

AAAS Conference on Science and Social Problems

How can scientists and scientific institutions better utilize their knowledge and skills in assessing public problems and suggesting possible solutions? What are some of the difficulties encountered in interdisciplinary, problem-oriented research? To more closely examine these and related questions, next month the AAAS Office of Special Programs will sponsor a conference on science and social problems. Tentatively titled "Adapting Science to Social Needs: Knowledge, Institutions, People into Action," the meeting will be held at the Institute for Man and Science in Rensselaerville, New York, 5-8 May.

More than 60 persons from the public and private sectors, including specialists in the natural and social sciences, policy science, management science, and the philosophy, history, and sociology of science, are being invited to participate. They will represent the larger group of persons who sponsor, perform, manage, or use problem-oriented research. The conference is being partially supported by the Office of Extramural Research, National Institute of Mental Health.

Although interdisciplinary, problem-oriented research continues to receive considerable attention, the character of its successful operation is still relatively obscure and its utility sometimes doubted. Meanwhile, scientists or engineers who seek to use their knowledge and skills in problem-oriented work must often function within institutions that are discipline-oriented, do not provide support or incentives to persons working outside of an established academic field, and generally demand different measures of performance from the individual than are required in problem-oriented work. These difficulties are frequently compounded by the lack of scientific communication between people in different disciplinary areas, even though researchers within separate fields may be studying the same social problem area.

The AAAS conference will explore these problems and others. In addition, it will assess areas of continuing uncertainty

and confusion regarding more effective utilization of scientific knowledge for social problems, and will suggest institutional, systematic, and behavioral changes which could help to make these efforts more effective.

C. West Churchman of the Center for Research in Management Science, University of California, Berkeley, will deliver the keynote speech, in which he will address questions surrounding the holistic nature of public problems and the reductionist approach of science. A set of plenary papers will then describe various aspects of interprofessional collaboration in specific problem areas (energy, transportation, and applied social research). Other papers will consider ways in which scientific and other professional expertise are being used to perform problem-oriented research and study. Through

AAAS has been requested to send representatives to the following meetings: East African Academy, Symposium on Energy, Dar es Salaam, June 1976; and Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science meeting, Colombo, 7-10 December 1976. AAAS members expecting to be in either area and interested in representing AAAS at these meetings are requested to contact the Office of International Science, AAAS, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

workshop sessions, conference participants will assess topics relating to the conceptual, individual, management, and organizational approaches to more effectively utilize scientific knowledge in problem-oriented efforts. They also will recommend specific actions for AAAS to consider in developing programs related to science and society.

The meeting is seen as a focal point in

June Colloquium on R & D in the Federal Budget

The AAAS Committee on Science and Public Policy has initiated a trial run of an annual analysis and commentary of research and development in the federal budget. A draft of the analysis is being prepared by Willis H. Shapley, who for many years was concerned with R & D programs as a senior official in the U.S. Bureau of the Budget. Mr. Shapley is working under a panel of the committee chaired by T. Dixon Long of Case Western Reserve University. His report will consist of: (i) background chapters on the federal budget in general and on research and development in the federal budget, and (ii) an analysis of research and development in the FY 1977 budget to the extent and depth feasible in the time available and an identification of some of the principal issues related to research and development in the FY 1977 budget.

A primary objective of this first report will be to identify and illuminate the

most significant policy issues related to federal research and development expenditures to aid the scientific community's understanding of budget-related processes. Toward this end, AAAS will organize a colloquium on the budget in Washington, 15-16 June. Several invited papers and workshop sessions will examine in detail the long-term policy implications of the principal issues identified by Shapley's report. The colloquium proceedings and the incorporated report should contribute significantly to a better understanding of science policy-making processes.

Registration for the colloquium is expected to be approximately \$25, exclusive of meals and lodging. For further information, contact William A. Blanpied, Division of Public Sector Programs, AAAS, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. All interested persons are welcome.

—WILLIAM A. BLANPIED

encouraging the development of a process to more carefully examine the factors influencing how knowledge may be applied to public problems.

Proceedings of the conference will be produced and distributed by AAAS. They are expected to include an annotated bibliography on problem-oriented research.—RICHARD A. SCRIBNER and ROSEMARY A. CHALK

AAAS Affiliate Works to Promote Equal Opportunity for Women

To promote equal opportunities for women to enter the professions and to achieve their career goals.

This is the stated goal of the Association for Women in Science (AWIS), one of the newest AAAS affiliates. This month Marion Webster of the National Institutes of Health will be installed as fifth president of the Association. Founded in 1971 by a group of women in biomedicine, AWIS has since grown to a membership of over 2500, including women and men in all the scientific disciplines who are interested in promoting equal opportunity for women in science.

AWIS was founded on the belief that inequities can be overcome by people working together. Its major activities include: promoting enforcement of equal rights legislation, developing a national registry of women in science, publishing a newsletter, establishing regional chapters, and furthering career development.

Anne Briscoe, of Columbia University's Harlem Hospital Center and retiring president of AWIS, has often reiterated the organization's emphasis on "action and not just civil rights words." AWIS has been involved in various litigations, including several class action suits against the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. It also has acted as *amicus curiae* to support individual suits of women complainants in civil rights cases.

As a positive response to affirmative action, AWIS made one of its first goals the establishment of a national computerized registry of women in science. This has just been accomplished, with computer operations beginning this spring. The registry will function as a talent bank of women to serve on review boards and committees and as a pool of active job seekers. Employers can buy

searches on the registry or place ads in the AWIS newsletter and the tri-weekly job bulletin.

The AWIS newsletter is a major vehicle for fostering communication among those interested in women in science. A bimonthly publication, it contains reports on AWIS actions to promote equal opportunity, current statistics on the status of women in the professions, and grant procedures and deadlines. It informs national members of the activities of local chapters, task forces, and committees, as well as those of other feminist organizations.

Local/regional AWIS chapters have been formed to improve communication and to provide mutual support. Active chapters now exist in New York, Hawaii, and Houston, and others are organizing. Activities of these groups include helping individuals write grant applications and curriculum vitae, apply for professional society membership, and fight discrimination on the job.

Local chapters also help women scientists with career development, as does another arm of AWIS, the AWIS Educational Foundation. This tax-exempt organization was set up to generate funds from a broad community base to help women attain their educational goals. Under the direction of its president, Estelle Ramey of Georgetown University Medical School, the Foundation currently awards three graduate scholarships each year to women science students.

In pursuit of its goals, AWIS works closely with the AAAS Office of Opportunities in Science, the AAAS Women's Caucus, and other groups which share the AWIS commitment to equal opportunity for all.—SUSAN E. POSNER

Atlanta Area AAAS Group to Meet

Atlanta area AAAS members will meet on 26 April at the Fernbank Science Center to discuss organization of local public understanding of science activities. A panel discussion on "Compulsion, Compulsion, Control—The Scientist's Conscience" will be featured. A short business meeting will follow. The area involved stretches for a 100-mile radius around Atlanta.

Groundwork for this unique endeavor was laid last December at a meeting of some 40 local AAAS members and other Atlanta citizens. A second meeting was

held 1 March, at which plans for the 26 April session were developed. Key organizers of the meeting include George Wallis of the University of Georgia in Athens and Melvin Kranzberg of the Georgia Institute of Technology.

AAAS members from other parts of the country interested in similar activities are urged to contact the AAAS Division of Public Sector Programs.

Science Education and Educational Policies

During the past year the AAAS Office of Science Education has held several conferences and seminars to address the question of the future of science education, particularly at the precollege level. These sessions included a conference last spring on science curricula and teaching for children 5–14 years of age; a meeting last fall to discuss precollege science education with particular concern for declining test scores; a forum discussion of the National Assessment of Educational Progress on science test score declines for 9-, 13-, and 17-year-old students; and a symposium, "Science Education Amidst Educational Policies." The open forum and symposium took place during the AAAS Annual Meeting this past February.

One point that came from these sessions was that, in the present time of tight school budgets, science education will suffer unless special efforts are made to teach efficiently and less expensively. Another point was that there is as yet no apparent connection between what goes on in science programs in schools and declines in science achievement test scores. Indeed, as John Goodlad, director of research at the Institute for Development of Educational Activities in Los Angeles, emphasized at the February symposium, very little is known about anything that goes on in schools. The third point was a concern that, with the decline in funds available to support innovations in science education and educational programs for teachers, the impetus given to science education by federally funded science curriculum development and teacher training programs may fade away.

The major concern of the AAAS Office of Science Education is to stimulate communication about science education among educators and scientists. The Office welcomes AAAS members' views.

—ARTHUR LIVERMORE