

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### ● BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES DATA:

The National Academy of Sciences Committee on Information in the Behavioral Sciences has proposed a computerized information system to streamline the data-gathering processes in the behavioral sciences. In its report, the committee recommends a time-shared system which "would read widely, have total recall, evaluate . . . reorganize materials, recognize fruitful analogies, and synthesize new ideas." The report also advocates the establishment of a decentralized national network of data banks containing basic statistical information on domestic and foreign populations, and a federal data service center to assure a coordinated government statistical output. The report opposes the creation of a single national data center that would centralize all social information, advocating instead a decentralized network of data banks "geographically organized in state and local government data collections, and topically or substantively organized in private or academic research repositories." Also suggested is the adoption of all necessary technical and legal safeguards so that data centers will not constitute a threat to individual privacy. David Easton, University of Chicago, headed the committee that prepared the report, *Communications Systems and Resources in the Behavioral Sciences*. Copies, at \$2.50 each, are available from the Printing and Publishing Office, NAS-NRC, 2101 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, D.C.

### ● NEW PUBLICATIONS:

Transcripts are now available of several hearings on research and technology that were held during the last congressional session. The Senate Subcommittee on Government Research of the Committee on Government Operations has parts two and three of hearings on Senate Resolution 110, the Equitable Distribution of R & D Funds by Government Agencies, and parts two and three of hearings on S. 836, the proposed National Social Sciences Foundation. Parts one of both hearings were issued earlier and are no longer available. The Subcommittee on Government Research may be contacted in the Old Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C.

The House Subcommittee on Science, Research, and Development of

the Committee on Science and Astronautics has copies of a Technology Assessment Seminar that was conducted by the committee. The committee is located in the Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. There is no charge for any of the publications.

### ● M.I.T. DRAFT STAND:

The faculty at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has endorsed a resolution against giving preferential draft treatment to students in the sciences and engineering. The resolution which was sent to President Johnson recommended that "all graduate students be treated equally without limitation or preference as to their particular disciplines or fields of study."

### ● NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD:

The Association of State Colleges and Universities has asked President Johnson to consider appointing "a qualified person" from its member institutions to the National Science Board. The request followed a resolution passed at the association's annual meeting in November. National Science Foundation officials said the request was the first direct petition ever submitted on behalf of an organization for representation on the 24-member board, NSF's highest level advisory board. The resolution stated, in part, that the institutions represented by the association enroll 1.3 million students, "are the fastest-growing degree granting colleges and universities in the United States . . . but which in fiscal 1966, received only three percent of the funds made available by the National Science Foundation . . . [and] no administrators or faculty members from within this major group of institutions are members of the National Science Board."

### ● PHYSICS INFORMATION SYSTEM:

The National Science Foundation has granted \$239,000 to the American Institute of Physics for the initial phase of a long-term project to develop a national information system in physics and astronomy. The project will consist of studies and analyses of elements of physics information, comparative studies of retrieval schemes for seeking and producing material from computers, and development of systems which will enable the information program to operate on a national basis.

In the world of biomedical research, the activities of NIH are so important that there is always apt to be concern about the appointment of a director. The increased worry since the announcement of Gardner's departure can, in simplified terms, be summed up in a name which is mentioned frequently by federal health officials—Mary Lasker. These officials like "Mary" and give her great credit for encouragement of health research, but they also fear that her view of the future of NIH is not that of the scientist. "She has the layman's natural desire for quick practical results and applications," one noted. They also think she has a tendency to throw her influence around.

Mary Lasker is no ordinary philanthropist. She has charm, persistence, and access to the highest political officials in Washington, including President Johnson.

At a lunch for Administration "intellectuals" on 18 May of last year, President Johnson told Gardner that he had a good candidate for the directorship of NIH—surgeon Michael E. De Bakey of Baylor University in Houston. Gardner is said to have been cool to the idea, and later conveyed his reservations to the President. De Bakey, who apparently did nothing to initiate such a proposal, is said to have been suggested for the position by Mary Lasker. Almost any candidate backed by Mrs. Lasker would probably be suspect by federal health officials and by many scientists, if only because it would be assumed that her candidates shared her concern for quick practical applications.

After Gardner's departure, it is feared that Mrs. Lasker will be better able to convince the President to "draft" De Bakey for the directorship. Even if De Bakey is eliminated from consideration or doesn't want the job, "Mary has a stable of other candidates," one NIH official lamented.

How much progress has been made in picking a successor to Shannon? According to Gardner, "We're coming into the home stretch; we're down to three or four names."

In an interview with *Science* last week, William H. Stewart, the Surgeon General, said that he collected a list of about 100 possibilities last year. From this list, he eliminated most of the older men and most of those who didn't have an M.D. He reduced the number to 12 or 15 names, and interviewed all these men. In November, he submitted the