

American Association for the Advancement of Science

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alan T. Waterman, <i>Retiring President, Chairman</i>	
Laurence M. Gould, <i>President</i>	
Henry Eyring, <i>President Elect</i>	
John W. Gardner	Mina Rees
H. Bentley Glass	Walter Orr Roberts
David R. Goddard	Athelstan F. Spilhaus
Don K. Price	H. Burr Steinbach
Paul E. Klopsteg	Dael Wolfe
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Executive Officer</i>

VICE PRESIDENTS AND SECRETARIES OF SECTIONS

MATHEMATICS (A)	
R. W. Hamming	Wallace Givens
PHYSICS (B)	
Ralph A. Sawyer	Stanley S. Ballard
CHEMISTRY (C)	
Roland Rivest	S. L. Meisel
ASTRONOMY (D)	
Walter Orr Roberts	Frank Bradshaw Wood
GEOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY (E)	
Trevor Lloyd	Richard H. Mahard
ZOOLOGICAL SCIENCES (F)	
Arthur D. Hasler	David W. Bishop
BOTANICAL SCIENCES (G)	
Harriet B. Creighton	Warren H. Wagner
ANTHROPOLOGY (H)	
Anthony F. C. Wallace	Eleanor Leacock
PSYCHOLOGY (I)	
Lorrin A. Riggs	Frank W. Finger
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SCIENCES (K)	
Harold D. Lasswell	Ithiel de Sola Pool
HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE (L)	
John Murdoch	N. Russell Hanson
ENGINEERING (M)	
Charles F. Savage	Leroy K. Wheelock
MEDICAL SCIENCES (N)	
James Ebert	Oscar Touster
DENTISTRY (Nd)	
James A. English	S. J. Kreshover
PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES (Np)	
Lee H. MacDonald	Joseph P. Buckley
AGRICULTURE (O)	
Edward F. Knipling	Howard B. Sprague
INDUSTRIAL SCIENCE (P)	
	Allen T. Bonnell
EDUCATION (Q)	
Herbert S. Conrad	Frederic B. Dutton
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION (T)	
Wallace R. Brode	Phyllis V. Parkins
STATISTICS (U)	
Samuel S. Wilks	Morris B. Ullman

PACIFIC DIVISION

Phil E. Church	Robert C. Miller
<i>President</i>	<i>Secretary</i>

SOUTHWESTERN AND ROCKY MOUNTAIN DIVISION

Edwin R. Helwig	Marlowe G. Anderson
<i>President</i>	<i>Executive Secretary</i>

ALASKA DIVISION

Allan H. Mick	George Dahlgren
<i>President</i>	<i>Executive Secretary</i>

The American Association for the Advancement of Science was founded in 1848 and incorporated in 1874. Its objects are to further the work of scientists, to facilitate cooperation among them, to improve the effectiveness of science in the promotion of human welfare, and to increase public understanding and appreciation of the importance and promise of the methods of science in human progress.

A Prodigious Inventory-Taking

The Select Committee on Government Research headed by Representative Elliott issued its first progress report on 17 February. This initial document came about 5 months after authorization of the study. During this period a substantial staff has been assembled, and hearings have been held involving some 75 expert witnesses. As a result, the committee has authorized its staff to begin work on ten separate studies.

The overall attitudes expressed in the progress report are relatively judicious and neutral. The following statements are indicative:

... the unparalleled wealth, the advanced state of health, and the myriad technological comforts we ... enjoy ... have been made possible by a ... combination of encouragement and exploitation of research ... The Federal Government's marriage to research and development has been marked by an amazingly long and luxurious honeymoon. ... Noting the recently slackening annual increase of Federal funds ... some say the honeymoon is over. Be that as it may, it is certain the marriage will endure.

There is one aspect of the report about which I have reservations. The progress report indicates that the principal effort of the committee will be devoted to a prodigious inventory-taking. This is revealed in the titles of the ten proposed studies and in their descriptions. The magnitude of the proposed endeavor is indicated in an outline for a statistical review of government research and development. The committee has instructed the staff to include in this study five major goals. One of these is "to survey the subject matter of all projects undertaken or supported by departments and agencies as well as the type of research or development undertaken." The number of grants issued each year by the National Institutes of Health is about 15,000, and this agency is only one of many.

If the staff attains all the goals set out for it, the committee will be swamped with information. So vast will be this collection that it will be difficult to digest and analyze it in any reasonable length of time; surely it cannot be digested before December 1964, when the committee is scheduled to make its report. Indeed, to gather all the information outlined may take far more staff than is available. The only way this monstrous task could be accomplished is by requiring extensive cooperation by executive agencies of the government and other institutions.

Apparently the universities will not escape. Under the heading "Student Assistance in Higher Education," we read:

Our staff has begun a study to determine the extent and direction of the Government's financial assistance programs for students in American degree-granting colleges and universities. ... Concomitant to this inquiry, an exhaustive questionnaire to some 1,500 colleges and universities is contemplated which will be followed by selective personal staff contact.

There are at least three grounds for hope that the Elliott Committee will come up with a more reasonable set of objectives. One is the basic wisdom of the members. A second is the flexibility of the staff. A third is the recent appointment of a Science-Engineering Advisory Committee. This group includes, among others, George W. Beadle, J. W. Beams, Lloyd Berkner, Henry T. Heald, Albert B. Sabin, Max Tishler, and Charles H. Townes. The advice of this committee will have a constructive influence on the studies.—P.H.A.