



Edward G. Sherburne, Jr.

It was felt that, although the new staff member should work largely through other agencies, he might well develop independent programs—perhaps seminars to bring together scientists and editors and scientists and television people, for example. Or again, he might set up a consultation service to aid the local groups now being established in a number of cities to provide information on such subjects as water and air pollution, radiation hazards, and fluoridation.

When presented with some of these suggestions, Sherburne expressed himself on a philosophical point that he feels is essential to the development of his office. "The basic ingredient which must underlie a sound program of public education," he says, "is respect for the knowledge to be shared, and the correlates of respect for the specialist sharing it, and for the recipients. While this may be almost a truism, when matched against practice, it is often the basic cause of failure in many efforts."

Sherburne will arrive at AAAS headquarters in mid-March to launch the new program. He will be aided by the AAAS Committee on Public Understanding of Science, which is chaired by Warren Weaver of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Members include Willard Bascom of the National Academy of Sciences, Allen T. Bonnell of the Drexel Institute of Technology, Victor Cohn of the Minneapolis *Star and Tribune*, Laurence M. Gould of Carleton College, Richard D. Heffner of the CBS Television Network, Paul E. Klopsteg of Glenview, Ill. (ex officio Board representative), and Dael Wolfle of the AAAS (ex officio).

SSRS Incorporation Successful

The court in Doylestown, Pa., ruled last month in favor of the Society for Social Responsibility in Science, granting a charter over the opposition of the American Legion. The SSRS applied for a charter in 1957, but the American Legion filed an opposing brief. The court appointed a Master of the Court to review the briefs for each side; the report of the Master was in the society's favor.

Yet the court overruled its own Master and decided against SSRS on the grounds that the wording of its constitution regarding the purpose of the society was vague. The constitution was rewritten to clarify the statement, but the American Legion also objected to the revised version. Months went by, then finally the court decided in favor of SSRS.

The decision makes it possible to apply for tax-exempt status. This status will help the society seek funds from various foundations with which to implement its concerns through various programs. The immediate reason for the incorporation proposal in 1957 was a desire on the part of SSRS to initiate a "Conference on the Constructive Uses of Science," a proposal which may now perhaps move ahead.

Science Foundation Establishes Social Sciences Division

The National Science Foundation has elevated its Office of Social Sciences to divisional status. Henry W. Riecken, on leave of absence from the University of Minnesota to head the office, has been appointed assistant director of the new Division of Social Sciences. (The other divisions of the foundation are the Division of Mathematical, Physical, and Engineering Sciences; the Division of Biological and Medical Sciences; and the Division of Scientific Personnel and Education.)

The change was made in recognition of the need for increased support of fundamental studies in the social sciences, particularly in view of diminishing assistance from other sources. Several large private foundations have either reduced their support of such basic research or have shifted the emphasis of their support in this field to applied research. The National Science Foundation is the major agency of government supporting basic re-

search in the history and philosophy of science, in large areas of anthropology, sociology, and social psychology, and in areas of economics which lend themselves to scientific treatment.

Foundation director Alan T. Waterman pointed out: "The magnitude of the need is indicated by noting that for the past two years the funds granted for support of the social sciences have been only about one-fifth of the funds requested in the form of proposals. The foundation's action indicates its appreciation and recognition of the importance and quality of scientific research in the social sciences and its belief in the sustained growth of these fields."

Division To Have Four Programs

The new division will organize its support of basic research in the social sciences under four programs: (i) anthropological sciences, including ethnology, archeology, linguistics, and physical anthropology; (ii) economic sciences, including econometrics, economic and social geography, the economics of research and innovation, and general mathematical economics; (iii) sociological sciences, including demography, social psychology, psycholinguistics, and the sociology of science; and (iv) a program supporting basic research in the history and philosophy of science.

In addition to achieving a more adequate level of support for the best proposals than has been possible heretofore, the foundation hopes to assist "coherent areas" of social science research. Several requests have been received by the foundation for interdisciplinary basic research aimed at understanding complicated phenomena, such as the structure and acquisition of language; the economic behavior of units within our social system, from the individual to more complex units such as households, firms, and governmental units; and the behavior of social systems and social processes themselves. These requests indicate some of the current frontiers of social science research where rewarding progress may be expected.

Rapid Budget Increase

When the Office of Social Sciences was created in 1958, the annual budget was \$850,000, dispersed among 49 grants. The present budget (fiscal year 1961) is \$3.4 million; this should provide about 130 grants.