

Inter-Society Committee for a National Science Foundation:

Report of the Meeting of December 28, 1947

Dael Wolfe, *Secretary-Treasurer*

THE SECOND MEETING OF THE Inter-Society Committee for a National Science Foundation, held in Chicago at 10 A.M. on December 28, 1947, was attended by 42 representatives of the member associations and 33 observers.

The treasurer reported that contributions to the Committee had totaled \$2,735.00, that expenses had been \$1,851.39, and that the balance was \$883.61.

Harlow Shapley reported for the Executive Committee a series of recent conferences with Senator H. Alexander Smith, Representative John H. Wolverton, representatives of the Bureau of the Budget, and Dr. Vannevar Bush. During these conferences a proposed new bill was drafted. Although the basis used was S.526 as it was passed by the Senate and House of Representatives in 1947, that bill was modified in several respects in order to take account of the objections which President Truman had expressed in his veto message.

The Committee discussed at some length the details of the revised bill, the size of the possible appropriation for a National Science Foundation, and the possibility of introducing greater changes into S.526 than those described by Dr. Shapley.

W. P. Anslow (speaking for Homer Smith) presented a statement prepared by a number of persons formerly active in the Committee in Support of the Bush Report. The statement read:

We recommend S.526 with modifications and amendments as follows:

(1) We think a 9-man Board would be better than a 24-man Board.

(2) We propose an amendment which would give the President the power to appoint the Director after receiving nominations from the Board, and which would give him the power to remove the Director.

(3) The provision for the Interdepartmental Committee should be amended to place the direction of its activities directly under the President's authority.

(4) The provisions for special commissions seem unnecessary and should be eliminated.

These recommendations are not presented as something to be urged upon the Committee, but as a point of view which, it is hoped, will be given serious consideration. The above recommendations have been endorsed during the past week by Dr. Roger Adams, Dr. Boris A. Bakhmetcheff, President Isaiah Bowman, Dean Charles E. MacQuigg, Dr. Walter W. Palmer, Dr. Homer W. Smith, and Mr. Bethuel M. Webster.

Discussion of this statement brought out the agreement between its first and second recommendations and the compromise proposed last May by the Inter-Society Committee and transmitted to all congressmen directly involved in preparing the legislation. The third recommendation had already been cared for through the creation by Executive Order of an Interdepartmental Science Committee. As to the fourth, Dr. Shapley suggested to Senator Smith the dropping of the special commissions and discovered that these provisions arose through the particular interest of individual congressmen in legislation for specific medical researches.

W. M. Higinbotham read two resolutions proposed by the Federation of American Scientists. The resolutions were:

RESOLVED that the Federation of American Scientists urges the continuance of a vigorous program by the Inter-Society Committee for a National Science Foundation, to ensure:

(1) Legislation creating an effective agency for national support of scientific research and training.

(2) Effective assistance by scientists to such an organization once established.

RESOLVED that the Federation of American Scientists urges the Inter-Society Committee to work for National Science Foundation legislation embodying the following:

(1) An organization integrated into the Federal Government, with a full-time administrator appointed by the President, and with direct responsibility for disbursement of Federal funds; and assisted by an advisory council from representative fields of science, government, and the public.

(2) Specific assignment to the Foundation of responsibility for formulation of national science policies, with the right and duty to survey public and private research, and to make recommendations for its coordination.

(3) Full discretionary power for the Foundation to set up necessary divisions and commissions without prior legislative enumeration.

(4) Pending the establishment of a general education program, responsibility of the Foundation for developing the Nation's scientific personnel through scholarships and fellowships.

(5) Provision for distribution on a geographic and population basis, to privately and publicly supported institutions alike, of part of the funds allotted for support of research and for training of personnel.

(6) Authority for the Foundation to publish and disseminate to scientists and the public results of scientific

inquiry, and to promote international scientific cooperation.

(7) Free availability or dedication to the public of all patentable discoveries made during research financed through the Foundation.

(8) Provision that all research supported by the Foundation be nonsecret.

(9) Provision for a military liaison committee to ensure that results of research supported by the Foundation are brought promptly to the attention of military agencies.

Discussion by the members of the Inter-Society Committee indicated that the specific provisions of the second resolution were considered more desirable by many scientists than were the provisions of S.526. Agreement between some of the recommendations contained in the resolution and the results of the poll conducted in March 1947 by the Inter-Society Committee was emphasized. However, the prevailing opinion appeared to be that decision on the action which should be taken in attempting to incorporate these recommendations into the proposed legislation should be left to the discretion of the Executive Committee.

Chairman Day reported that it was the unanimous recommendation of the Executive Committee that the Inter-Society Committee lend its support to the adoption of a bill similar to S.526, but changed to take account of the President's objections as stated in his veto message last summer (*Science*, September 12, 1947, p. 237). Except for these changes, he advised leaving the bill as nearly as possible in the form in which Congress had already passed it. He expressed the hope that such a bill would be introduced in identical form in both houses of Congress and that it would be adopted as a bipartisan measure.

A motion was made that the Executive Committee be given authority to act in the name of the Committee as a whole, following the policy outlined by Chairman Day or modifying that policy if modification

seemed desirable to the Executive Committee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The Chairman suggested that the Committee elect new officers. It was moved that the existing membership of the Executive Committee be continued. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

It was moved and seconded that the Inter-Society Committee be dissolved upon the enactment of a satisfactory National Science Foundation act. In opposition to this motion, several members pointed out that the Committee might be able to make recommendations concerning the personnel of the Foundation and that it was impossible at this time to know what functions the Committee might be able to perform if a National Science Foundation becomes law. Upon vote, the motion lost.

It was then moved that the Executive Committee convene a meeting of the Committee as a whole as soon as possible after the passage of the bill if a National Science Foundation act is adopted. The motion was seconded and passed.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 P.M.

Adjournment of the Committee as a whole was followed by a meeting of the Executive Committee. Present were Chairman Day, Vice-chairman Shapley, Secretary-Treasurer Wolfe, and Members-at-large Gerard, Gustavson, and Whitaker. C. G. Suits was absent. The Executive Committee agreed upon the desirability of preparing a list of persons to be proposed to the President for membership on the National Science Foundation if and when one is established. It was agreed that the Committee's recommendations should be ready for submission immediately upon enactment of the proposed legislation. The secretary-treasurer was therefore instructed to send to all members of the Committee a request for nominations and to submit the list of nominees to the members of the Committee for final voting on those to be recommended to the President.

