Three Annual Reports

OF THE numerous annual reports that have reached the editorial office of the AAAS in recent weeks it would be difficult to select three that are more divergent than the *82nd Annual Report of the American Museum of Natural History,* the *Annual Report for 1951* (presumably the 41st) of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the *First Annual Report of the National Science Foundation.*

Founded in 1869, the Museum has built up a modest endowment of $16,000,000, has a budget approximating $3,000,000, and a gross income of $2,800,000, of which $1,000,000 is contributed by the City of New York. Dealing essentially with specimens and with their original functional role in nature, the Museum staff is not only concerned with scientific exposition and popular display, but also with those fundamental aspects of pure science—evolution and ecology—which give meaning, order, and educational value to collections that have been painstakingly and imaginatively assembled over a period of 82 years.

Unlike the American Museum of Natural History, the Carnegie Corporation of New York is backed by a basic endowment of $135,000,000, which good management has increased to $160,000,000. In the year ended September 30, 1951, $6,435,944 was disbursed for the "advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding." Believing that established institutions are best equipped to carry out these functions, the trustees gave 70 per cent of the total to universities and colleges, and substantial fractions of it went to aid the "uncommitted investigator," to accelerate the tempo of research in the social sciences, to improve education, and to find and develop administrative talent.

The National Science Foundation has, as is to be expected, little to report but much to sell. Created by act of Congress on May 10, 1950, it had no formal existence until its board was appointed and held its first meeting on December 12, 1950. It had no director until April 6, 1951, and its first fiscal year ended June 30, 1951, with $152,951 of its $225,000 appropriation obligated. The appropriation troubles of its second year are well known to readers of SCIENCE, and it now faces budgetary uncertainties for its third year beginning July 1, 1952. Congress will do well to ponder the slender 31-page annual report.

Entrusted with the important task of promoting and supporting basic research and education in the sciences, its financial resources for the current fiscal year are 0.14 per cent of this country's total expenditure for research and development, a scant 60 per cent of the funds available to the Carnegie Corporation, and only 16 2/3 per cent more than is expended to operate New York City's American Museum of Natural History. Like the Carnegie Corporation, the Foundation stresses the fact that discoveries in science are in the same category as wildcat drilling for oil, and that the surest approach to success is through the discovery and development of latent talent in every part of the nation.

Noting the study of Knapp and Goodrich (SCIENCE, **113**, 543 [1951]), in which the vital contribution of first-class brainpower on the part of the small liberal arts colleges was so effectively demonstrated, the report pledges Foundation aid to small institutions to enable them to train more and better men with better facilities. Except to those who direct research or train researchers, it is not easy to sell the thought that results are a function of individual talent, carefully schooled under optimum conditions. Yet this point of view is clearly a cardinal principle that guides the trustees of the Carnegie Corporation, and it is the keystone of the American Museum's program and success. It is to be hoped that the Congress will take its cue from privately supported institutions and give adequate public support to the organization that can do most to evolve a national science policy and world leadership in science and technology.

H. A. MEYERHOFF

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