Some innovations were made, particularly in the direction of mitigating extreme specialization, but the critics argue that the image of Oxbridge has been a dominant one and that the other universities tend to revert to type.

Disenchantment with the universities, however, seems to have mixed causes. For one thing, a sizable number of university graduates in recent years have been unable to find jobs for which they had prepared. The public at large reacted to the spectacle of student protests in recent years without much sympathy. The government has evidently grown impatient with faculty demands for better salaries and increased research funds at a time when the university record on increasing "productivity" or responding to national problems has been less than brilliant. Furthermore, it is generally recognized that the university policy of selective admissions based on academic performance in practice means that the universities tend to draw their students mainly from the middle class, so that the percentage of children of manual workers in universities has not grown appreciably in the past decade. As a result, the university finds itself stuck with the elitist label.

What is happening, not surprisingly, is that the old question of what a university is for is being asked in less abstract terms than usual. The Robbins report stated the multiple aims of higher education as instruction in skills, promotion of the general powers of the mind, the advancement of learning, and the transmission of a common culture and of common standards of citizenship. Rather pointedly, the Robbins committee declined to put these in any particular order.

These unexceptionable aims are being challenged from several directions. The government white paper, while not rejecting the Robbins view, puts new emphasis on reconciling national needs with resources and notes that employers' requirements for university trained people "in the forms of employment they traditionally enter are, in the aggregate, largely being met." The white paper goes on to say that "the continuously changing relationship between higher education and subsequent employment should be reflected both in the institutions and in individuals' choices." This applies, of course, to all types of institutions of higher education, but the implication for universities is particularly clear.

The white paper itself has been the target for criticism. There have been suggestions from university people that the policy is prompted more by cost-cutting motives than by sound educational policy. Spokesmen for the students have been suspicious of the white paper, particularly of the reduction in the number of new places. But the students have been distracted in recent months by a campaign to improve government grants to students.

The most direct public attack has come in the form of a critical "green paper" from a Labour party study group. As might have been anticipated, the Labour group calls for creation of a total of 1 million places in higher education by 1981 rather than the 750,000 projected in the white paper. Probably more significant, the Labour critics suggest that all of higher education should be placed under a single policy making body. Such a move would inevitably infringe on the powers of the University Grants Committee, the semiautonomous agency through which policy is made and government funds are distributed to the university. This presumably would result in a curb on the traditional independence of the universities and the nascent independence of the polytechnics.

Certainly the decline and fall of British universities is not in prospect. The universities, particularly some universities, still command great prestige and the power to defend themselves. But the white paper, which sets policy for the whole of British education, signals a reordering of priorities. Funds for programs for preschool children and for reconstruction of outdated schools will figure prominently in future budgets, and the Conservatives seem to be in earnest about a real diversification effort in higher education. So it appears that the government —and probably any future British government—will use its financial control of higher education in the next decade to move faster than in the last from class higher education toward mass higher education.—JOHN WALSH

NSF Promotes Ex-SE Asia Expert

The National Science Foundation (NSF), in an attempt to respond to the "mounting interest throughout our society in the ethical and human value implications of science and technology," has appointed the one-time counterinsurgency task force chief for Southeast Asia under the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, Charles Maechling, Jr., to head up a new program in ethics.

Maechling, a lawyer, served as the State Department's director for internal defense from 1961 until 1963 and was the chairman of a National Security Council task force on counterinsurgency from 1961 until 1966. Since then he has dealt with international matters in the general counsel's office at NSF, and represented the foundation at Law of the Sea meetings. Most recently he was appointed special assistant to the director.

The Ethical and Human Value Implications of Science and Technology program, which will be run jointly with the National Endowment for the Humanities, will have access to various kitties held by the Director. The amount of these monies varies during the year, but this year they totaled the considerable sum of $2 million. From its location in the Director's office, the committee will fund some proposals directly; the committee will also make reviews and recommendations on proposals being considered by the various, independent, NSF directorates.

Hence the science foundation is starting an innovative experiment: both in terms of substance, by getting into some moral problems posed by science, and in terms of personnel, since Maechling's background is atypical of science foundation officials. Unusual, as well, is the administrative mechanism of a supercommittee with red- or green-light funding powers and located right in the Director's office. Maechling said that the committee's mandate, which cuts across all parts of the foundation, is bound to stir things up. But so far, he added, the consensus on which proposals are worthwhile and which fall wide of the mark has been remarkable.—D.S.

Erratum: In the 18 May issue of *Science* (p. 719, Don Paarlberg was identified as "former director of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture." The attribution should have read: "Don Paarlberg, 1968, Purdue University, now Director of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture."