Despite excellent papers on both sides, at the end the social and natural sciences seemed at best to be talking at, rather than to, each other. The critical questions of yield *versus* conservation and the nature of rationality—which ultimately separate the two—were scarcely broached. But the full range of approaches was represented and the congress served as an important stage in the internationalizing trend of a young discipline.

BRIAN SPOONER
Representative to Rangeland Congress, Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania

CSFR Prepares Annual Report

The Committee on Scientific Freedom and Responsibility has completed its 1978 annual report describing current projects and interests of the Committee. It includes the group's working procedures for reviewing individual claims involving ethical issues submitted by U.S. scientists, as well as a summary of the year's activities of the clearinghouse on science and human rights. The report details various issues of scientific responsibility received in response to an inquiry letter from Committee Chairman Bentley Glass and describes the range of topics suggested for the Committee's attention.

A letter from Committee members Bentley Glass, John Edsall, and Joel Primack replying to earlier statements by Sir Andrew Huxley, of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, on the appropriate role for scientific societies in the area of human rights concerns also is included in the report. Finally, the topics of Committee letters and reports of 1978 are listed as an appendix, along with the titles of papers available from symposia sponsored by the Committee at the 1978 AAAS annual meeting in Washington, D.C.

In early 1979, John T. Edsall of Harvard University was appointed by the AAAS Board of Directors as the new chairman of the Committee on Scientific Freedom and Responsibility. Edsall, author of the 1975 AAAS report *Scientific Freedom and Responsibility* (summarized in *Science*, 16 May 1975), succeeds Bentley Glass of the State University of New York at Stony Brook, who will continue as a member of the Committee. New members of the Committee are Herman Feshbach of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Leonard Rieser of Dartmouth College, and Fletcher Watson of New York University. Rosemary A. Chalk is the Committee's staff officer.

Copies of the 1978 annual report may be ordered at a cost of $2 each (individual orders should be prepaid) from: AAAS SFR-7, 1515 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Further details and a copy of the current Committee roster are available from the Committee office.

Scientists and Lawyers Meet in Washington

In an effort to get a better understanding of each other's viewpoint, legislators, lawyers, judges, administrators, ethicists, and scientists met recently to discuss how public policy decisions are made.

The conference, jointly arranged by the AAAS and the American Law Institute–American Bar Association (ALI-ABA) was held in Washington, D.C., 25–27 January 1979.

The theme, "Law/Science Perspectives on Public Policy Decision-Making," was presented through four lecture and discussion topics: (i) the environment for public decision-making, (ii) how should the decision be made?, (iii) the case of artificial sweeteners, and (iv) the case of recombinant DNA.

The exchange concerning the environment for public decision-making was led by Richard H. Bolt of Bolt Beranek and Newman, Inc.—scientist, and Louis B. Mayo of George Washington University—lawyer. Basic concepts such as "risks," "dangers," and "hazards" were discussed and analyzed in the context of decision-making. Unique contributions of science to the decision-making process include scientific knowledge, encompassing both basic and applied science; use of the scientific method to determine facts; and development of scientific models to study the future.

During the discussion of how decisions should be made, Congressman James G. Martin (R-N.C.) pointed to the difficulties inherent in these kinds of decisions. The Congress and regulatory agencies, for instance, must pass and implement legislation addressing carcinogens, yet the perception of risk may change substantially as more is learned about the substance in question.

Commissioner Richard T. Kennedy of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission stressed that while Congress will decide the extent to which nuclear energy will be used, that decision will be made in part on intuitive recognition of its risks and benefits.

The case of artificial sweeteners was described by Arnold Brown, dean, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine, and Richard A. Merrill, professor of law, University of Virginia. Here is an example of what might prove to be premature regulation being enacted in response to use of a questionable substance before complete testing and evaluation. Ray Thornton, former chairman of the Subcommittee on Science, Research, and Technology of the U.S. House of Representatives, said that the "spectacular and witty" often attracted the most public attention during Congressional action on artificial sweeteners The results are that some artificial sweeteners were banned, even when no carcinogenicity was proven, while for others, only a warning label was required, although some carcinogenicity was demonstrated.

The exchange concerning recombinant DNA centered around the 1976 and 1978 National Institutes of Health guidelines. One view put forth was that experimentation is such an integral part of the scientific method that one could not proceed very far without it and that basic research would generally be protected under the First Amendment.

While expressing the hope that in the future all regulations concerning recombinant DNA research will be dropped, Peter B. Hutt, former chief legal counsel for the Food and Drug Administration, said that it is up to the scientists who propose research to show that the risk is reasonably small and that benefits exist.

Conference participants were able to see the chasm between the perceptions and priorities of research scientists and regulators. The former stressed present scientific evaluation and questioned the need for bureaucratic controls. At least some of the latter felt that any risk warrants regulation and were mainly interested in due procedures for establishing the regulations and enforcing them.

Such free exchange between scientists and representatives of government, ethics, and law should lead to a better mutual understanding of both the benefits and the dangers of regulation and result in future benefits to society.

For more information about the activities and publications described in AAAS News, write to the appropriate office, AAAS, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036, unless otherwise indicated.