

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 uncer-

tainty 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