

Association Affairs

Centennial Meeting of the AAAS, 1948

On September 20, 1848, the American Association for the Advancement of Science was formally established. Next year, by vote of the Executive Committee of the Council, it will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its founding in a meeting to be held in Washington from September 13 to September 17, inclusive.

The centenary of the Association will not be simply an occasion for reviewing its hundred years of achievements; the times call for more serious purposes. The future of civilization appears to depend in large measure on science, and consequently the Association faces much heavier responsibilities to society than it has heretofore anticipated. Clearly, the centennial celebration next year may appropriately pay tribute to our predecessors, but it should also critically examine the present and make plans for an arduous future.

At a meeting a few weeks ago the Executive Committee appointed the following Centennial Policy Committee to draw up general plans for the Association's centenary next year: Harlow Shapley (chairman), E. W. Sinnott, E. U. Condon, Roger Williams, W. M. Stanley, James Gilluly, J. M. Hutzel, and F. R. Moulton. The Committee was instructed to formulate plans for (a) the Centennial Meeting, (b) the Centennial Membership Drive, and (c) the Centennial Fund Campaign. This report will be limited to the first of the three duties imposed upon the Committee.

As a general theme for the Centennial Meeting the Committee chose *One World of Science*, meaning by these words that science is the same throughout the world, irrespective of language, politics, and race, and meaning, also, that this unity in science provides rapidly expanding nuclei of men having mutual understanding, respect and cooperation—the only promising foundation for permanent peace.

In order to make effective plans for carrying out the general policies adopted by the Committee, it was decided to organize three quite distinct types of programs, one type for the mornings, another for the afternoons, and still another for

evenings. It will be sufficient to characterize briefly the three kinds of programs, which, because of their nature, make it obviously inadvisable to arrange concurrent sessions for any of the affiliated or associated societies.

At the first evening session on Monday, September 13, 1948, Dr. Harlow Shapley will deliver his address as retiring president of the Association. It is hoped that the President of the United States will be present at this meeting and that he will welcome the Association to Washington and express his appreciation of the contributions scientists are making to human welfare. Other governmental officials of high rank are expected to be present on this occasion, for a justice of the Supreme Court, an ex-president of the United States, a United States senator, as well as hundreds of other governmental officials and employees in Washington, are members of the Association.

It is expected, also, that representatives of all the foreign embassies will attend this first evening session, and many other sessions as well. This expectation rests partly on the clear realization of all that there is "one world of science" in which their peoples participate, and also on the fact that the Association has members in 76 foreign countries.

It is expected that many prominent residents of Washington who are not professional scientists will also attend the first evening session, and other sessions, for they know how greatly society is indebted to science and how much the great scientific societies whose headquarters are in Washington add to the life and culture of this capital city.

Following Dr. Shapley's address there will be a reception with high-ranking governmental officials and members of the diplomatic corps, as well as presidents and past-presidents of the Association, in the receiving line. This notable occasion obviously will be in tune with the theme that there is but "one world of science," a phrase of only four words on which, when fully understood, the highest hopes for the future of mankind rest.

The morning sessions, as outlined by

the Centennial Policy Committee, will consist of broad symposia on the major fields of science, participated in by the foremost authorities and intended to be major contributions to the exposition and integration of science. Since the meeting will be limited to five days, it is expected that several morning programs in different fields will be presented simultaneously. The afternoons, according to plans, will be devoted to prearranged visits to the numerous scientific laboratories, libraries, art galleries, and educational and governmental institutions with which Washington abounds.

It would be impossible for the officers of the Association to achieve the possibilities the centenary offers without the full cooperation and assistance of many scientific organizations and scientists in Washington. Invitations were sent out a few weeks ago to the chief executive officers of all the leading governmental, scientific, and cultural agencies in Washington and environs to accept membership in the Honorary Local Planning Committee and to appoint representatives of their respective organizations on the active committees as they are organized. The replies received were gratifying. Not only have the invitations been almost universally accepted, but nearly all of the acceptances have contained very cordial words of approval and expressions of pleasure in rendering the desired assistance. The general committee has met, with 27 members in attendance, and a subcommittee on planning has drawn up specifications for 12 special committees whose duties range from finance to entertainment. Preparations for the Centennial Meeting of the Association next year are well under way.

What does the extraordinary interest in the Association's centenary mean? It means that the Association and its purposes are approved. More importantly, it means the general realization, though not expressed, that there is "One World of Science."

F. R. MOULTON
Administrative Secretary