

Two Innovations

With this March, 1962, issue the *A.I.Ch.E. Journal* becomes a bimonthly instead of a quarterly publication. More pages, as well as more issues, have been allotted; so it should be possible to fulfill our publishing obligations and commitments in a speedier fashion. Since the *Journal* is not yet a self-supporting venture, the editor wishes to take this opportunity to acknowledge the constant interest of the Publisher and of Council in maintaining the book.

We are also setting forth on an information retrieval program. (See page 000.) Any conscientious student of the current literature must view with increasing despair the staggering growth rate of technical publications. The mass of technical articles will soon be so great that the duplication of work buried in the literature will become inevitable.

The Information Retrieval Program of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers has been adopted in the hope that some measure of control over the sheer mass of literature can be regained. The details of the program are described in articles by Rollin Morse and by B. E. Holm in *Chemical Engineering Progress* [57, No. 5, p. 55]; [No. 6, p. 73 (1961)]. The system is based on a carefully prepared abstract, the selection of key words, and the assignment of role letters to such words. A particularly valuable aid in the selection and use of key words is the "Chemical Engineering Thesaurus"

(published by the A.I.Ch.E.), which is arranged so as to afford an almost automatic reminder of related words. The great virtue of the Institute system is its flexibility. It can be adapted to hand filing and recovery or to machine operation. It can also be modified as experience dictates.

The Information Retrieval Program can be made successful only through a cooperative effort on the part of all concerned. It is important that the authors of articles do a thorough job in writing the abstract and selecting the key words and role letters. It is essential that the editorial staff do a careful job of checking these items. It is necessary for the authors, editors, and readers to watch for and suggest new words to be added to the Thesaurus. It is also highly desirable that the role concepts be constantly examined and enlarged to meet the increasing needs of the wide field of chemical engineering.

The Information Retrieval Program promises to be worth the effort. It should make it possible for each of us to have a much better command over the literature. It is highly probable that similar programs will be adopted by other engineering and scientific societies. Our experience should be enormously helpful to them, and once more our fellow engineers and scientists must acknowledge the progressive position of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers.

H. B.