

NEWS IN BRIEF

● **NSF BILL:** The house last week completed final congressional action on a new legislative charter for the National Science Foundation. The bill, which was originally introduced by Representative Emilio Q. Daddario (D-Conn.), passed the House last year but was returned to bring it into conformity with a number of Senate amendments. The most significant of these provides for annual authorization hearings for the Foundation (*Science*, 10 May 1968). The House accepted the amendments following a brief debate in which Representative George Miller (D-Calif.), chairman of the Science and Astronautics Committee—which will handle the authorization bill—assured budget-minded members that the annual bill will spell out the NSF program in detail and will not simply state a lump sum for the Foundation's activities. In the House, Daddario will probably handle the bill. The Senate situation is less clear, but the authorization will be handled there by the Labor and Public Welfare Committee and may come under the chairmanship of Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), whose special subcommittee on science handled the Daddario bill. At the same session, the House also gave final approval to the Standard Reference Data Act, which authorizes the expenditure of \$1.8 million for the National Bureau of Standards to assemble and disseminate various technical data.

● **SONIC BOOM:** The Senate Commerce Committee approved on 27 June a House-passed bill requiring the Federal Aviation Administration to prescribe standards and rules for control and abatement of sonic boom. On the same day, the House Appropriations Committee eliminated the \$233 million asked by President Johnson for supersonic transport development. Because of delays in design and construction of the SST, this action is not expected to have any immediate effect, but may reflect some congressional uneasiness. Earlier last week, a study committee of the National Academy of Sciences recommended that a special study be made of human response to sonic boom. The Human Response Subcommittee, chaired by Raymond A. Bauer of the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, warned that while sonic booms may cause no direct damage to hearing, "indirect physiological re-

sponses, however, can result from the startle produced by sonic booms of even moderate proportions." The report is available for \$2 from the Printing and Publishing Office, National Academy of Sciences, 2101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C.

● **CARIBBEAN RESEARCH:** The Caribbean Research Institute is currently developing a program of ecological research on Anegada Island in the British Virgin Islands. Further information is available from Edward L. Towle, director, Caribbean Research Institute, Box 1826, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

● **FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION:** At an "emergency meeting" called on 21 June by the New York Academy of Sciences to consider means of preventing deep slashes in federal support for research and development, scientists warned that the nation will face serious consequences if it lets science efforts slip. Keynote speaker Linus C. Pauling said that a serious cutback in science research "would be an act of national folly." Geneticist H. Bentley Glass and Minoru Tsutsui, New York Academy of Sciences president, expressed the same sentiment. Somewhat different views were expressed by Representative Lester L. Wolff (D-N.Y.), Walter S. Baer of the Science and Technology Office, and Margaret Mead. Baer says federal funds are being leveled, not cut back. Wolff and Mead say scientists have acted too late and too quietly.

● **SEABORG REAPPOINTMENT TO AEC:** Glenn T. Seaborg has accepted reappointment as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, but, at his request, it will be for a 2-year term rather than the full 5-year period. Seaborg, who has served as chairman since 1961, told a congressional committee in a confirmation hearing on 26 June that, because of financial considerations, he will not accept a full term. The job pays \$30,000 a year. President Johnson has also announced the renomination of Commission members James T. Ramey to a new 5-year term. Ramey's present term expires on 30 June 1969. Even with the Seaborg and Ramey reappointments the five-member commission is still one member short.

borhood museums. So far, inquiries have come in from museum directors across the country, and two neighborhood-type museums have been started in New York City.

Before the Smithsonian began operating its neighborhood museum, Ripley told *Science*, "I realize that it may fail and that everyone may laugh at us for trying it, but I don't care. We're just going to go ahead and do it." It is obvious that no one is laughing about the neighborhood museum, except perhaps in pleasure at its success.

The visitor to the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum emerges to the same world of poverty and blighted human hopes. But he has, at least for the time he has been there, again sensed that direct participation in the excitement of learning and achievement can add some measure of joy to all our lives.

—BRYCE NELSON

Student Aid: Standardization Sought in U.S. Government Stipends

Two separate government studies have started movement toward standardizing traineeship and fellowship grants of various government agencies. The most direct result, so far, is a recently issued policy statement by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW),* which makes several important changes aimed at standardizing that department's grant programs.

The studies—conducted by the General Accounting Office (GAO) and the Division of Grants Administration Policy at HEW—sought to find the variations in awards and then to seek ways to eliminate those variations. "It was not a question of standardization for standardization's sake," a Bureau of the Budget (BOB) spokesman told *Science*, but rather an attempt to make the various federal programs less competitive and contradictory.

He said that the GAO report, which was submitted to the Budget Bureau, will have done its job if HEW "gets its house in some kind of order." After that, he said, it becomes a question of priorities. Since HEW accounts for some 80 percent of all federal traineeship and fellowship grants and, according to the GAO report, some 90 percent of the standardization problems, with HEW in order, the BOB spokes-

*The policy statement, "Pre-Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Student Support," is part of HEW's recently published *Grants Administration*. It can be obtained for \$4 from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.