

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

Board of Directors

PAUL B. SEARS, *President*
LAURENCE H. SNYDER, *President Elect*
GEORGE W. BEADLE, *Retiring President*
WALLACE R. BRODE
PAUL M. GROSS
GEORGE R. HARRISON
MARK H. INGRAHAM
PAUL E. KLOPSTEG
CHAUNCEY D. LEAKE
MARGARET MEAD
THOMAS PARK
PAUL A. SCHERER, *Treasurer*
DAEL WOLFLE, *Executive Officer*

DAEL WOLFLE, *Executive Officer*
GRAHAM DUSHANE, *Editor*
CHARLOTTE V. MEETING, *Assistant Editor*

Editorial Board

MARK H. ADAMS KARL LARK-HOROVITZ
WALLACE R. BRODE EDWIN M. LERNER
BENTLEY GLASS WILLIAM L. STRAUS, JR.

Editorial Staff

SARAH S. DEES, JUNE M. FORBES, OLIVER W.
HEATWOLE, YUKIE KOZAI, JEAN MCCARTHY,
ELIZABETH MCGOVERN, DAVIS S. MOORE, ELLEN E.
MURPHY, ROBERT V. ORMES, BETHSABE PEDERSEN,
MADELINE SCHNEIDER, JOSEPH TURNER, JACQUELYN
VOLLMER

EARL J. SCHERAGO, *Advertising Representative*

SCIENCE founded in 1880, is published each Friday by the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Business Press, Lancaster, Pa. Entered at the Lancaster, Pa., Post Office as second class matter under the Act of 3 March 1879.

SCIENCE is indexed in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* and in the *Industrial Arts Index*.

Editorial and personnel-placement correspondence should be addressed to SCIENCE, 1515 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington 5, D.C. Manuscripts should be typed with double spacing and submitted in duplicate. The AAAS assumes no responsibility for the safety of manuscripts or for the opinions expressed by contributors. For detailed suggestions on the preparation of manuscripts, book reviews, and illustrations, see *Science* 123, 714 (27 Apr. 1956).

Display-advertising correspondence should be addressed to SCIENCE, Room 604, 11 West 42 St., New York 36, N.Y.

Change of address: The notification should reach us 4 weeks in advance. If possible, please furnish an address stencil label from a recent issue. Be sure to give both old and new addresses, including zone numbers, if any.

Annual subscriptions: \$7.50; foreign postage, \$1; Canadian postage, 50¢. Single copies, 25¢. Special rates to members of the AAAS. Cable address: Advancesci, Washington.

The AAAS also publishes THE SCIENTIFIC MONTHLY.

A National Medical Library

From 1836 to 1952 the Armed Forces Medical Library developed under the auspices of the Army. Since 1952 it has been under the control of the Department of Defense. Thanks to a series of able directors, the library has operated effectively. However, if a solution to the problem of limited budgets and insufficient space is not found, a difficult task may become an impossible one.

Research workers in the medical and biological sciences know about the Armed Forces Medical Library chiefly through its notable publication, the *Current List of Medical Literature*, in which something over 100,000 articles are listed annually. The library's collections total nearly 1 million volumes, and its accessions, which include more than 10,000 serial publications, come in at the rate of nearly 100,000 pieces per year. During 1955 the library filled more than 37,000 requests for books for interlibrary loans and more than 92,000 orders for photoduplications (photostats and microfilms).

The building in which the library is housed is a red brick monstrosity dating from one of the sorriest periods of American architecture. It is unusual for a period of more than a few months to pass before another leak is sprung in the antique roof; the stacks are so nearly full that a great deal of reshelving has to be done to take care of accessions; space available in the building today will be completely filled in 2 years; and, what is probably of the greatest importance, the collections are in constant danger of destruction by fire.

In July 1955 the Congress recognized the need for action, but its intentions were not carried out. An appropriation bill was passed, which authorized an expenditure of \$350,000 for architects' plans for the library. In December 1955 the Department of Defense decided not to include any appropriations for building a new library in its budget request for fiscal 1957. Accordingly, the Navy's Bureau of Yards and Docks (there are some administrative complications here) was advised not to ask for apportionment of the funds for architects' plans already appropriated by the Congress.

If the library is, as many have contended, a national medical library, then it is appropriate that it should be an independent branch of the Federal Government, as recommended by the Task Force on Federal Medical Services of the Hoover Commission. The Task Force went on to say that "The needs of a National Library of Medicine are neither in theory or practice familiar to, or a natural concern of, the Department of Defense."

Senators Hill and Kennedy have recently introduced a bill (S. 3430) that embodies many of the recommendations of the Task Force. They propose the creation of a "National Library of Medicine," which is to be governed by a board of regents made up of 12 people appointed by the President and, as ex officio representatives, the surgeons general of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and Public Health Service, and the librarian of Congress. The board would be authorized to have plans drawn for an appropriate building, to choose the site, and to condemn land, if necessary.

We join numerous others in urging the Congress to act favorably on this bill during the present session. A National Medical Library properly housed would be a great national asset for medicine and related sciences and for the general public.—G. DuS.

