Letters to the Editor

A Plea for Stabilized Progress

Government inevitably reflects the mind of Main Street. Among the laymen, and therefore in government circles, the practical aspects of atomic fission appear to have produced four characteristic, if not correlative, reactions: (1) a vague, yet realistic, fear; (2) concomitant or subsequent attempts to escape from reality by clinging to national and local tradition; (3) a consuming interest in the mechanics and destructive potentialities of the bomb; and (4) futile gestures toward keeping secret the methods of manufacture and design.

There is considerable likelihood that these elements of reaction may combine to swing the pendulum of science from obscurity to sustained and revered leadership. Scientists may be lavished with all the respect and eulogy previously accorded generals. It is pertinent, therefore, that we be prepared to advise the public politically before the first limelight fades. Profs. Einstein, Urey, and others have already indicated the dire necessity for world government as the only plausible defense against the atomic bomb. But how to implement a solution of the social and organizational problems involved? We vaguely and categorically satisfy ourselves with the ends and leave the means to "society," "politics," or other social abstraction.

Our logical co-worker in this regard is the social scientist, for his background consists of the history of human relationship and a knowledge of present social conditions and trends. His equipment for dealing with outworn and positively dangerous traditional thinking should be ideal. Perhaps he can shed light on the problems necessarily accompanying, and peculiar to, the establishment of permanent peace.

Raymond E. Bassett (*Science*, 1946, 103, 25–26) confirms the similarity of method inherent in sociological, and in physical, biological, and medical investigations. Mutual cooperation, therefore, could be maintained on a common footing to the ultimate satisfaction of both groups, and a coordinated solution to world problems might be effected.

In order that science may proceed on a comprehensive and safe basis, it seems not unreasonable to suggest for the two scientific groups a 50–50 relationship. This would involve an equal sharing of government appropriations, a more equitable distribution of offices within the more broadly constructed scientific societies and organizations, and unremitting requests to the public and Government for impartial support of scientific projects, regardless of social or physical classification.

Unfortunately, with the rapid and not always well-deliberated shifting of public opinion, physical science may become a disproportionate public fad, and the social scientist may be lost in the shuffle.

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Broadcasting Congressional Sessions

A continuous radio broadcast of all open Congressional proceedings would do more than almost anything else to intelligently arouse, enlighten, and interest the American people in the preservation of the American way of life.

We have the technical power to place a microphone at every congressman's desk and provide a place on our radio bands for democracy in action at its roots. The cost involved would be trivial compared to the value to our country.

If those men of science who approve of this plan would approach their governmental representatives and radio executives and interest their friends in doing likewise, considerable influence would be directed towards the attainment of a continuous radio broadcast of all Congressional sessions.

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Federal Aid for Scientific Research

The importance of federal aid for scientific research is again stressed by publication in the *New York Times* (14 February) of a "top secret" letter from German Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz admitting, in the fall of 1943, that American and British scientists had defeated the U-boat campaign through "superiority in the field of science." He said: "It is essential to our victory that we make good our scientific disparity and thereby restore to the U-boat its fighting qualities."

While scientists are practically unanimous in favoring federal aid for research, many are apt to be misled by idealistic declarations in the preambles of proposed legislation or in the statements of Committees, and thereupon assume that whatever the bill itself proposes, or the small executive group of the Committee decides upon, will really be helpful in attaining the ideals advocated. While nominally having the right of criticism, many, if not most, of these well-meaning persons fail to consider in detail what is actually expressed or implied in a bill, and may thus find themselves used as "rubber-stamp" sponsors for practical results which, on sober reflection, they would abhor.

After securing a copy of the bill S. 1720 and making a careful analysis of it, I read (*Science*, 1946, 103, 161) that S. 1720 is undergoing final redrafting; so that perhaps my comment may be moot. But I cannot take the naive view (expressed in *Science*, 1946, 103, 104) that techniques of administration are unimportant. As I understand it, S. 1720 places very great power and financial patronage in the hands of appointees and appointees of appointees. Even though Sec. 4 (f) of S. 1720 says that all "officers and employees of the Foundation, shall be chosen without regard to their political affiliations