

# Letters

## Committee on Science and Public Policy

A new AAAS Committee on Science and Public Policy (CSPP) (1) has been formed and is charged by the AAAS board of directors with examining questions of public policy affecting the advancement, dissemination, and utilization of scientific knowledge, and with stimulating the study of such questions.

A substantial portion of the CSPP's efforts are expected to be directed toward the professional needs of those working on science policy studies and of those interested in the results of such studies. Within its charge, it could also have responsibility for analyzing and reporting on government programs that affect the allocation of resources for the advancement of science (for example, manpower programs, the establishment of federal laboratories, and government appropriations for research and development) and the government's utilization of scientific and technical knowledge in the formation of public policy (for example, how government utilizes social science advice and how outside expertise can aid Congress and the Executive). These matters would be considered in both a domestic and an international context.

The CSPP has embarked on a short-term plan to give careful consideration to the role and functions of the committee, in all its dimensions, within the AAAS, and to present by the end of 1973 a detailed plan for implementing the goals that the committee recommends. Since, in my view, as chairman, the committee is regarded as an interim group, some changes in membership, including possibly a different chairman, might become desirable in the light of whatever goals are eventually recommended.

We encourage suggestions regarding matters which should occupy the committee's attention and ways that it can best serve the needs of those interested in science and public policy. We welcome the suggestions of those members and friends of AAAS who would like

to assist us in articulating a set of goals and developing a program. All responses should be in writing and directed to Richard Scribner, director of the Office of Science and Society Programs and staff representative to the AAAS Committee on Science and Public Policy, AAAS, 1515 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005, so that copies can be distributed to the members of the committee.

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### Notes

1. Other members of the committee are Brewster Denny, William Drayton, Jr., Don E. Kash (vice-chairman), Mack Lipkin, Jr., Derek de Solla Price, Don K. Price, Eugene B. Skolnikoff, Victor Rabinowitch, Jurgen Schmandt, Christopher Wright, Eugene S. Uyeki, and William Bevan (board representative of AAAS); guests at recent meetings have included Albert Fritsch, John Holmfeld, Howard Lewis, Claire Nader, and Harvey Sapolsky.

## Tropical Rain Forests

I can say "amen" to the urgent plea for preservation of tropical rain forests embodied in the excellent article "The tropical rain forest: A nonrenewable resource" (1 Sept. 1972, p. 762) by Gómez-Pompa, Vázquez-Yanes, and

Guevara. Recent avifaunal studies I have conducted in Cameroun, Peru, and Malaya, and other travels on the three continents where tropical rain forests are located, convince me that, as seemingly vast as some remnants may be, rain forests and their faunas are diminishing rapidly, and we stand to lose many potentially valuable and biologically interesting and important species of plants and animals.

Perhaps no rain forest area is suffering more than that of Southeast Asia, where destruction of lowland forests in Borneo, Sumatra, and Malaya is wholesale. Government attitudes in these areas need changing rapidly. For example, the accompanying photograph shows the highway entrance to the International Biological Program's Malayan Rain Forest Study Site at Pasoh, Negeri Sembilan, Malaya. This area of 5 square kilometers was, when established in 1967, within a large tract of virgin forest. Since then, cutting to the very edges of the tract has proceeded at a great pace and threatens the various ongoing projects, as well as the entire future of the site. After the forest is cut, rains begin to wash away the soil; this process is enhanced with burning. The influx of personnel in adjoining areas results in poaching within the study site. At present, the pall of smoke fills the air; one hears chain saws biting at fallen logs and sees frequent evidence of poaching while working in the site. This is not an isolated example; wildlife refuges and preserves of various kinds in Malaya face the same fate (for example, there has been cutting to the borders of the 702-square-kilometer game reserve at Kaula Lompat in Pahang, and the famous Ulu Gombak Reserve of the University of Malaya, about to be

