Prizes and Awards

ELSEWHERE in this issue appears the first public announcement of the AAAS–Anne Frankel Rosenthal Memorial Award for Cancer Research, a new award to be made for the first time at the 1955 annual meeting. A few weeks ago [*Science,* 11 March 1955] the Association announced the resumption of the annual Socio-Psychological Prize, which is now financed on a long-term basis by an anonymous donor who wishes to stimulate the wider use in the socio-psychological area of the kind of rigorous methodology that has proved so fruitful in the natural sciences.

Each such research award poses problems, and not all awards that have been offered to the Association have been accepted. Beyond the fact that the administration of an award is a costly affair in terms of the amount of time devoted to it by already busy judges is the more important question of whether the award will in fact accomplish its purpose of stimulating better research. In the case of these two awards the answer will not be known for some years.

If they succeed as well as have the Association's older awards, the money and time will have been first-rate investments. The AAAS–George Westinghouse Science Writing Awards, although no longer being awarded, are generally credited with having had a worth-while effect in stimulating and rewarding excellence in science writing.

The Theobald Smith Award in Medical Sciences was started in 1936 and has been awarded 10 times. It goes to a person under the age of 36 for research in the medical sciences that shows independence of thought and originality. The award is supported by Eli Lilly and Company.

The oldest of the Association's awards is the Newcomb Cleveland Prize. Started in 1923, the award was made for the 27th time at the Berkeley meeting. It is given, preferably to a younger scientist, in recognition of an outstanding contribution to science, which is reported at the Association's annual meeting.

Last December at Berkeley, after the 1954 winner, D. H. Alpert, had been presented with a check for $1000, and after the news photographers and reporters had kept him busy for an hour or so, George Beadle and I started reminiscing about previous winners. They are a distinguished group. Three have since won Nobel prizes. H. J. Muller won the Association's Thousand Dollar Prize, as it was known until after the modest donor died in 1927, and a Nobel prize in 1946; Wendell Stanley, the 1936 winner, received a Nobel prize in 1946; and I. I. Rabi, who received the Association's prize in 1939, became a Nobel laureate 5 years later. Other winners, although not so fortunate as to have their names on the Nobel list, have continued to make distinguished contributions to science; L. E. Dickson, E. P. Hubble, D. C. Miller, G. D. Birkhoff, A. J. Dempster, M. A. Tuve, L. R. Hafstad, and others illustrate the high caliber of the roster.

Rabi, the most recent of the group to be honored by a Nobel award, was the 22nd winner of the Association's prize; three Nobel laureates out of 22 men selected by the award committees is a proud record. How much the Association's prize helped these men to greater achievements no one can say. But their contributions and the fact that one in seven of them have since received the highest honor that can come to a scientist must be an inspiration to the 17 men and women who have been awarded the Association's prize since Rabi received it in 1939.

Beyond the effects on individual winners is the larger effect on scientists as a whole. Although an individual does not compete for these prizes as athletes compete for Olympic medals, their existence adds a bit to the pleasures of research for its own sake. And to the public at large they are an annually recurring reminder of the importance of fundamental research.—D. W.

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