Speaking on handling of metallurgical information by government agencies, Donald A. Shinn (Wright-Patterson Air Force Base) pointed out that the federal government has no activity, solely as such, which could be called a "metallurgical information center." It does, however, operate a number of separate information centers in special fields, particularly dealing with materials and their properties. The functions and operations of a number of these were described.

Robert S. Taylor (Lehigh University) dealt with the problem of how the scientific and engineering students are taught to use information, and stressed the importance of learning how to ask questions. The student—who becomes the working scientist—must be cognizant of the various kinds and types of information services in his field so that he can match his needs to the availability of the resources.

Cooperation in metallurgical information handling was discussed by a panel consisting of Frank Speight (American Society for Testing and Materials), G. R. Forrer (Society for Nondestructive Testing), James H. Keeler (American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical and Petroleum Engineers), David Liston (Engineers Joint Council), and Harry B. Goodwin (American Society for Metals). Goodwin, chairman of the session, summarized the discussion by delineating four areas of cooperation:

1) Possibility of revising the whole concept of the way information is handled. This might involve elimination of traditional society "transactions," accompanied by wider distribution of abstracts.

2) Standardization of indexing nomenclature, possibly by thesaurus techniques.

3) Elimination of duplication in abstracting.

4) Combined sales efforts so that information products of various technical and professional societies can become better known to the individual members.

Members of a panel on information retrieval in the world of metals presented a rather full description and exposition of ASM's Information Searching Service, and emphasized its relationships to similar activities in the information processing field. While this pioneering computer-based service is now entering its fourth year of operation, there are many areas of development, refinement, and even drastically new approaches which will be actively explored in the months to come.

The ASM deep-indexed file of some 140,000 documents, is a veritable gold mine for information retrieval research because of the various ways in which the computer indexes can be programmed and manipulated. Some of the future products contemplated by ASM are: (i) statistical examination of terminology used in past searches; (ii) analysis of the indexing terms and codes to eliminate unused or unnecessary terms; (iii) grouping of search files under major subject categories to reduce machine time in searching; (iv) possibility of "inverting" the file to aspect rather than sequential arrangement; and (v) development of new products based on the same indexing techniques now used. For example, the customized central searching service might be supplemented by a broader "interest profile" service or by development of "dual dictionaries" or other products allowing the user to do precise searching at his own desk.

The far moving field of computer technology will undoubtedly provide both the hardware and software for developing metallurgical information services of greater efficiency, broader usefulness, and less cost to the scientific community.

This symposium was the joint program of the Information and Communications Section and the American Society of Metals, and was cosponsored by the Engineering Section.

MARJORIE R. HYSLOP, American Society for Metals

Vice-Presidential Address. In his talk on documentation, Foster E. Mohrhardt described it as a newly developed discipline where there is a lack of understanding and agreement concerning the meaning and scope of the term "documentation." There is also lacking a definition of the relationship of documentation to information science, communications, and librarianship.

Beginning with the broad field of communication sciences as the center of this special universe, the relationship of information sciences and librarianship was shown and a differentiation was made between librarianship and documentation. The inclusion of various areas in documentation, such as writing, editing and publishing, not germane to librarianship, coupled with the evaluation in depth by subject specialists indicate the special aspects of documentation. In conclusion, suggestions were made for improvements in documentation and the need for closer relationships between documentalists and specialists in other fields.

PHYLLIS V. PARKINS, Program Chairman

Luncheon and Business Meeting. Walter Sullivan (science news editor of the New York Times), speaker at Section T's annual luncheon 29 December, developed his topic, "A new problem in communication: trying to make contact with intelligent life beyond the solar system," in a logical and convincing manner. He reviewed the scientific background and presented the most recent evidence for the existence of intelligent beings in other worlds, in our own world, and in other galaxies. He explained the kind and pattern of signals that might be expected to transmit messages, and the means developed and developing to monitor and decipher codes. Sullivan noted some evidence for the belief that even now intelligent beings somewhere are trying to establish communications. This was a scholarly and remarkably clear presentation of a highly technical subject, one which Sullivan will develop further in a book to be published soon. Walter Sullivan was this year's winner of the AAAS Westinghouse Award for science writing in the newspaper medium.

Foster Mohrhardt, chairman, presided at a lively business meeting that followed his vice-presidential address. Fourteen of the 19 societies now affiliated with Section T were represented. Ideas voiced, suggestions, and constructive criticisms indicated the great interest and multiplicity of problems surrounding the broad field of science information and communication. Section T programs, it was concluded, should be interdisciplinary in nature to serve most satisfactorily the variety of interests involved in the field.

Pierre Fraley outlined briefly his idea for a program in 1964 to explore the history of the popularization of science, and to explain the steps taken to date to select participants. A number of outstanding individuals in the field have received the idea of the program with enthusiasm and have promised active support and participation.

Newly elected section officers were announced: chairman, Wallace R. Brode; committeeman-at-large, Milton O. Lee.

PHYLLIS V. PARKINS, Secretary
Luncheon and Business Meeting
Phyllis V. Parkins

Science 143 (3608), 854.
DOI: 10.1126/science.143.3608.854-a