News of Science

National Science Foundation Budget

The National Science Foundation budget for fiscal year 1959 will be $140 million if the President's recommendations are followed by Congress. This amount is exactly $100 million greater that the 1958 appropriation; how the actual appropriation for 1959 will compare with the current $40 million will depend upon Congressional action. The proposed increases are spread over practically every item in the foundation's budget, but the largest increases are in the field of science education, for which approximately a fivefold increase has been recommended.

Estimated expenditures for 1958 and budget proposals for 1959, expressed in thousands of dollars, for some of the major items are given in Table 1. The proposed research facilities and the amounts for each are: biological research facilities, $2 million; southern hemisphere astrograph, $1.2 million; solar research telescope, $5 million; radio and optical astronomy facilities, $700,000; and university nuclear reactor facilities, $1.5 million.

The foundation plans to increase all of its fellowship programs and to start some new ones. The smallest increase is in the regular predoctoral fellowships, which will increase from 776 to 970 if appropriations are granted. The increase in regular postdoctoral fellowships is from 100 to 200; in senior postdoctoral fellowships from 42 to 100; and in science faculty fellowships from 90 to 300. The following new fellowship programs are planned: 2500 summer fellowships for high school science and mathematics teachers (these are in addition to the institutes that have been conducted for several years and that are mentioned below); 2000 summer fellowships for college and university teaching assistants to enable them to study or engage in research during the summer months; 800 pre-service fellowships for persons who would like to become high school teachers of science or mathematics but who have not received the necessary education; and 1250 training grants for fellows who would be chosen jointly by the foundation and the university at which the recipient planned to take his graduate work.

The summer institute program is in for a big increase if plans go through. Institutes for high school teachers would be increased in number from 103 to 320, and institutes for college teachers from 5 to 36. In addition, support would be available for 20 short-term (about 2 weeks) summer conferences on special topics for college teachers, for 10 summer institutes for members of the faculties of technical training institutes, and for 20 summer institutes for elementary school supervisors who want additional training in science or mathematics.

Institutes lasting through the academic year are also scheduled to increase in number. The increase for regular, full-time institutes for high school teachers is from 17 to 30, and for institutes (usually on Saturdays) for teachers who are in service from 30 to 200. Comparable in-service institutes for elementary school teachers have not been offered by the foundation in the past, but 125 are scheduled in the new budget.

Two entirely new programs are planned to give special opportunities for science instruction or research experience to students. One of these programs would provide science instruction for from 4 to 8 weeks, on 80 campuses, for 4000 able high school students. The other would provide research experience for 1500 selected college undergraduates in special institutes offered on 60 campuses.

Table 1. National Science Foundation budget in thousands of dollars.

Item	Estimated expenditure for 1958	Proposed budget for 1959
Support of basic research (approximately evenly divided between physical and biological sciences)	$16,000	$40,000
Research facilities (about 5/6 in physical sciences)	6,000	12,000
Survey and reports on scientific resources	174	290
Dissemination of scientific information	855	1,879
Attendance at international meetings	125	500
Research on scientific information problems	266	414
Pre- and postdoctoral fellowships	3,265	21,000
Institutes for teachers	9,790	35,500
Special projects in science education	655	15,400
Improvement of course content	611	6,000
International science education program	0	1,000
Clearinghouse for scientific manpower information	248	830

Parliament of Science

The planning committee for the AAAS Parliament of Science that is to take place in Washington, 15, 16, and 17 March (see editorial, 9 Feb.) has released a statement which includes the background philosophy that led to the meeting and that guides the committee in its planning:

"The power of man through science is currently assuming a new order of magnitude. Power has always been sought avidly. Sometimes it has been used disastrously; often it has been used wisely. How America shall keep abreast of the developments in science and scientific technology; how it shall help avoid disaster; how it shall ensure that new knowledge (the age-old synonym for power) will be used for the benefit of mankind in general and its citizens in particular are among the most important questions before the public today.

"But the American public is disturbed, worried, and confused. We were supposed to be well in the lead, scientifically and technologically. Now, all of a sudden, this comfortable assumption is challenged. We are 'behind.' It isn't clear just what this statement means, or whether the serious versions of its possible meanings are in fact true. But there is no denying the general concern, and the almost frantic determination to 'do something about it.'

"The concern and the determination are, we believe, justified. But it is imperative that we sort out our ideas, brush off as superficial certain spectacular but minor items, and try to see our problem in its true dimensions.

"Not long after the discovery of fission, we began to sense the fact that man's impending control of atomic and nuclear power made possible, and indeed made inevitable, the beginning of a new age. As the still more vast potentialities of fusion were made available for destructive purposes, and as it became clear