de Matamoros, featured a 1000-foot long fan of lava and giant eruptions of steam. A local businessman who owns a private astronomical observatory told Marsh this was Popocateptl's first major outburst since 1920.

● **SMITHSONIAN APPRAISED:** A House subcommittee has released a report on the management and policies of the Smithsonian Institution following hearings last summer in which some of its financial procedures were called into question (see *Science*, 4 September 1970). While no mishandling of funds was found, some procedures were criticized—notably those involved in the acceptance of a gift of money and paintings from Joseph H. Hirschhorn for a museum and sculpture garden. The subcommittee also noted "weaknesses" in the institution's financial management and asked that it be more explicit and public in its accounting for income from private sources. The hearings, the first since 1885, were called after the General Accounting Office questioned some of the institution's policies and practices. The report may be obtained from the Committee on House Administration.

cerned, but would enable us to continue to discharge our responsibilities to the scientific community."

Archie Kay, of IPC's Special Interest Group, as quoted in the U.K. *Press Gazette*, was more blunt. "We would have been very unhappy to see *Science Journal* go into another company because together the two papers will have enormous strength in the scientific world which otherwise would have been lost to us. We wanted to protect our position, and secondly to see that what results is an even stronger scientific journal."

The IPC publishes scores of magazines. *Science Journal*, a well-designed monthly that used color and printed review articles of 4000 to 5000 words, was published by IPC's Business Publications Division, which puts out journals as disparate as *Melody Maker*, *Goal*, *Ultrasonics*, *The Scottish Licensed Trade News*, and *Cage and Aviary Birds*. *New Scientist*, a more spartan weekly science news magazine, with no color, much shorter articles, and paper just good enough to hold up the print, comes out of IPC's Magazine Division, and counts among its stablemates *Petticoat*, *Rave*, *Bobo Bunny*, *Home Sewing and Knitting*, *Amateur Gardening*, and a host of other publications for both sexes, all ages, and most interests—trivial, professional, and arcane.

It is easy to mock IPC, and considering the range and occasional overlapping of its publications, it is a wonder that such a behemoth stays in business at all. But nobody loves a business giant. An indignant scientist denounced the *Science Journal* merger in a letter to the *London Times* as "commercialism run riot." To this Pickering replied: "In the present cost-inflation situation it has become increasingly difficult for many publications, particularly those serving specialist needs, to maintain their services and standards without loss." *Science Journal*, he said, had lost £250,000 in 5 years. "In the face of escalating costs of production, salaries, and postal rates on the one hand, and declining revenue from advertising on the other, the publishers were confronted with accelerating losses in addition to those they have suffered over the past 5 years."

Science Journal, founded in 1965, undoubtedly lost money as long as it lived, although it had built up a circulation of about 50,000, half of which was overseas, particularly in Canada, the United States, Australia, and New

Zealand. Only a tenth of its advertising, however, was from overseas. The IPC naturally hopes that a good proportion of the advertisers, and the overseas readers, will transfer their allegiance to an enlarged and more comprehensive *New Scientist*.

The editor of *Science Journal*, Robin Clarke, a Cambridge science graduate, aged 33, says that the economic squeeze of the last 3 years has cut the total volume of corporate advertising, but that the proportion of corporate advertising taken by *Science Journal* had not gone down: in other words, it had had a bigger share of a declining market. He blames the magazine's troubles on neglect of management and says that by managing it himself after August 1970, he made it show a profit. Printing costs, he says, went up by 18½ percent between July and October 1970; and, although he admits that magazines like *Science Journal* are marginal enterprises and always liable to fall under the axe, he thinks it could have survived, had proper use been made of its resources.

"A magazine like *Science Journal*," he says, "should be considered as one unit in a group, which relies on pooled expertise, and is also busy producing other magazines, books, film strips, and wall charts. That's where the growth is, if someone grabs it."

Colin Shepherd, who will be responsible for publishing the enlarged *New Scientist*—which IPC claims will, with the addition of *Science Journal*'s resources, be "the most important weekly magazine serving science, technology, and industry on an international scale"—says that monthlies like *Science Journal* are always vulnerable. A weekly may need a staff twice as large as a monthly, but it produces 52 issues as against 12; and a monthly, which needs that shiny, permanent look, is relatively more expensive to produce. And, of course, monthlies cannot carry very effective classified advertising.

Classified advertising! This is the prosaic slogan that lifts the hearts of IPC men as the cold economic winds bluster about them. *New Scientist*, and its sociological stablemate, *New Society*, have always been weekly news magazines without prestige advertising, but they have made their fortune out of closely packed and lucrative small advertisements aimed at their special readership.

New Scientist was launched in 1956 as a magazine of science for the non-scientist: "At the time," says the editor,