

Letters

"Brain Drain" Figures

The figures you give in your comment entitled "Brain Drain—The View from This Side of the Atlantic" (21 Feb., p. 787) can be misleading. These scientists and engineers are neither all British nor necessarily seeking U.S. citizenship. They are people whose last country of residence was Britain and who entered the United States on immigrant visas. Thus the figures you give include an unknown number of non-British subjects moving from Britain to the United States. Nor can entry on an immigrant visa be regarded as evidence of intent to seek U.S. citizenship. Many foreigners who enter the U.S. on immigrant visas have every intention of returning to their home countries.

While the British Government is concerned at the loss of British scientists by emigration, it should be recognized that many of the scientists included in the figures you quote will return to Britain within a few years.

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Mohole

As ranking minority member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee which passes on the National Science Foundation's requests for funds, I have taken a particularly keen interest in Project Mohole. I believe that I am probably more conversant with the subject than is any other member of Congress. From this vantage point, I would like to commend you, in general, for the series you have printed recently on the subject [News and Comment, 10, 17, and 24 Jan., 1964], and comment on some pertinent points.

Greenberg says that I have been "blasting" NSF since one of my constituents was passed by for the Mohole

contract. If any one of the bidders could be considered a constituent of mine, it would be Brown & Root, because that company has a subsidiary corporation located in Colorado. My "blasting" of NSF has been based on the fact that I do not think Brown & Root was the best qualified of the bidders. Further, I feel that Brown & Root has not progressed at all well since the contract was let. I am concerned with the direction the Project has taken, the apparent loss of time in getting the Project under way, and, above all, the continued escalation in cost estimates.

A great deal of the testimony about Project Mohole before our subcommittee this last fall revolved around the question whether an intermediate ship had been contemplated for the project as originally conceived. While I am convinced that the intermediate step has been contemplated from the beginning, the more important question is whether the intermediate ship is now necessary or desirable. I believe that it is. Greenberg points out in his article that Haworth appears to agree, basically, with this position but thinks it is now too late to build the intermediate ship. Greenberg also mentions, just in passing, that the National Science Board convened a special study of the question. He did not say what the recommendations of the special committee were. Interestingly, I am informed that the committee is now planning to make no final written report. However, its "preliminary" report said that "the panel unanimously urges that an intermediate drilling vehicle be constructed promptly. . . ." And I would point out that the great majority of people knowledgeable in the subject have taken the same position. There is no question that, from the scientific viewpoint, the intermediate ship is desirable.

From a purely economic view of the project, I think the intermediate ship is worthwhile. Everyone involved

agrees there must be a period of testing and experience-gaining before the ultimate hole is started. To carry out this work with the platform at an operating cost of roughly \$8 or \$9 million per year is folly. This is particularly true in view of the offers which have been made to the NSF to construct and operate an intermediate ship—offers which have been neither accepted nor rejected by NSF. Further, carrying out this phase of the project with the ultimate platform will involve a renegotiation of the contract with Brown & Root. Presumably this renegotiation will include a renegotiation upward of Brown & Root's \$1.8 million fee. I might add that Brown & Root was the only bidder for the contract who asked for a fee. This was another factor in the selection of Brown & Root which I found disturbing.

I would like to set the record straight on one point: The Senate Appropriations Committee did not retreat from its position that Mohole funds should be withheld. A conference report on an appropriations bill is written by the managers on the part of the House. In this case, the chairman of the House subcommittee, Representative Albert Thomas (of Houston, Texas), was responsible for preparing the report. Chairman Thomas felt that Brown & Root (of Houston, Texas) was doing a fine job on Project Mohole, and this feeling, not surprisingly, was reflected in the conference report.

But the most disturbing factor to me in this whole project has been the attempt by NSF, at least until recently, to treat the entire subject as if there were no problems. It may be, as Greenberg intimates, the "traditional concern [of the scientist] for maintaining an appearance of dignity and keeping spats out of public view." But, as a United States Senator directly responsible for reporting to the Senate on the conduct of NSF and making recommendations for funding its activities, I resent the attitude, which I have seen displayed by some, that the Senate, or more generally the nonscientific community, must be kept in the dark if things are not completely harmonious in the household of science. I recognize that there may sometimes be a thin line between unwarranted intrusions on administrative decisions and legitimate concern for the wise management of government funds. But, occupying as I do a position of trust with regard