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AAAS: Retrospect and Prospect

When I was approached by the search committee of the Board of Directors early in the spring of 1970 about the possibility of joining AAAS, I was infected by their enthusiasm for the roles AAAS could play in increasing the public understanding of science and in educating scientists to their responsibilities as citizens.

Shortly after I came to AAAS, I expressed my conviction that the Association must seek to reach out to five populations: the scientific community, youth, teachers and education administrators, leaders in government, and science journalists.

Scientists have become increasingly conscious of parochialism within the scientific enterprise. *Science* has evolved as a counterforce for the broader education of scientists. I take pride in having served as its publisher and in having shared the responsibility for answering the irate letters that are an indicator of a lively journal.

In the field of science education, *Science—A Process Approach* has had a major impact upon instruction at the elementary school level. Similarly, the AAAS-developed curriculum guidelines have been models for education and planning at both the elementary and secondary levels.

The Congressional Seminars conducted for many years jointly with the Brookings Institution and expanded 2 years ago are an effective educational instrument for decision-makers. The program of Congressional Science Fellowships, inaugurated last fall, is among the three or four most important things that the Association has engaged in during its recent history. These fellowships offer scientists and engineers—particularly young scientists and engineers—exciting new career opportunities.

Communications with the public through science journalists have been rather limited. But with our recent participation with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in science television, our audiotope program, and our community seminars on energy held this year in six cities around the country, there is a glimpse of what is possible.

A sixth audience that I should have included in my earlier list are the artists and writers of our country. The two cultures gap is as broad now as it was when C. P. Snow wrote about it in the late 1950's. Everyone will agree that science profoundly affects our life and times, but we scientists have failed to have a significant impact upon the general scheme of American values.

The artist, in contrast to the scientist, immerses himself in the everyday experiences of people, reflects what society is, and ultimately has a powerful role in shaping what it will become. If we are truly to achieve Bacon's vision of science as the enlightened servant of man, we must take science and, as one great humanist of an earlier day urged upon the artist, "assimilate it to human needs, color it with human passion, transform it into the blood and bone of human nature." Sir William Osler is reported to have said not too many years ago that we are in "yet the childhood of the world, and a supine credulity is still the most charming characteristic of man." If such is the case, it is high time that we got on with the job of teaching society at large that science and technology—as the companion approaches to solving problems that combine logic with observation—are, in the general case, simple, straightforward, and even beautiful in their conceptualization.

My life and times at AAAS have been exhilarating. I've formed many friendships. I've had a great learning experience. As I leave my present post, I look forward to participation in Association affairs as a life member. My enthusiasm and affection for AAAS will long continue.—WILLIAM BEVAN