

Letters

National Science Academy Bill

There is one bill being considered by Congress that has not received as much attention in the scientific community as it deserves. It is HR-1, a bill to establish a national science academy, several research institutes, a scholarship and fellowship program, and a separate career service for government scientists. Enactment of the bill would considerably strengthen science in the United States.

Establishment of the academy would make more and better qualified scientists available for government research positions. The curriculum would include both graduate and undergraduate courses, but it is to be hoped that emphasis would be put on the graduate courses. The provision of research institutes in which the faculty would participate is wise for many reasons. Not only would it keep the faculty fresh and abreast of current problems but it would provide federal research centers, outside the Department of Defense, in several needed areas. Institutes of oceanography and meteorology are specifically provided for, and there would be others as determined by the director. A healthy mixture of teaching and research would help to attract a highly qualified faculty and would produce superior graduates for teaching or research. The bill provides that federally supported students would be obligated to spend as many years in government scientific service as they spent at the academy, unless other provisions were made by the director of the academy. It has already been suggested that acceptance of a teaching position in any U.S. school should be considered an acceptable alternative.

The proposed program of scholarships and fellowships at existing universities and colleges is an excellent one. These can be administered from any or all of several existing organizations, but they could be handled without any suggestion of bias from a national science academy.

The proposal to establish a distinct scientific career service within the Civil Service is sound and worthy of support,

but separate from the proposal to establish an academy. It is part of the over-all effort to improve the lot of the scientist in the federal government, however.

Scientific freedom, so essential in a university, would certainly exist in a national science academy. The present National Science Foundation testifies to that. The graduate science academy with research institutes could produce scientists as competent as those trained by older methods, if not more competent, and it would produce more of them.

HR-1 is still being studied by subcommittee No. 3 of the House Committee on Science and Astronautics. Representative Victor Anfuso of New York is the chairman.

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Exporting Universities

The very stimulating editorial entitled "Diploma diplomacy" [*Science* 133, 1557 (1961)] has very wisely emphasized a point made by A. F. Burns regarding the establishment of universities on foreign soil with American government funds. It should be pointed out that the American University of Beirut, the largest "American" university outside of the United States, is essentially an existing example of what Burns suggests. However, that university is privately endowed largely with American private capital.

Although it is impossible to over-emphasize the amount of good will for the United States that this university and its graduates have spread in the Middle East, this institution is not looked upon with fond regard by all in the host country. The annual budget of A.U.B. (\$2 to \$3 million) is approximately equal to the total annual budget for all public education in Lebanon. Several years ago Lebanon established its own national university within its Department of Public Education. Most

people would resent foreign teachers of their elementary and secondary grades and many feel the same way about university-level instruction. While American professors abroad do feel the pulse beat of the people to a greater extent than any other group of Americans abroad, they also catch the strong, indignant reactions of the host country to American foreign policy actions. If the A.U.B. may be taken as an example, it should be noted that its good name rests on its reputation of many years of unselfish service to the Arab nations.

Professors' salaries are about one-half to one-third their U.S. equivalents, and the universities have infinite patience with obstacles that stand in the way of a proper education. It goes without saying that most secondary school graduates in underdeveloped countries do not have sufficient preparation to enter a university. It also goes without saying that we would be hard put to find U.S. professors to lecture in a foreign tongue, and lecturing in English is considered one form of propaganda. I do not think you could find much Peace Corps fervor for this program in U.S. professorial circles.

These remarks are not made against so-called "diploma diplomacy." On the contrary, the idea has a sound basis. Having taught at A.U.B. for 3 years I would like to encourage the idea but dissuade anyone who feels that this is an overly easy way to help an underdeveloped country with American capital.

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As a former student at Robert College, Istanbul, Turkey, may I voice my support of the editorial "Diploma diplomacy." The establishment and support of colleges on foreign soil, such as those of the Near East Colleges Association in Greece, Turkey, and Syria, has been an excellent example of America at its best.

Whether private or government aided, such institutions provide the educational facilities and the contact with live Americans so sorely needed. It also avoids costly maintenance of students in a far-off place, and reduces the threat of draining underdeveloped countries of their scientific man power.

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