

educational policy to the directives of the most recent (Twenty-Third) Party Congress, which stressed the need for a considerable increase in the economic level and prosperity of the peoples of the Soviet Union and for a speeding up of the industrialization of Siberia, the Soviet Far East and other less developed regions.

Among the rash of newly opened and projected educational and scientific institutions, the emphasis seems to lie largely on the applied sciences. The new developments of the Donets scientific centre of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences include, alongside a new Institute of Applied Mathematics, the somewhat specialized Institute of Industrial Economics. At the other end of the Union, at Irkutsk, the new "science village" of the East Siberian Branch of the Siberian Division of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR specializes in geology, biology, chemistry and power engineering—all of which have specific applications to the development of the region. Vil'nyus (Lithuania) has a new Institute of Building Engineering, Vitebsk (Byelorussia) a new trade training *Technikum*, while there is also interest in the new State University at Yaroslavl (due to receive its first students in 1971).

It would seem, however, that this scheme of education for industry and technology is not entirely bearing the hoped-for fruits. A brief and somewhat vague note in *Pravda* (August 8), reporting the meeting of the Commission on National Education, Science and Culture, urges, in general terms, "improvement in the training of specialists in the field of economics in Higher and Secondary colleges". In a leader of September 3, *Pravda* becomes even more explicit. Speaking of the "science centres" scattered throughout the Union and related, according to current policy, to the local industrial and natural resources, it states: "It is no secret, for example, that a number of the branches still have an insufficient experimental basis, and are suffering from lack of living accommodation for the scientific personnel, in laboratory and auxiliary buildings". Similarly, at the same time as the importance of primary and secondary education as the basis for the technology of the future is being reiterated in the Press throughout the whole Soviet Union, and new education schemes are being inaugurated such as the new schools television project in the Byelorussian SSR, designed to give instruction in the "methods of the scientific disciplines and the latest achievements of science", many schools—the regional boarding schools particularly—are suffering acute shortages of educational equipment and living facilities. In the words of the *Pravda* leader-writer, "a good material basis is the most important condition for increasing the effectiveness of scientific work". It would appear, therefore, that, before science training can come to the aid of Soviet economic development, the Soviet economy must come to the aid of at least certain educational establishments.

#### MANPOWER

### Brain Drain Office Repatriated

REVERSING the brain drain is a tough proposition. It is certainly a bigger proposition than the Ministry of Technology foresaw when in 1967 it awarded a contract for £85,000 to Management Selection, Ltd (MSL), for a recruitment campaign to lure back to Britain some

of the qualified people who had left for America. It is probably a greater task than MSL itself realized, because last month it shut down its New York recruiting office.

The office was opened in September 1967. It seems to have been a mixed success. MSL claims to have been instrumental in placing in British companies about 500 people from American firms and universities with HNC or higher qualifications. This figure has been estimated from follow-up records of about three hundred people from a total list of 900. These show that 70 per cent accepted appointments in Britain, and 27 per cent took up fresh appointments abroad. An average of 250 people recruited a year is substantially better than any similar scheme has achieved, but, when compared with the figure of 3,100 scientists and technologists who left Britain for America in 1966, it does not exactly reverse the flow. However, MSL claims that the contacts and expertise built up during this period in New York will be invaluable if British industry is ever going to make a significant impact in luring back its departed scientists and technologists. The contract is due to expire in March 1970, and discussions are now going on about possible extensions of the work.

MSL says that shutting down the New York office does not indicate that the project has failed, and that it will be more efficient if all the work is done in London. Given a free choice, more than 80 per cent of applicants wrote to London and not New York. All the advertising is run from a London agency; while a London base will enable MSL to concentrate more on the recipient companies.

The method which MSL has been using is to provide a link between British firms and people working in America through advertisements, direct contact by letter and through the *Transatlantic Newsletter*, a bulletin of job opportunities which has a readership of about four thousand. These methods are similar to those employed by the North American Joint Selection Board, which has been operating for about ten years and recruits specifically for the Scientific Civil Service, the Atomic Energy Authority and the Central Electricity Generating Board, but the standard of the people accepted in the NAJSB scheme and the rigour of the interview probably account for the fact that only about five hundred people have been recruited since the scheme started (see *Nature*, **220**, 645; 1968). Both schemes seem to share the property of recruiting people who have already decided that they want to return to Britain and who need some sort of push.

The reason given for returning is usually intangible, stemming from a difficulty in identifying with a foreign community. The average salary change of the people who were handled by MSL was from £5,750 to £2,900, which shows that salary considerations took second place.

#### INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

### European Geophysical Union

from our Geomagnetism Correspondent

DURING the recent general assemblies of IAGA and IASPEI (see page 1207) in Madrid (September 1–12), two meetings were convened by Professor S. K. Runcorn (University of Newcastle upon Tyne) to discuss the