

A United Front for S. 1850

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New developments are appearing which go far toward endangering enactment of S. 1850. And it is this bill which combines those provisions of the original Kilgore and Magnuson Bills meeting the approval of the great majority of scientists in this country. The AAAS Council at the St. Louis meeting voted 223 to 10 in support of the bill. Moreover, the Committee Supporting the Bush Report published a statement (*Science*, 1946, 103, 558), as an appeal to Congress on behalf of the 5,000 scientists who had signed the letter to the President favoring the Magnuson Bill, saying that the Committee endorsed the combined Kilgore-Magnuson Bill, S. 1850. This appeal, with the 5,000 endorsements, was mailed to the President and Congress on 23 April 1946. S. 1850 was approved by a majority of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs and has been on the Senate calendar since early April of this year.

Of the two disturbing factors which have recently appeared, one is the "Minority Views of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs," presented by Mr. Bridges and signed by Senators Austin, Bridges, Wilson, Revercomb, and Hart. This document (Calendar No. 1153, Report 1136—Pt. 2) can be obtained from the Government Printing Office. It attacks several of the provisions in the constitution of S. 1850. It claims that the state responsibility of education and learning will be brought under the domination of the Federal Government, and that the proposed administrator will be a veritable Czar of Science. It is fearful of the strain entailed on the already dangerously overbalanced budget of the Nation, citing as an example of climbing costs that Federal research in 1940 amounted to \$70,000,000 and by 1944 was \$700,000,000! The absurd criticisms make one wonder regarding the intelligence of the writer of the "Minority Views."

The other disturbing factor is the appearance of a new bill, H.R. 6448 (also obtainable from the Government Printing Office), sponsored by Representative Wilbur Mills. This is actually a revision of the original Magnuson Bill calling for a Board appointed by the President assisted, I understand, by the National Academy of Sciences. In a report which appeared in the *New York Times*, 29 May, the statement is made that the House Bill 6448 is expected to supersede S. 1850. H.R. 6448 attempts to reduce governmental supervision to a minimum; it seriously restricts provisions for a Division of the Social Sci-

ences; it eliminates mandatory geographical distribution of funds to state-supported and land grant colleges, whereas S. 1850 provides for a more thorough distribution of funds throughout the country than we have at present; it eliminates provisions affecting the Government's patent policy which, in S. 1850, has been approved of by those competent to do so. In brief, H.R. 6448 again presents us with a sort of bill already objected to by many who were critical of the original Magnuson Bill. On the other hand, it eliminates those features which were deplored by the Committee Supporting the Bush Report in their recent statement purporting to be an appeal to Congress to enact S. 1850.

H.R. 6448 again opens up the controversy between scientists who had taken sides for and against the Kilgore and Magnuson Bills—a controversy which we had hoped had been settled by a combined bill acceptable to the greatest possible majority. A still worse feature is that hearings were held in Washington on 28 May at which Isaiah Bowman, chairman of the Committee Supporting the Bush Report, and others of the same Committee presented testimonies in favor of the bill. The impression given was that their testimonies constitute the opinion of scientists at large. Why was the Committee appointed by the Council of the AAAS at St. Louis in March not brought into the testimony? The testimony apparently did not include those who were active in revising the Kilgore Bill.

From the 3 May statement made by the Committee Supporting the Bush Report, we read:

We believe that the creation of a National Science Foundation to support fundamental scientific research and the education of scientists is of the utmost importance for the health, security, and welfare of the nation. . . . Believing the matter to be of great urgency . . . we endorse this bill and appeal now to the Congress as a whole to create a National Science Foundation by the enactment of S. 1850. . . .

Now a few influential members of this Committee appear to be in favor of something which will hamper the very stand the Committee took in the statement just quoted! Senators and Congressmen may introduce difficulties concerning S. 1850, but, at least, the scientists should be unified in the support of a single bill. The one bill which has the widest support is S. 1850.