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Wish You Were Here

It takes more than a casual stopover in the magnificent new AAAS headquarters building to know your association. If each member could enjoy the privilege, as I did, of working with the staff, the board of directors, and others engaged in the association's varied activities, his appreciation of AAAS and his loyalty to it would be greatly enhanced.

Individual members may not have paused to reflect on the difficulties involved in the services performed by an organization which must somehow satisfy a diversity of specialized interests within the larger framework of all the sciences. If they could see the program as a whole, they would realize that it is far more than a compromise of special interests; it is a sound, effectively functioning unit.

The program is evolving, and the rate of desirable mutations has been appreciably accelerated during the 4 years I have been in a position to see them occur. A brief review will show not only changes but trends.

The expanded efforts of the AAAS in the field of science education are probably of greatest importance. The Science Teaching Improvement Program has already made a contribution—in less than a year—to the improvement of science teaching and the recruiting of more high-school teachers. The trial year for the Traveling Science Libraries for Small High Schools ended with reports showing enough influence on young people to justify planning for its continuance. The issuing of a recommended list of books this year should give real impetus to a movement for making scientific reading material of general interest and high quality available to high-school and college students. A new kind of Junior Scientists Assembly at our annual meetings has proved to be a promising innovation. Youth in the area where the meeting is held have an opportunity to meet and hear leading scientists, watch interesting demonstrations, and participate in panel discussions.

The symposium volume series has been modernized in format and has been placed on a more efficient and sound financial basis—without appreciable increases in book prices. More important, the methods for careful development and critical appraisal of the content of the volumes have been thoroughly reorganized.

Finally, during my tenure, the AAAS entered the field of international meetings with the successful direction of the International Arid Lands Meetings in New Mexico in 1955. It is hoped that additional interdisciplinary sessions of this kind can be conducted in the future—perhaps one on marine science, for example.

Among other avenues of service being actively explored is the education of the public about science—its aims, methods, and its basic principles. The development of this program, because of its complexity, requires careful planning and adequate financing. Plans for a series of popular science books are well advanced and will represent an initial step in this field.

The news has been getting around. Membership in the AAAS, after a static period, has started upward again. I regret that I shall now be watching future progress from the sidelines.—JOHN A. BEHNKE, *Associate Administrative Secretary*