

held or, at least, before a specific piece of legislation reached the House floor. The membership of these *ad hoc* groups would change with changing problems. On matters concerning transportation, for example, representatives of the committee on Science and Astronautics would meet with representatives from the committees on Commerce, Foreign Affairs, Government Operations, Merchant Marine and Fisheries, Public Works, and Appropriations.

As Daddario sees it, the meetings of the study groups might be initiated either when the administration presents a program to Congress, or when an individual committee chairman sees a major problem. The group members would survey the problem, decide who should handle what aspects of it, and subsequently keep each other informed of the progress in their respective committees. Hopefully, this scheme would avoid some duplication and combine the advantages of bargaining and expert advice with a degree of integration by giving committees an overall view of things.

A different solution to the problem of fragmentation of committee responsibility on scientific and technological matters was offered by the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, which was formed in 1965 to investigate reforms needed in the structure of Congress. This group recommended that jurisdiction on questions of science policy be rearranged and consolidated into fewer committees (*Science*, 16 Sept.). Much opposition came from committee chairmen who resent possible diminution of their influence.

An informal group, such as Daddario's subcommittee suggests, would be less likely to encounter such opposition. But a good look at Congress shows that informality has its own headaches. Committee chairmen already have a more than full schedule: why be a delegate to an informal discussion group when a lot of informal discussion goes on anyway? Furthermore, an informal leadership, dependent on which chairman initiated the meeting or which committee handled the heaviest load of the problem, might mean that no leadership will be taken. How to go about staffing an informal group also presents problems—and little gets done without a staff.

The value of such study groups would ultimately rest on the cooperation of the committee chairmen—a co-

operation that can be inconsistent and unpredictable. At any rate, the study group is still a fuzzy idea, offered by the subcommittee to generate interest and discussion, and awaiting suggestions.

The second suggestion of the subcommittee deals with efforts to foresee and forestall the undesirable side effects created by technological innovations, side effects such as the toxic byproducts of atomic energy or the pollution of the soil resulting from the use of pesticides. Says Daddario, "... We need an early warning system to apprise us of the potential dangers of certain technologies if they are applied without restraint."

Here, too, the recommendation of the subcommittee is still vague, but the members suggest the establishment of a "technology assessment board" which would identify the possible dangerous side effects, as well as the benefits of new technology, so that we do not "blindly adapt technology to our needs." This board, they suggest, might consist of a small group of scientists and congressmen concerned with scientific matters, plus an advisory council representing science, industry, and the public. The subcommittee report emphasized that it does not see the board as having regulatory or "cease and desist" authority, but that it would act only as an "early warning" system.

One likely objection to such a board is that the decision whether the side effects of new technology are "dangerous" or "undesirable" is often a hazy and controversial philosophical-social question rather than a political or scientific one. But a board that would inform the public of the possible directions technology can take and its taking might be valuable.

The problems to which Daddario is addressing himself have been targets for a wide variety of suggestions. Daddario does not expect swift action on his proposals, but he would like to stimulate discussion as a step toward action.—NAOMI PANUSH

Amendments to AAAS Constitution

The Committee on Council Affairs and the Board of Directors recommend that Article IV, Section 2, of the Association's constitution be amended by inserting "the vice presidents-elect" in the list of members of Council, and that Article VI, Section 3, be amended by inserting "the chairman-elect, if

there be one" in the list of members of a section committee.

The constitution specifies: "Proposed amendments shall be published officially in substance at least one month prior to an annual meeting of the Association. A proposed amendment that is approved by the Board of Directors shall require for its adoption a favorable vote of two-thirds of the Council members present in a Council session of that meeting."

Council will vote on these amendments at the annual meeting in Washington, D.C., on 30 December 1966.

Announcements

Terre des Hommes, an international organization which is providing medical help for children in Vietnam needs volunteers to work in the only children's hospital in Saigon. The organization is running the acute care unit in Nhi Dong Hospital and needs **pediatricians, nurses, and support personnel** to make the unit a 24-hour-a-day operation, to relieve the current staff, and to serve in provincial hospitals. The minimum service period for physicians is 6 months. Volunteers will be accepted from any country and will receive a modest stipend; they may not engage in political activities during their service.

Terre des Hommes also needs donations of drugs and equipment for Nhi Dong and the provincial hospitals, and planes to take children to Europe (or elsewhere) for treatment they cannot get in Saigon. More information is available from Terre des Hommes, 26 Beau Sejour, Lausanne, Switzerland.

Recent Deaths

J. William Buchta, 71; retired physics professor at the University of Minnesota; 23 October.

Peter J. W. Debye, 82; professor emeritus of chemistry at Cornell University and winner, in 1936, of the Nobel prize in chemistry; 2 November.

Warren J. Gross, 50; professor of zoology at the University of California, Riverside; 17 October.

Allan R. Holmberg, 56; director of the Cornell Peru project and formerly chairman of Cornell's department of anthropology; 13 October.

Henry Bearden Mulholland, 74; professor emeritus of internal medicine at the University of Virginia; 30 October.