

this year's seminar was heterogeneous. Four Nobel laureates* were on hand to lend an added touch of prestige to the scientific delegation, which included many of the country's most established cancer researchers, as well as a contingent of young investigators. Most of them spoke directly about cancer research, although many managed to work a plug for training grants in among their comments about lymphocytes or chemotherapeutic agents. A few spoke more specifically about policy.

Frank J. Rauscher, Jr., director of the cancer institute, came to meet the press and talk about the national cancer program. Former assistant secretary of health Merlin K. DuVal, who is now vice president for medical affairs at the University of Arizona at Tucson, dropped by in a suede, fringed cowboy jacket to make a few remarks about Washington politics and the status of deans. (He thinks that deans will recoup some of their old authority within medical schools as individual researchers find their once sizable grants dwindling away and, with them, the clout that came with having all that money.) And, to add an international flavor to the proceedings, there was Han Suyin of Hong Kong, the Chinese physician famous for her novels, particularly for *A Many Splendored Thing*. Clad in an exquisite fur coat, Dr. Han talked about the good that Chairman Mao has done for the health of the citizens of the People's Republic of China and emphasized that the conception many persons have of China as a welfare state is wrong. "The individual contributes to his commune and it takes care of him," she said. "We're too poor to be a welfare state."

The reporters present were as diverse a crew as the scientists, representing papers of all sizes from all parts of the United States and Canada. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* sent representatives. So did *Newsweek* and the *Wall Street Journal*. A reporter for the Topeka (Kans.) *Capital Journal* came, as did one for the *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*. Reporters for several medical magazines were there. The *National Enquirer*, which is trying to change its image as a scandal sheet, sent a writer. There were a smattering of television and radio people. Most of them wrote about achievements in the crusade against cancer.

* Robert Holley, Salk Institute; Arthur Kornberg, Stanford Medical Center; Salvador E. Luria, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Earl Sutherland, Vanderbilt University.

Throughout the years, the cancer society has been charged with "managing the news" and "using the press" by holding its seminar at the same time that the fund-raising drive begins. Inevitably, some journalist brings it up each year, and, from time to time, a couple of writers stay home in protest. But they usually show up again the next year. Apparently, the advantages the seminar offers attract them back.

From a writer's point of view, those advantages are considerable. Many of the reporters who turn up at the seminar year after year travel very little the rest of the time. For some, the ACS meeting is the only thing they cover out of their home territory all year, and, therefore, the first-hand exposure they get to the scientists present is of considerable value. Even for the troupe of more sophisticated national science writers, who are likely to hit as many meetings a year as most scientists, the opportunity the seminar provides for people to just sit and talk with each other at length is invaluable.

The exposure the writers get to a range of research projects is also worthwhile. Although it by no means covers

every aspect of cancer research, the material presented at the seminar is carefully selected to touch a number of bases. The society seems to have two things in mind. Certainly, its own interests are not forgotten, and so every effort is made to provide a choice of stories to fit every writer's editorial needs. Thus, the scientific presentations ranged from a discussion by Arthur Kornberg about RNA as a primer for DNA synthesis to a series of papers by physicians from St. Jude's Hospital in Memphis about what can be done right now to treat, and sometimes cure, childhood cancers.

On the other hand, the society is genuinely interested in educating the press and goes to some effort to do what it can to help reporters fully understand the science that is presented. An innovation at the seminar this year that proved useful to most writers was what Davis billed as a "teaching and briefing" session. Before each panel began, its chairman met with anyone who cared to come and went over the material that would be coming up, trying to show where work was inter-related and to put things in perspective.

Academy Response to Shockley

As has been his custom over the past 7 years, William B. Shockley asked the National Academy of Sciences at its April meeting to review his hypotheses about race, genetics, and IQ.

Instead of tabling the motion, as in past years, the academy sought to give Shockley a specific answer, in the form of a resolution, that would deal finally with the issue—at least in its present form.

In the preamble to the resolution, the academy council said it "doubts the wisdom of attempting to select one field" for study among the many that "impinge strongly on important social and economic issues of our times. . . ." The resolution was as follows:

"The National Academy of Sciences acknowledges Mr. Shockley's having brought to its attention the inquiry in which he is currently engaged, and encourages him and others engaged in such efforts to follow the normal scientific procedures of publication so that their results may be subjected to the usual peer review and accorded the scientific impact afforded by such publication."

Shockley appears to feel undeterred by the resolution which he says "simply does not face the issues that I raised." He would not say whether he intends to press his cause at next year's NAS meeting, but he does plan to investigate whether the NAS action breaks with the academy's usual policies in dealing with study proposals.

In an unrelated action, the council eliminated from its constitution the requirement that time be set aside for contributed papers. The number of papers given dwindled to nine this year, and attendance has become microscopic. An academy spokesman explained that the paper-giving was a vestige of the old days when the academy provided a forum not available elsewhere.—C.H.