

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION  
FOR THE  
ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

Board of Directors

PAUL E. KLOPFSTEG, *President*  
CHAUNCEY D. LEAKE, *President Elect*  
WALLACE R. BRODE, *Retiring President*  
H. BENTLEY GLASS  
GEORGE R. HARRISON  
MARGARET MEAD  
THOMAS PARK  
DON K. PRICE  
MINA REES  
WILLIAM W. RUBEY  
ALAN T. WATERMAN  
PAUL A. SCHERER, *Treasurer*  
DAEL WOLFLE, *Executive Officer*

DAEL WOLFLE, *Executive Officer*  
GRAHAM DUSHANE, *Editor*  
JOSEPH TURNER, *Assistant Editor*  
ROBERT V. ORMES, *Assistant Editor*

Editorial Board

DONALD J. HUGHES     H. BURR STEINBACH  
KONRAD B. KRAUSKOPF     WILLIAM L. STRAUS, JR.  
EDWIN M. LERNER     EDWARD L. TATUM

Editorial Staff

JUNE G. BANDY, CHARLOTTE F. CHAMBERS,  
SARAH S. DEES, NANCY S. HAMILTON, WILLIAM  
HASKELL, OLIVER W. HEATWOLE, YUKIE KOZAI,  
ELLEN E. MURPHY, BETHSABE PEDERSEN, NANCY  
L. TEIMOURIAN, MARIA A. WOLSAK, LOIS W.  
WOODWORTH

EARL J. SCHERAGO, *Advertising Representative*

SCIENCE, which is now combined with THE SCIENTIFIC MONTHLY, is published each Friday by the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Business Press, Lancaster, Pa. The joint journal is published in the SCIENCE format. 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*.

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* 125, 16 (4 Jan. 1957).

Display-advertising correspondence should be addressed to SCIENCE, Room 740, 11 West 42 St., New York 36, N.Y.

Change of address notification should be sent to 1515 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington 5, D.C., 4 weeks in advance. If possible, 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: \$8.50, foreign postage, \$1.50; Canadian postage, 75¢. Single copies, 35¢. Cable address: Advancesci, Washington.



## Fission in the AEC

During the past few years, the feeling has been growing in and out of government that it is unwise to continue centering responsibility for protecting the nation against radiation hazards in the same agency that is responsible for developing nuclear weapons and reactors. Various criticisms of the Atomic Energy Commission's public safety program have been voiced, but the chief argument for a change is an appeal to the principle that regulatory and developmental functions should not be placed in the same hands. The interest in change has now reached critical size.

On 22 August the President assigned to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare "primary responsibility" within the executive branch for the public health aspects of atomic energy. On the same date, the President designated the secretary of HEW as current chairman of the Federal Radiation Council, a unit he had created eight days earlier to help coordinate existing government programs in radiation research. And on the earlier date the President also gave his approval to legislation that if enacted will transfer from the AEC to the states certain safety tasks, with responsibility for federal assistance to the states to go eventually to HEW.

The story of these new developments is a story of advisory committees. A proposal to give the primary role in radiation protection to a group in HEW was made public last March in a report to the surgeon general by a special committee of scientists, the National Advisory Committee on Radiation. A few days later, to obtain advice for himself on questions of radiation control, the President set up a committee consisting of the chairman of the AEC, the secretary of HEW, and the director of the Bureau of the Budget. It was on the basis of recommendations by the latter group that the President gave new responsibilities to HEW and established the Federal Radiation Council. The members of the council are the heads of agencies most significantly involved with radiation, which means again the chairman of the AEC and the secretary of HEW and, in addition, the secretaries of Defense and Commerce. Besides its other tasks, the council will advise the President on public health aspects of radiation, while to advise it the council will have the services of the President's special assistant for science and technology.

The scope of HEW's new activities is indicated by the department's plans to increase expenditures in this area in the Public Health Service and Food and Drug Administration from about \$1 million for fiscal 1959 to \$3.2 million for fiscal 1960, with the possibility of asking Congress for additional funds in January. Spending in the AEC for fiscal 1960 is estimated at \$3.5 million for fallout sampling and analysis and \$2½ million for research in radiation biology. HEW's principal new task is the regular receipt of radiation data from other government agencies and the interpretation of these data for the President and the public.

The present effort to place primary responsibility for radiation protection outside the AEC without unduly disturbing existing research and safety programs looks like a workable solution to a difficult problem. Many organizational details still have to be filled in, however. For example, the principal body up till now for recommending radiation protection standards to federal agencies has been a private but quasi-official group, the National Committee on Radiation Protection. How this advisory body will fit into the new scheme of things is one of the first questions the new Federal Radiation Council must decide.—J.T.