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SCIENCE, now combined with THE SCIENTIFIC MONTHLY, is published each Friday by the American Association for the Advancement of Science at National Publishing Company, Washington, D.C. SCIENCE is indexed in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*.

**Editorial 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, see *Science* 125, 16 (4 Jan. 1957).

**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 label from a recent issue. 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.

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## Advising the President on Manpower

The President needs, and gets, advice on a wide variety of matters. Among the more highly institutionalized sources, his Council of Economic Advisers exists by congressional statute, and his Science Advisory Committee by his own decision. His Task Force on Education has advocated an Advisory Committee on Education, and the President himself has hinted at the possibility of a comparable body to consider natural resources.

Before the structure of presidential advisory bodies grows too complex and compartmentalized, it would be well to consider the matter on a more comprehensive basis, or to consider advisory bodies that would deal with wider ranges of topics than any of those yet mentioned. Senator Clark made one such proposal last spring in recommending an Advisory Council on Manpower. He was thinking broadly of the optimal development and utilization of the nation's human resources. The advisers he had in mind would be an integrating force among the several agencies of the government that deal with, advise upon, or directly influence education, economic trends, the labor force, manpower distribution, and kindred matters.

There is a considerable number of such agencies, including the Office of Education, the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the International Cooperation Administration, and the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, and Labor. They offer scholarships or fellowships to attract students into selected professions; they study manpower trends; their policies of utilization, taxation, and military service make some kinds of work more attractive than others. And the government itself employs millions of men and women for many kinds of work in many parts of the world.

When the government itself is doing so much both to study and to influence the development and utilization of the nation's human resources, it becomes almost obligatory to establish means by which the influences and their effects can be viewed as a whole. Because so many independent agencies of government are involved, it is only at the presidential level that responsibility for the over-all view can be exercised. Yet a statutory Advisory Council on Manpower may not be the proper means. Hearings on Senator Clark's bill in June and December elicited a good deal of support for an integrated review of the nation's human resources problems and a good deal of doubt concerning another statutory council of presidential advisers. It would be better, most witnesses agreed, to let the President select his own methods, so long as he accepts responsibility for establishing some adequate means of assuring continuing top-level attention to the vital problems of attaining optimal development and utilization of the nation's greatest source of strength, its wealth of human ability.

The burden of the presidency is already so great that one cannot lightly recommend the addition of a new responsibility. Yet the optimal development and utilization of human ability—the one natural resource for which there is no substitute—is so basic to the achievement of our national purposes and so fundamental an element of the democratic ideal that it is hard to think of a long-range problem more deserving of presidential attention, or more worthy of a periodic presidential report to the Congress and the nation.—D.W.