versities, but with sufficient autonomy to establish ties with Mexico City schools and other potential sources of support. For the most part, the institutes will emphasize regional development problems—one will focus on marine resources and arid land development in Baja California, while another will aid the Veracruz sugar industry on the eastern coast. Still another, 50 miles southeast of Mexico City at Puebla, is concentrating on optics, electronics, and astrophysics.

Setting up the institutes has been a slow process, partly because of the usual money problems and partly because recruiting has gone slowly. Painful past experience, however, suggests that it is just as well not to rush into such things. According to a story told by one Mexican official, a previous attempt to establish a physics institute at the University of Puebla ended in disaster in 1967 when militant students and faculty discovered that the new researchers had been attracted with salaries several times higher than the going rate. Resentment flamed into violence, the laboratory was ransacked, and the physicists departed in some bitterness and haste.

The government seems confident that it can avoid such incidents in the future; the official told the story only to illustrate that science policy in Mexico can be a most contentious business.

It is a lesson, in fact, that CONACYT has learned repeatedly over the past 2½ years. The very nature of its mission has brought it into conflict with the territorial imperatives of old-line agencies, but philosophical conflicts have also developed with some of its natural allies in the universities.

"This is a very conservative science community, kind of like the Faraday Society," an American observer in Mexico City comments. "CONACYT's penchant for press conferences just drives them up the wall. And they also object to these young whippersnappers coming along and telling them what they ought to be doing in the national interest."

From the provincial schools CONACYT may seem as a breath of fresh air, but in the major universities there is some disappointment that it has not developed into a funding agency along the lines of the National Science Foundation. The agency's heavy emphasis on applied research is viewed as a short-sighted play for the quick technological payoff, and the new institutes, small as they are, are regarded with some justification as potential competitors for talent and money.

Criticism has also focused on CONACYT's administration. The remarks of one prominent social scientist, in a recent interview, reflect the general tone:

> They have a tremendously large staff for the size of the budget, and there has been a lot of motion and not much accomplished. There is still an ad hoc quality to policy, a continuing search for a style and a role.
>
> There is a new awareness in government of the importance of research—that we can't just sit back and accept foreign technology—but there is still no coherent plan, no connection with economic planning such as it exists in Mexico.

Some of these difficulties can probably be traced to an overburdened top leadership. The agency's director until last month, Eugenio Méndez Docurro, doubled as Secretary of Communications and Transport and the council's main policy directorate has been composed of equally busy men. In May, however, the President relieved Mendez of his job at CONACYT and replaced him with a full-time director, Gerardo Bueno, an economist and presidential adviser on issues of importation of technology.

Agency officials, for their part, tend to agree that some of the criticism has been "solid." But a series of virulent attacks in the press in recent months—alleging, among other things, that CONACYT was frittering its money away on worthless projects and consorting with foreign multinational corporations—are regarded as unfair even by some of the agency's university critics. To some of the younger staff, the harshest blow came in February from Echeverría, who publicly rebuked the agency for "preparing and training employees for the multinational companies . . . of imperial objectives" through its scholarship programs, and for failing to adopt a properly patriotic attitude. A survey has since shown that only about 5 percent of the scholarship holders have ended up in multinational firms, and then did so mainly because no other jobs were available.

Morale in the agency appears to run a scale from gloom to qualified optimism. Some wonder privately whether Mexico is ready for science policy, and some of the agency's outside advisers even suggest that it may be doing the image of science more harm than good. In a country where research has only recently come to be regarded as socially useful employment, image is important.

But the consensus, if an outsider can really gauge consensus, seems brighter than that. Will CONACYT survive and succeed? One young and highly placed attorney in the agency paused a moment, sighed audibly, and replied that, yes, he thought that it would gradually bring new order to Mexican research. "We are just at the take-off point now," he said. "And this is the most difficult time."

—ROBERT GILLETTE

RECENT DEATHS

William F. Bradley, 64; professor of engineering, University of Texas, Austin; 16 January.

Lloyd A. Ferguson, 40; associate professor of medicine, University of Chicago; 1 January.

Thomas A. Foster, 76; former pharmacist, director, U.S. Public Health Service; 4 January.

Jacob H. Friedman, 59; assistant clinical professor of psychiatry, Albert Einstein College of Medicine; 27 January.

Walter C. Hamilton, 41; deputy chairman, chemistry department, Brookhaven National Laboratory; 23 January.

Edward Henderson, 76; executive director, American Geriatrics Society; 5 January.

Benjamin F. Holland, 75; professor emeritus of education, University of Texas; 14 January.

Jean L. Laffoon, 50; professor of entomology, Iowa State University; 19 January.

Nathan Lazar, 74; professor emeritus of education, Ohio State University; 17 January.

John D. Marshall, Jr., 49; associate clinical professor of psychiatry, Yale University; 10 January.

Donald M. Maynard, 44; professor of biology, University of Oregon; 28 January.

Earl P. McBee, 66; professor of industrial chemistry, Purdue University; 3 January.

Harald H. Nielsen, 69; professor emeritus of physics, Ohio State University; 8 January.

William R. Ransom, 97; retired professor of mathematics, Tufts University; 9 January.