

THE GREAT DISCOVERY

Last month we announced our intention to describe in Engineering and Science a variety of important Institute needs. This month's article is the second of a series.

As you have read, the Russians claim to have discovered almost everything from the wheel to the cotton gin — and more. Just ask them. But they could truthfully claim title to one discovery for which they wouldn't like to take credit. It was the Russian space feat of October 4, 1957, which jarred the American public to critically scrutinize our educational system from kindergarten to graduate school. The nation's educational program eventually passed the test, but a great "discovery" was made. The financial rewards of our teachers — especially in higher education — were found to be pitifully unrewarding.

This predicament was hardly news to those in teaching. Even at the ten highest-paying universities, the average faculty member received only \$10,300 annually.* The average salary at all the remaining universities was only \$7,875.

Caltech at that time was considerably below the average of the top ten universities.

In 1957 President Eisenhower's Committee on Education above the High School recommended immediate reform. The committee resolved to double faculty salaries in the decade to end in 1967-68. There is evidence to show that this pronouncement has produced results.

At the end of the 1962-63 school year the nation's higher education faculty were re-

ceiving a salary of \$9,975, an increase of 27 percent. While this rate of increase is not enough to double salaries in ten years, it is at least a rather big step in the direction of an *adequate* salary scale.

Fortunately for Caltech and its professors, the Development Program was launched at a very opportune time. Approximately 1.2 million dollars were secured specifically for increasing faculty salaries during the 1958-60 period. Without this running start we would have been hard pressed to achieve the results obtained in only five years.

Today, Caltech ranks at the top of the national salary scale: no school is classified higher.

Why then do we suggest that alumni consider support of the Institute's faculty salary fund? The answer is this: Development funds are all but depleted after five years of specific and across-the-board increases. Future increases will come from the *annual operating budget* which, unfortunately, is generally strained from a myriad of other important programs.

Too, consider this rather common occurrence. Some of our June 1963 PhD graduates received industrial salaries which are higher than the average CIT. full professors' — and our professors' average teaching experience spans a quarter of a century! No one is advocating matching industrial salaries, but a more equitable balance must be achieved if quality education is to thrive.

Your gift for faculty salaries will be greatly appreciated.

* All references to salaries are based on an eleven-month year, not including fringe benefits. References: AAUP Summer Issues, 1959, 1963.

— G. Russell Nance '36 and David L. Hanna '52
Directors of the Caltech Alumni Fund