

Lords on the Brain Drain

It seems a long time since anyone admitted that people emigrate to earn more money. The Lords were debating the Brain Drain and clearly agreed with Lord Windlesham, who said that it was a subject on which it is necessary for politicians, editorial writers and others to have opinions.

Opening the debate, Lord Windlesham defined the problem by referring to the Willis Jackson and Swann Reports, and to the new committee under Dr. F. E. Jones. The British Government's role, Lord Windlesham said, would have to be a subtle one if the problem was to be solved; it would involve supporting in a sustained way the most exciting work. Beyond this, he said, there seems to be an inevitability about many of the forces leading to emigration.

Lord Bowden, Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science 1964-65, said there was nothing new about the Brain Drain—it went back to the time when students went to Athens to study under Socrates and Aristotle. The problem was world-wide, he said, and he quoted figures showing the immigration into America of scientists and engineers (Table 1).

Table 1

Country of origin	Immigrants into the U.S.A.	
	Scientists	Engineers
France	26	56
Germany	124	301
Netherlands	34	102
United Kingdom	155	507

These figures come from *The Research and Development Effort*, an O.E.C.D. report, and represent the annual average between 1956 and 1961.] In every case, Lord Bowden said, the number of engineers was three times as great as the number of scientists.

Table 2

Year	Number taking first employment overseas			
	Scientists		Engineers	
	With first degrees	With higher degrees	With first degrees	With higher degrees
1962	144	225	86	53
1963	147	212	102	65
1964	264	311	148	89
1965	299	325	178	90

Although these were not quoted in the debate, the statistics in the Swann Report for first employment show that more scientists than engineers go abroad, at least for their first jobs. These figures include, of course, emigration to countries other than the United States.

In the debate Lord Bowden went on to discuss the space race and the defence budget of the United States. These had been begun, he said, as a means of providing work for engineers, but had been elevated into what he called "the most extravagant, highly organized and nonsensical system of outdoor relief ever organized by a great country in peacetime". The impact of this on the rest of the world was enormous—it was beginning to appear that fields in India will remain uncultivated in order that America should put a man on the Moon.

Viscount Eccles, a former Minister of Education, said that it was the high rates of taxation which drove people to emigrate. Lord Snow, a former Minister of State at the Ministry of Technology, agreed. Money, he said, is not everything, but it represents a chance to

do one's best work. "If one can cross the Atlantic and do good work and earn \$20,000 instead of £2,500", he said, "it is an attraction, and it would clear the air if someone occasionally said so." Lord Snow suggested that British universities might borrow an idea from the American universities, which engage their academic staffs for only nine months of the year; for the other three months, the staff are free to do exactly as they please. This was something which was not usual, or even approved of, in Britain, and it was one of the crying needs in Britain. "We also need some centres of excellence", he said, and suggested that Britain might be able to produce about two or three. Lord Annan, Provost of University College, London, agreed in principle, but said that it would be better to arrange for two or three departments in a particular university to be excellent. There should be in each university certain departments which are internationally known. Lord Snow intervened to say that he did not think this would work, but Lord Annan said that by trying to produce universities which were excellent in everything, Britain would get indigestion.

Lord Taylor said that he had always been in favour of the Brain Drain, and he was now even more strongly in favour of it. Why was it respectable to go to a developing country and work, but not respectable to go to a country with a little more money than Britain has? Lord Taylor said he was going to Newfoundland to help run the university there; was this bad if you thought of Newfoundland as a developed country, and good if you thought of it as a developing one? The distinction, Lord Taylor implied, was meaningless. Lord Shackleton, for the Government, said that the problems for undeveloped countries were so serious that governments, including the British Government, would have to take the initiative in international discussion.

University News: California Institute of Technology

HOWARD H. HAGLUND has been appointed manager of the Surveyor Project Office at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory of the California Institute of Technology, in succession to Robert J. Parks, who has returned to his former position of assistant laboratory director for Lunar and Planetary Projects.

Strathclyde

DR. DENIS TAYLOR, head of Unesco Mission, Faculty of Engineering, University College, Nairobi, has been appointed to the new chair of electronic science and telecommunications in the School of Electrical Engineering as from April 1, 1967. He is well known for his work in the fields of radar systems, electronics and radiation problems.

Appointments

DR. L. LEVIN has been appointed associate director (institutional relations) of the U.S. National Science Foundation. This position was established by the foundation in recognition of the increasing importance of its programmes for maintaining and improving the quality of science at institutions of higher education. Dr. Levin is well known for his work in the field of biochemical endocrinology.

DR. J. D. CARTHY, at present in the Department of Zoology, Queen Mary College, University of London, has been appointed to a new post of scientific director of the Field Studies Council.

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