

## AAAS Won't Absorb Science Service

The AAAS directors, at their regular quarterly meeting this past weekend, decided not to use AAAS funds to bail out financially troubled Science Service Inc. Instead, the directors offered to provide "consultation and management services" under contract if Science Service desires such help.

The action fell far short of the assistance sought by the nonprofit publishing organization, which is probably best known for its popularized weekly magazine, *Science News*, and for its conduct of the annual Science Talent Search, sponsored by the Westinghouse Educational Foundation. Science Service, whose board includes many distinguished scientists, has operated for roughly half a century, but in recent years deficits have soared to the point where the organization's continued existence is threatened (see *Science*, 18 September). According to records filed with the Internal Revenue Service, Science Service reported losses of \$45,540, \$189,609, \$208,498, and \$365,371 in the four successive fiscal years ending 31 March 1969. The records also show that Science Service has been selling off assets to make ends meet. Records for the most recent fiscal year are not available, but Science Service is said to have cut its deficit to around \$100,000 for fiscal 1970. Moreover, rigorous economy measures are said to have brought the organization close to the break-even point in recent months.

In an effort to gain enough financial backing to survive the current crisis and to allow room for future expansion, Science Service appealed to the AAAS to merge or otherwise assume its financial obligations. That hope was dashed this past weekend when the AAAS directors voted down a proposal "that the AAAS accept the assets, liabilities and responsibilities of Science Service" and commit up to \$500,000 for that purpose from AAAS resources. Unwilling to turn their backs completely on troubled colleagues, however, the directors expressed their willingness "to accept from Science Service a contract for one year to provide consultation and management services to be negotiated." The board charged its chairman "to ensure that AAAS does not incur liability for the debts of Science Service" and urged him to complete contract negotiations "at the earliest possible time." Board members are said to have felt sympathy with Science Service's efforts to reach the young and the lay public, but a majority of the board felt that the organization's precarious finances might prove an endless drain on the AAAS treasury.—P.M.B.

White House staff, though apparently there was neither a job offer nor even a mention of any particular position. It is not clear just what it was that suddenly precipitated the decision leading to DuBridge's departure, but late in July David was asked whether he would take the job of White House science adviser. David says that, before he accepted, he discussed the job with several "key people" in the White House. "If I hadn't been assured of their support," he said in an interview with *Science*, "I wouldn't have taken the job. I said to the White House people that I wouldn't take the job to downgrade science. I was satisfied after talking cold turkey that they agreed."

David warmly praises his predecessor for leaving him what he describes as

a "solid foundation" and also for having done "a terrific job of educating people about problems of science policy." He rejects the widely held view that under DuBridge the office declined in influence and that DuBridge was, in effect, suddenly eased out. But there are those in a position to know who say that plans for David's hiring and DuBridge's departure were simultaneously disclosed to DuBridge by the White House staff and that the affront was then diplomatically papered over with an effusively worded, publicly released "Dear Lee" letter from Nixon.

In any case, with the change announced 19 August, David proceeded toward his new post in a fashion which indicates that he realized that his appointment broke with tradition and that

it would be desirable quickly to establish links with the various persons and organizations that have been important in the affairs of the office he heads. As he put it, "I made sure I had contact with the constituencies." One of David's first steps was to get together with past presidential science advisers, in a meeting held at his doctoral alma mater, M.I.T., and hosted by Eisenhower's first fulltime science adviser, M.I.T. board chairman James R. Killian, Jr. Among those present were George Kistiakowsky, the Harvard chemist, who also served under Eisenhower; Jerome B. Wiesner, M.I.T. provost, who was Kennedy's adviser; and Donald F. Hornig, president of Brown University, who served Kennedy and Johnson. The only occupant of the office not present was DuBridge, the explanation being that he and David had held conversations earlier. David also met with the Council of the National Academy of Sciences (he is a member of both the NAS and the National Academy of Engineering). Meetings were also held with PSAC and several of its advisory panels.

Though it might be expected that some old-time members of the advisory system would feel chagrined by David's appointment, the fact is that, even in conditions of strict anonymity, there seems to be a good deal of confidence in the choice. One reason is that David's professional ability is held in high regard. Another is that few of the old-timers feel at home with the Nixon administration, but they feel rapport with David and believe, or at least hope, that he can provide the link that has been missing between science and government since Nixon took office.

David is going about his duties in a quiet but apparently surefooted way. There are reports that since he took office a formal understanding has been reached under which OST will automatically be consulted by the Office of Management and Budget on matters concerning science, technology, and many educational affairs. It is known that under DuBridge the consultative process was considerably diminished. David simply says, "We've worked out some understandings, but essentially it's a process that depends on confidence and good relations. We'll have to see how it works." Others say, however, that the understandings are specifically embodied in a memorandum and that David took the job only after it was agreed that his office would be given