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## Science and the 1964 Election

A review of the Democratic and Republican party platforms of 1964 suggests that science is now not considered very important by either party. With respect to science, both platforms are inferior to the Republican platform of 1960. This document devoted a special section to science and technology and made many excellent statements, including: "Our continuing and great national need is for basic research . . . a well-spring of knowledge and progress." References to science in the Republican platform of 1964 are woven into the text, and a minimum of space is allotted to them. The Democratic platform devotes more words to "science," but the text reflects the writers' concern with gadgets rather than basic concepts. As in 1960, comments on "science" concentrate on space, atomic energy, and oceanography, but this time a score of examples of construction of hardware are cited. The opportunities and progress in biology and medicine go virtually unrecognized. Neither party mentions the population explosion, one of the gravest sociologic and scientific problems of today's world.

One area in which the Democrats have virtually unchallenged superiority is in the recruitment of scientific and engineering personnel. In this nation there are about 1,850,000 scientists and engineers. With associated families a voter potential of more than 3 million is indicated. An effective group, Scientists and Engineers for Johnson, has been organized and will surely enhance the number of Democratic votes.

Organizers of Scientists and Engineers for Johnson include a distinguished bipartisan group capable of great things. In the intellectual sphere their product so far has not been impressive. The principal initial offering was testimony to the Democratic platform committee. This was a special opportunity to influence constructively the Democratic party's attitudes toward matters deeply involving science. This opportunity was not fully exploited. Instead of discussing problems in the relation of government and science, they talked of such matters as extremism, poverty, and distribution of wealth. The most striking passage of their presentation was: "We maintain further that the nation must no longer deprive itself of talent by reason of discrimination based on race, creed, or sex. We reject discrimination as immoral, undemocratic, and savagely wasteful of the nation's human resources." No special scientific training was required to formulate these sentiments. Politicians need no help in such matters. Who is to serve as advocate for science?

While the scientists have been talking politics, at least two politicians, Congressmen Daddario and Price (both Democrats), have been talking science. For instance, Price, who is a key figure on committees dealing with research, recently outlined some of the matters Congress will be concerned with during the next session.

First, establishment of clear-cut objectives for research and development projects.

Second, a realistic cost estimate for the entire project: not just the immediate year.

Third, centralized responsibility and continuity of management.

Fourth, a plan to follow through; to put the results of research and development to actual use.

It will be interesting to note how widely these principles will be applied. Price has stated that high-energy physics is on the agenda. When the election is over, the complex problems of the interrelation of science and government will remain and indeed may become even more controversial.—PHILIP H. ABELSON