

Letters

Federal Grants and Small Institutions

I have been most interested in the debate currently under way in the pages of *Science* concerning the distribution of federal research funds. The small land-grant institution of which I am president is quite well staffed and equipped and is proud of its accomplishment in both research and teaching. Our school has received some federal grants, and while certain of our applications have been rejected, we don't feel our progress has been damaged particularly by the new brand of financial malnutrition. Our program will continue to grow.

But the most important point seems to me to have been missed in the debate over who should or shouldn't be favored with federal grant funds. The smaller schools, actually, have far less concern about becoming competitive in science with the so-called "centers of excellence" than they have about losing their most competent faculty members. Here the system has worked against the national interest; here perhaps, legitimacy is given to the appeal for wider distribution of federal research grants. The smaller institutions have been subjected to so much raiding by the more successful applicants for federal research funds that higher education, of acceptable quality, is beyond the reach and hope of many young Americans. The consequences to America's future could be tragic from the social, economic, and scientific standpoints, and hardly compensated for by advancing our arrival on the moon by a few days.

The larger schools and the federal agencies can't insulate themselves from the problems born of the federal research grant system. We can't all send our kids to Harvard, and it does seem a waste that many laboratories throughout the land, often very adequate for needed research, should go unmanned. Perhaps our educational system could be given protection and the nation's research resources could be utilized

more effectively if phases of large research projects could be subcontracted by the larger successful applicants for federal funds; large industry has found this technique helpful in solving certain kinds of production problems, and many smaller communities have been benefited as a result.

It's too bad that in this debate so much stress has been placed upon quality differentials among institutions. I'm sure that those who raise the issue are wholly sincere when they challenge the smaller schools to go get themselves excellent and then apply for those elusive federal funds, but they overlook the circumstances which militate against the smaller institutions in the first place. It was wrong in the beginning for our colleges and universities and federal agencies to allow the development of a system which would force schools whose participation in research must necessarily be modest (but can be good) to enter into competition with the largest and wealthiest universities. Perhaps Congress, through passage of recently enacted legislation, has provided the beginnings of a more logical approach to federal assistance to higher education. At least there now seems to be some hope that all of us—large schools that appear to be abandoning the mission and small schools that are crippled trying to attend to it—can give renewed emphasis to one of our first reasons for being, namely, providing high-quality education to the young people of America.

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The Race Problem and Science

Putnam's letter [*Science* 142, 1419 (1963)] attacking the AAAS Committee's report on "Science and the race problem" (*ibid.*, p. 558) seems to me

to be a mixture of confusion, ignorance, and delusions of persecution.

1) Scientists have carried on nothing like the kind of Gestapo operation with respect to the race question that Putnam insinuates. . . .

2) Evidence from the various relevant disciplines is not "overwhelmingly on the side of George" simply because there is not enough evidence on either side to be "overwhelming." I doubt that "genetic racial inequality" is any greater than genetic intraracial inequality. That the races of *Homo sapiens* are capable of interbreeding is genetically more indicative of common relationship than "anatomy and physical anthropology."

3) What Jefferson said about White-Negro relations has nothing to do with the Constitution. "Equal protection under law" is in the 14th Amendment, and even Putnam knows Negroes could receive more of that.

4) The AAAS "principle" does not need to be spelled out in the Constitution in *abc* fashion because the problem in detail was not anticipated. It is instead interpreted from the spirit of the amendments by the people of the United States through the Supreme Court. It is justice and fairness that are at stake, not white supremacy. Race supremacy is a vicious concept, historically and potentially. If there is such a thing as "white supremacy," it is at its worst in those places where there is the most noise about it.

Finally, there is insufficient experience and an unsatisfactory climate for deciding whether or not "integration injures the Negro more than segregation." What is certain is that declarations of inadequacy and indoctrination toward "an awareness of lower capacity" would injure anyone.

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It is evident that Putnam and others are surprised at the "McCarthyism" that is utilized to enhance the views of F. Boas and downgrade the findings of W. C. George. But this approach has been used for centuries, and still remains, in this "enlightened" 20th century, an effective method of promoting a group's ideas, concepts, and scientific interpretations. Galileo was muzzled by cleric and scholar alike; Young's wave theory of light was suppressed for a century by Newton's idolizers. . . .