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THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

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President-Elect

In its 118-year history, the American Association for the Advancement of Science has been guided by men of the stature of Joseph Henry, Louis Agassiz, Ira Remsen, David Starr Jordan, A. A. Michelson, and Simon Flexner. Reflecting the composition of the Association, most of the presidents have been natural scientists. Only a few have been social scientists, the latest of these being the economist Wesley C. Mitchell, president in 1938.

The election of Don K. Price, a political scientist (page 1690, this issue), is thus a relatively rare event. The event takes on added significance when one considers the circumstances. The natural sciences do not lack for distinguished leaders of proven wisdom. The two candidates for the presidency were nominated by a committee well aware of the many other choices.

Responsibility for the affairs of the Association is vested in the Council, which elects the officers of the Association. The Council in turn is composed of about 470 members. Most of these are elected or appointed by the independent, affiliated societies; all major fields of science and a wide range of scientific interests are represented. The body that elected Mr. Price is a diverse and distinguished company. How could it happen that such a group could select a man of different background from its own? After all, there is a long tradition in human affairs that when the tribe selects a chief it chooses one of its members. I believe that part of the explanation lies in the special nature of AAAS and its membership. A selection process occurs at the time a person decides to become a member of AAAS. Those scientists whose interests are narrow see little reason for belonging to an organization of such diverse character. The act of joining is an act of tolerance and an expression of a wish to support efforts of broad significance. As set forth in its constitution, "The objects of AAAS are to further the work of scientists, to facilitate cooperation among them, to improve the effectiveness of science in the promotion of human welfare. . . ."

It is in the implementation of the third purpose that we can find a further explanation for Mr. Price's election. Science and technology have become crucial to our way of life. At the same time, there is increasing interaction between science and society at a multitude of interfaces. Of major importance now is the interface of science and government.

Dean Price has been the leading pioneer in the study of this interaction. He has wrestled with one of the central problems of our times: "How is science with all its new power to be related to our political purpose and values and to our economic and constitutional system?" Out of his labors have come books and articles, including several in *Science*. In his writing and in his conversations, Dean Price makes many perceptive comments. One of my favorites is found in his new book, *The Scientific Estate*. "The union of the political and scientific estates is not like a partnership, but a marriage; it will not be improved if the two become like each other, but only if they respect each other's quite different needs and purposes. No great harm is done if in the meantime they quarrel a bit."

In his articles in *Science* and in his 5 years of service on the board of directors of AAAS, Dean Price has made fine contributions toward bridging the gap between science and the humanities. It is good to know that the Council has seen fit to select him for even more demanding tasks.—P. H. ABELSON