stand and vice versa. A similar request to new members 10 or 12 years ago, Edsall recalls, was a resounding failure, because no one responded.

Invited papers dealing with broad, interdisciplinary social and political issues are also seen as a means of enlivening the PNAS. Sinsheimer plans to solicit these "primarily from NAS members," but not exclusively so. In the past, the PNAS has stayed away from papers dealing with policy. To an extent, the academy has also, and the proposed change in stance reflects the academy's expressed desire to address itself to public issues.

The idea behind these anticipated changes in the staid PNAS, Last comments, is to encourage NAS members and others to use their journal and read it. "We don't expect to compete for attention with *Science* or *Nature* just yet, but maybe someday," he muses.

—BARBARA J. CULLITON

Science in Britain: Research Councils Lose Some Autonomy

After 8 months of deliberations, the British government has given its cautious approval to a controversial plan for reorganizing British science. The effect of the decision will be to shift funds for science from the independent research councils to government departments, which will use the money to commission their own research. The plan represents an attempt to encourage more mission-oriented research in a system that has traditionally emphasized the freedom of the scientist to go wherever his curiosity takes him.

The plan was devised by Lord Rothschild, chief of a recently created advisory group to the Cabinet. The basis of the new arrangements will be the customer-contractor principle, Rothschild's device for guaranteeing the relevance of research done with public funds. The "customers" will be the departments of state, principally the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food (MAFF). The "contractors" will in all probability be drawn from the same groups who are doing the work today—the universities and the research council laboratories. The only thing that will change is the route by which the money reaches them—but that, of course, can make an important difference.

The storm of protest that greeted the Rothschild report (*Science*, 5 November 1971, p. 572) has won the research councils several important concessions. For a start, the total amount of money to be transferred from their budgets has been trimmed from £25.5 million to £20 million, figures that should be compared with the £56 million total annual budget of the three councils affected (all figures at 1971 prices). Furthermore, the changes are to be phased over 3 years. In the first year, 1973–1974, only £10 million will be taken from the research councils; the accumulated total will be only £20 million by 1975–1976. Additionally, and most significantly, the research councils have managed to have written into the white paper a clause which declares that "the expectation is that it [the money transferred] will be spent to commission applied research work from the Research Councils." Rothschild's original report made no such recommendation, which meant that the departments could have spent the money anywhere—even in the United States, for example. The crucial word here is "expectation." "Not quite as strong a word as we would have liked" a research council source admitted to *Science*, "but still we think it's a small victory."

Another small victory is a clause allowing the research councils to turn down commissioned work if they have "good grounds"—if, for instance, they do not think the project scientifically feasible. Thus the pure flame of research council independence has been preserved.

Lord Jellicoe, who, despite his antique title (he is the Lord Privy Seal), is responsible for British science policy, introduced the white paper at a House of Lords press conference. (Such are the security precautions at the Palace of Westminster these days that several correspondents had to cool their heels in an antechamber until policemen could be persuaded to issue passes. Fortunately, Lord Jellicoe was late, too.) The Lord Privy Seal declared the white paper "a landmark in open government." "We welcomed the discussion," he said, "although we didn't anticipate there would be quite so much. We took very careful account of the representations."

That much, at least, is abundantly clear from a careful reading of the paper. Short of defeating the Rothschild proposals altogether, or cutting them down so ruthlessly that little remained, the research councils could not have hoped for a much better outcome. Discussions now going on will determine exactly which projects will be transferred from research council to departmental control to make up the total cash transfer of £10 million for 1973–1974. Lacking such a list of programs, the cash transfer is simply a figure plucked from the air, without any substantive justification, but Lord Jellicoe was not to be drawn into admitting which projects would change hands. "Both sides have a damn good idea what is to be transferred," he said, "but I'm not going to dot the i's and cross the t's today." Sir Alan Cottrell, the government's Chief Scientific Adviser, estimates that all should be known "by the end of the year."

The assumption, quite clearly, is that there are already programs within the research councils that can be taken over lock, stock, and barrel by the departments—at which time they will be transformed into a contract between the customer (the department) and the contractor (the research council). Such a change is well short of revolution. Nevertheless, voices were not long in being raised against it. The *Guardian*, which has campaigned against the proposals, described the concessions as "two faltering steps away from a wrong policy." The London *Times* expected "something a little more imaginative" —and cleared its correspondence page for action.

Advisory Meetings: Confidentiality Dropped, Public Is Invited

On 5 June, President Nixon ordered all federal agencies to open meetings of their advisory bodies—estimated to be 2000 strong—to the public. Executive Order 11671, in one bureaucrat's words, "sent shock waves through the government."

As yet, officials of Washington science agencies agree, the scientific community at large seems unaware of this order, which will probably open most of its advisory meetings to public scrutiny. Gone are the days when scientists could enjoy the security that comes from rendering advice in relative seclusion. One White House official speculates that the days when scientists from both sides of the political fence willingly advised the government may be gone too. "There are a lot of Democratic scientists to whom we go for advice," he said. "Many of them might not want it widely known that they're consorting with a Republican administration. But we would hate to lose their expertise."

In fact, agency heads at this stage do not even know precisely how the Executive order will be implemented. Certainly, meetings of some bodies will remain closed. Study sections at the National Institutes of Health, the advisory groups that approve or reject grant applications, probably will continue to function in private. And it appears likely that those portions of any advisory meeting during which individual research proposals and their funding are being judged will remain safe from the public eye. As for the rest, nobody knows for sure.

The question of opening advisory committee meetings has been around since the passage of the Freedom of Information Act in 1967, but no action has been taken in this particular area until now. However, several bills on the subject have been in the hopper, both in the House and the Senate. There is some speculation about whether these bills will remain viable now. Spokesmen for the Administration are betting against it, claiming that Nixon's order does what the legislation would. However, their opinion is not universally shared.

Congressional staffers who have been working on the various pieces of legislation charge that the Executive order is full of loopholes that legislation could plug. (Some might be challenged by consumer groups, reporters, or others who believe they have been unfairly denied access to a meeting, but such challenges have yet to come.) Under the order as it stands, for example, agency heads "may establish reasonable limitations as to numbers of persons who may attend [advisory meetings] and the nature and extent of their participation, if any, in such meetings." There are, in fact, a number of specific exemptions to the requirement for open meetings, including discussions of various financial matters, trade secrets (a matter of great concern to the Food and Drug Administration), inter- or intra-agency correspondence, personnel files, and others. In addition, the issue of how the public is to be notified of advisory meetings has not been resolved, and congressional aides believe that a portion of a new bill could speak to that problem. Under the Executive order, agency heads are now required to announce their meetings either in the *Federal Register*, a document not widely read by the general public, to put it mildly, or "as appropriate, by publication in local media." At present, agency heads are likely to stick to announcements in the *Federal Register*, although pressures for more generally accessible notification could precipitate a change.

Just what the ultimate effect of this change in policy, which was by no means directed specifically at scientific advisory groups, will be is, of course, anybody's guess. Initially, officials fear that the loss of privacy may deaden scientists' willingness to speak out, but, as one man said, "They may learn to handle this more easily than we might think." The one thing that is certain is that the public will have easier access to the workings of advisory bodies than it ever has before.—B.J.C.

In fact, the changes do not affect all of the research councils. The largest of the five, the Science Research Council, which supports physical science, is not affected at all. Its budget (£55.7 million in 1971–1972) remains unchanged. The smallest, the Social Science Research Council (£4.1 million), also remains unscathed. The net result is that the total research council budget will be cut from £115 million to £95 million by progressive stages and that much of the money taken away with one hand will be given back with the other. To American scientists, accustomed to much more violent shifts in the science budget, this must seem like easy street.

Adopting another of Rothschild's recommendations, the white paper announces that the departments will be setting up scientific organizations of their own, under a new post of Chief Scientist. The first of these appointments, in the DHSS, is expected to be announced soon. The idea is to strengthen the departments' scientific expertise, which has been allowed to wither away as the research councils monopolized the research budgets. The British scientist has paid for his independence with a signal lack of influence in Whitehall. If the changes do anything to reverse this, they will have achieved something.

The government is also talking (as all governments do) about improving the flow of scientists in and out of public service, from industry into universities and vice versa. This desirable end has been frustrated in the past by difficulties such as the nontransferability of pension schemes and by a natural suspicion of the outsiders. Jellicoe announced that a high-level "task force" (which presumably differs from a committee in name only) was being assembled under the chairmanship of Herman Bondi "to make recommendations and see that they are carried out." "I personally attach great importance to this task," Jellicoe said.

Although the changes have been justified in the name of public participation in policy-making, that participation will have to be expressed through the departments, not always as responsive as they might be to public feeling. The concept of a top-level science policy committee with lay as well as scientific members has apparently been considered but rejected. The science budget will be distributed by a new council (replacing the existing Council for Scientific Policy), on which all of the in-

terested parties—research councils, universities, departments, industry, and the Royal Society—will be represented. An independent chairman, yet to be appointed, will preside.

The organization that comes off worst because of the changes is the Nature Conservancy, which has combined the funding of research and the running of national nature reserves. It started life as an independent organization, then fell into the care of the Natural Environment Research Council, and is now to be transferred to the Department of the Environment—but leaving its research funds and laboratories with the council. It will need to be vigorous to survive such a ruthless amputation.

Compared with the totals spent on defense research and prestige projects such as Concorde, the trimming of the scientific budget is, of course, almost an irrelevance. A single week's expenditure on Concorde would make up for the cuts that Jellicoe announced. But observers of the science policy scene, in Britain as elsewhere, have long since despaired of that kind of argument's finding its way into science policy-making. Despite the fanfares, the most recent changes will probably make less difference than the politicians hope—and less, too, than the scientists fear.

—NIGEL HAWKES

Nigel Hawkes works for the Daily Telegraph *magazine section in London, England.*

Nader on Mental Health Centers: A Movement That Got Bogged Down

The conflicts and disarray that have dragged down community mental health centers since their inception in 1963 have been brought together for public inspection in a study just completed by a Ralph Nader task force.

The 152-page mimeographed work is the first half of a book on the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)—*The Mental Health Complex*—to be published this fall. The study was directed by Franklin Chu, a 1971 Harvard graduate. Part two will examine NIMH research and training programs.

Chu's group, which spent 2 years looking into the centers program, concluded, to the surprise of few, that the "movement" (as it is frequently called) was hastily conceived and will need substantial adjustments if it is to fulfill its original goals.

The centers, which are funded partly by NIMH and partly by other public and private agencies, were set up as an alternative to state hospitals, the idea being that hospital population can be drastically reduced if community-based care is made available. They are seen as the proving ground for "community psychiatry," an approach whereby people are treated if possible on an outpatient basis, in their own neighborhoods, and in the context of all their problems whether or not psychological in origin.

The centers also represent an effort to eliminate the age-old division between care for the rich and care for the poor, by making help available to all members of the communities they serve.

The report finds that the motives are commendable, but that they have fallen sadly awry in the practice. "The community mental health center model as it was conceived at the federal level is seriously at odds with reality at the community level. And unless this model is drastically changed, the 'third psychiatric revolution' is likely to go the same route as the first—that 'revolution' being the development of the state hospital system."

In brief, the report alleges that the centers have failed to fulfill any of their major stated goals. They have not been responsible for decreasing state hospital populations (rather the decrease has been due to a combination of new drugs and the fact that many people are dumped into nursing or foster care homes); they are not usually accessible, geographically, financially, and psychologically; they have continued the two-class (rich and poor) system of care by frequent exclusion of indigent patients as well as those with the most severe problems; citizen involvement in administration and decision-making is more a goal than a reality in most cases; and centers are not made accountable because they continue to receive NIMH money even if they're not fulfilling NIMH goals.

Of the approximately 325 centers now in operation, says the report, almost all "offer mostly a collection of traditional clinical services" which remain "inaccessible or irrelevant to large segments of the community."

NIMH officials are still assessing the report. Saul Feldman of NIMH says, though, he finds "some major problems in methodology," and points out that the Chu team did not visit all the centers analyzed in the study. Fuller Torrey, a psychiatrist with NIMH, says that nonetheless he found the report "accurate, temperate, and well-documented," and that his colleagues were pleasantly surprised that it was not more bombastic.

The task force includes in its study descriptions of five different centers, and these hint at the infinite number of political, financial, social, and administrative problems such a venture entails.

Programs and problems outlined by the report were as follows:

► Washington, D.C.: Conceived as a national model. Washington has more psychiatrists per capita than any other place in the country and an abundance of prestigious mental health resources. Yet the mental health center, which is divided into four areas, constitutes an island of squalor, so to speak, in a sea of plenty. One basic problem is that Washington's priorities are set by Congress rather than by the population, which is 85 percent black, and private institutions have involved themselves minimally with the problems of the poor.

► The center at Kern View Hospital, in Bakersfield, California: This center's "catchment area" holds many Spanish-speaking and black farm workers in the San Joaquin Valley. Yet it was first used by the local psychiatric community as a private inpatient