

Kilgore that in their revisions biology as distinct from the medical sciences will be considered on a par with the physical, chemical, and mathematical sciences.

Concerning the top administration of the proposed Foundation, the opinion of scientists in general has been one of favoring a board of scientists. This has persisted, in spite of the fact that some of the testimony at the hearings presented cogent reasons in favor of a single Administrator responsible to the President and the Congress.

Subsequently, the Letter to the President, drafted by the Bowman Committee and endorsing the principles presented in Senator Magnuson's Bill, was drafted and widely published (*Science*, 1945, **102**, 545). Some regarded the stand taken in the letter as uncompromising. This would be most unfortunate, since both the Magnuson and Kilgore Bills are still in committee and open to revision for the cooperative formulation of a bill which will be acceptable to governmental procedure without loss of the prerogative of free initiative in scientific research. An uncompromising attitude, fancied or real, at this stage, may jeopardize the enactment of a measure so overwhelmingly approved of in the October hearings in Washington. More recently a Committee for a National Science Foundation has been formed (see *Science*, 1946, **103**, 11, 45) claiming to sponsor no one bill but to stand for a general cooperative effort toward the realization of a Federal organization for the advancement of science in this country. The original Kilgore Bill contained several provisions unacceptable to scientists at large. The recent draft, S. 1720 (printed in *Science*, 1946, **103**, 39) is a complete revision in which most of those provisions have been eliminated. This draft is presented by the Subcommittee as a preliminary report for further comment before it is reported out of committee.

It is suggested that this draft serve as a basis for further discussion toward the enactment of a bill acceptable to scientists and Congressmen alike.

The publication of the Letter to the President by the Bowman Committee has been most valuable in awakening scientists to the implications involved in setting up a National Science Foundation. Its endorsement by so many prominent scientists has presented to the Congress and to the country how jealously the scientist maintains his conviction that scientific endeavor shall, under no circumstances, be trammelled or regimented by government or by any individual.

At the same time it behooves us to assist in the formulation of a bill which comes within the framework of accepted constitutional procedure. There should be no need for dividing into two camps. We have every right to differ on details, but the proposition is so big that we surely can agree on the big principles for the embodiment of a federally sponsored foundation in which adequate freedom of scientific enterprise will be maintained.

Several suggestions come to mind for the appointment of the top administration of the proposed Foundation. One is that two panels of names be prepared by the National Academy of Sciences, which should set up a mechanism for receiving nominations from accredited scientific societies. The President might then appoint the Administrator and the Advisory Board from the two panels. It is hoped that amendments now under consideration will achieve the desired result, namely, a National Science or Research Foundation the operations of which will be guided by the experience and wisdom of scientists, and in which scientists themselves will be induced to take responsibility commensurate with their experience and wisdom.

S. 1720 vs. S. 1777

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S. 1720 IS UNDERGOING FINAL REVISION and redrafting, and there is every reason to believe that the bill which reaches the floor of the Senate will be acceptable to the vast majority of scientists. The bill was distributed widely in Subcommittee Report No. 7, with an invitation to submit constructive suggestions. It was evident that S. 1720 had effectively met the more serious criticisms that had been directed at S. 1285 and S. 1297, and that opposition to S. 1720 as a whole on the part of any group

would merely be regarded as obstructionism. At the same time, despite the marked improvement in the new draft, several minor provisions and at least two major ones called for further discussion.

For this purpose Senator Elbert D. Thomas, of Utah, arranged a preliminary meeting at which Messrs. Bush and Bowman discussed differences with Senators Kilgore, Magnuson, and Thomas. A more formal meeting was held on 23 January with Senator Saltonstall presiding. Although some question has

arisen regarding the propriety of giving representatives of the Committee Supporting the Bush Report a hearing practically to the exclusion of other interested groups, the procedure was expedient and practical. The Committee for a National Science Foundation, which draws more widely among scientific fields for its support, had indicated its acceptance of the major provisions of S. 1720; hence, it was important to get the viewpoint of the Committee Supporting the Bush Report, which had at one time entertained the idea of opposing any bill except S. 1285.

Although it is unsafe to predict the changes which will be made in the provisions of S. 1720 by the time it is reported out of committee, there is now unanimity among scientists regarding the need for a National Science Foundation. The Committee Supporting the Bush Report recognized that the President cannot be restricted in his appointive powers and is satisfied that a strong board which may submit nominations for the post of Administrator, and which can check or balance the Administrator at crucial times, will adequately protect scientists from possible political control or domination.

SOCIAL SCIENCE

This Committee is still convinced that the Social Sciences should not be included in the Foundation, but chiefly because of the fear that lack of definition and vagueness in stated aims and functions in the field may militate against the passage of the bill. The fact is that the social scientists, through the Social Science Research Council, are ready and willing to define their field, their aims, and their functions and will welcome the opportunity to accept the same rigorous standards as apply in the physical, biological, and medical fields.

PATENTS

Even on the issue of patents it is unanimously agreed that the patent provisions of S. 1720 are basically sound; that they do not involve patent reform or new legislation; and that the purpose of the bill to standardize patent policy within the government agencies is worthy of support. Here again the fear is expressed that such provisions will arouse opposition which will jeopardize the entire bill.

REMAINING QUESTION

Whether or not these fears are well founded, the question still remains: Should desirable elements be excluded in committee on the chance that they may generate some opposition on the floor? Any answer to this question must be qualified. If such provisions are irrelevant, it is foolhardy to load the bill with them. If they expose the bill to a serious risk of

defeat, they may wisely be sacrificed. But if they are desirable provisions, the political expediency of scrapping them before the existence of opposition is known or its strength ascertained is doubtful.

At this moment other hazards appear more serious than these. The Senate is becoming increasingly preoccupied with other matters, and the interest which was evident last fall has waned. The House is scarcely aware of the proposed legislation; and with sentiment for economy rising, it can easily consign the bill to painless death in committee. There is comparatively little public pressure upon Senate or House to pass such legislation, and even though many scientists have written interested Senators, the impression given has been one of internal dissension, which provides a dubious background for Congressional action.

A NEW HAZARD

Without question the most serious hazard which must be faced comes unexpectedly from a new quarter. On 30 January Senator Willis (Ind.), with Senators Hart (Conn.), Hawkes (N. J.), Hickenlooper (Ia.), Smith (N. J.), Stanfill (Ky.), Wiley (Wis.), and Young (N. D.), introduced S. 1777 into the Senate. The Bill proposes that the President appoint a self-perpetuating committee of 50 from a list of nominees submitted by the National Academy of Science for the purpose of administering a limited program of scientific activity. This solemn proposal ignores the work performed by Vannevar Bush and his committees; by Senators Kilgore and Magnuson and their respective subcommittees and staffs; by more than 100 scientists who prepared and presented testimony at the October hearings; by more than 100 scientific organizations which have painstakingly studied the bills already before us; by the Committee Supporting the Bush Report, which has ardently worked in behalf of an excellent report, which S. 1777 would at best duplicate; by the Committee for a National Science Foundation, which has had the single aim of assuring the creation of a Foundation based upon studies already made.

After all this work has been done eight Senators, who have had no previous connection with science legislation and who have offered no evidence of knowing anything about it, ask their 88 colleagues to consider a \$100,000 appropriation to appoint a new committee of 50 to make "an initial report and recommendation to Congress." This has already been done gratis, by the eminent professional men who have contributed to the final draft of S. 1720.

It is to be hoped that scientists will not leave the sponsors of S. 1777 long in doubt regarding the value they place upon this bill.