

oblivious to its double-edged character—replied, “That’s what I’d like to have engraved on my tombstone.”

Just how Stever spent his time at CMU is also a matter of frequent criticism. He was the university’s first “outside” president, constantly traveling to meetings of the host of government advisory committees on which he sat. His driver told *Science* that Stever went to and from the airport about three times a week. It is often said that, because of his many outside interests, Stever left much of the running of CMU to his vice president for academic affairs, Edward R. Shatz. Recently a planning committee completed a faculty report on how CMU should be run, which calls the concept of an “inside” and an “outside” president “invalid and unsound” for the needs of the university. Stever is familiar with the report, and responded in an interview to its criticisms by saying, “I would do a university presidency differently now.”

Carnegie-Mellon University also has

financial troubles. As of 30 June 1971, it had a cumulative current operating deficit of \$2.3 million and all new unrestricted funds have been going into current expenses—not into reserves. Stever’s predecessor as CMU president, John C. Warner, financed and built four major new buildings. By Pittsburgh standards, Warner was highly successful, since fund-raising is a very important Pittsburgh activity. In particular, the interests of the Mellon family there are so ubiquitous that the area has been nicknamed the Mellon Patch.

However, Stever’s single big building project, Science Hall, had been originally estimated to cost approximately \$4 million, then \$9 million; but when it opened last fall, its cost had reached \$15.5 million, of which \$8.3 million was borrowed—in an unusual procedure for CMU—out of university endowment funds. Stever’s fund-raising drive, called the Fund For Distinction, was scheduled to raise \$55 million by the end of 1971; so far it has gathered \$30 million with \$7 million more

pledged, according to CMU treasurer George O. Luster. Stever obviously faced a much tougher national financial situation than did Warner.

Stever’s record as president of CMU perhaps illustrates the strengths and weaknesses he will bring to the NSF. But the story of how he got the appointment—which is one of Washington’s science plums—is also revealing.

A number of sources close to the appointments mechanism have said that Stever was the Administration’s first choice for the NSF job in early 1969. Stever himself confirms that “virtually all steps” up to a formal offer were taken at that time. As a result of his being chairman of the President’s preinauguration task force on science and technology, Stever became acquainted with a key Nixon assistant, Peter M. Flanigan, whom Stever now terms a “good friend.” Presumably Flanigan, and also Lee DuBridge, who was then stepping into the science adviser’s job, advertised Stever to others on the White House staff. However, Stever says that he told the Administration body hunters that he wanted to stay on at CMU; he had only gone there in 1965.

The searchers then turned to Long but, as is well known, Nixon’s heavy involvement with the fight for the ABM system and Long’s previous criticisms of another version of the system caused consideration of him to be dropped. The Administration then nominated McElroy. One source summarized: “I was given to understand that it was always just a question of whether and when Stever wanted it.”

Stever evidently wanted it, 2 years later, when at the 10 July 1971 meeting of the NSB at Woods Hole, Massachusetts, McElroy made a final telephone call securing the switch from his NSF job to that at San Diego. A source close to NSB said that, from then on, Stever’s nomination was “a foregone conclusion.” At Woods Hole, NSB went through their ritual of appointing a nominations subcommittee, chaired by Roger W. Heyns, now president of the American Council on Education. The White House also scrounged for candidates and submitted a list to NSB, on which Stever’s name appeared. The NSB then screened the White House choices, allegedly added some new names to the list, and, after its 10 September meeting in Washington, sent a letter to the President’s appointment chief, Frederic V. Malek, with five names. Stever’s name ranked first.

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## Briefing

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### FDA to Relax Data Ban

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Scientific decision making in the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) may become less of a closed-door process as a result of a significant change impending in the agency’s public information policy. Announcement of the policy switch, which is still in the planning stage, was prompted by a lawsuit brought against the agency under the Freedom of Information Act.

The suit, filed by the Environmental Defense Fund, sought to compel the FDA to make available the safety data on sodium nitrite, a chemical additive widely used to preserve the color of processed meats. Until now the FDA has claimed that toxicological information of this kind, provided by manufacturers in their petitions to use a product, was a trade secret and therefore exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (*Science*, 4 February).

In a letter sent last week to the Environmental Defense Fund, the general counsel of the FDA, Peter B. Hutt, promises to release the agency’s data on sodium nitrite and asks the fund to

drop its lawsuit. “We are in the midst of adopting a new policy for releasing information to the public,” Hutt explains. “It is regrettable that the lawsuit was necessary, but we can certainly understand your reasons for it.”

The reasons for the suit go back as far as July 1970 when a Ph.D. student at Stanford University medical school, Dale B. Hattis, requested the FDA to furnish the safety data relating to a variety of food additives and pesticide residues. After nearly 18 months’ worth of delays, rebuffs, and denials from FDA officials, Hattis finally took his case to the Environmental Defense Fund, which on his behalf filed suit against the FDA in February this year.

Replying to Hutt’s letter, Thomas J. Graff, counsel for the Environmental Defense Fund, hailed the new FDA policy as a “significant milestone in the battle waged by members of the public to get access to information formerly hidden by a government bureaucracy unwilling to subject itself to public scrutiny. . . . Our victory stands as a precedent for any other public group or citizens who have an interest in overseeing the government’s activities with respect to the safety of the nation’s food and drug supply.”—N.W.