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BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE: Area Code 202. Business Office, 467-4411; Circulation, 467-4417.

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## Your Annual Meeting

In its 130-year history, the AAAS has had 144 national meetings, usually annually, although some war years were missed and in other years both winter and summer meetings were held. The forthcoming Annual Meeting in Houston (3 to 8 January 1979) will be our 145th National Meeting.

During our formative years (the first 50 or so), as the various specialties of science were just beginning to be recognized, our national meetings provided the principal forum for the interchange of information among all U.S. scientists. As these various specialties matured and formed their separate associations, both here and abroad, our national meeting went through an extended transition until, just after our own centennial (in 1948), a new policy was adopted. It was decided that the AAAS would hold meetings "at which one branch of science is interpreted to the other branches of science, meetings at which are stressed the interrelations between the branches of science, meetings at which the unifying theme would be central problems whose treatment requires the attack of several disciplines."

The Houston meeting, "Science and Technology: Resources for Our Future," follows this paradigm and addresses such a central problem. The world now stands at a crossroads, all of the fledgling disciplines of a century ago have grown into "big science," and the mostly rural and agrarian cultures in which they began have become the modern urbanized-industrial nations of today. These are the nations whose growth and development consumed prodigious amounts of the world's depletable resources and whose further momentum appears to require an even greater consumption; these are the nations whose peoples have been freed from a marginal existence, sparking equal hopes among the billions of their less fortunate brethren; and these are the nations whose leaders grope for a path to bridge the gap between the reality of a world's declining material resources and the hopes of a world of rising human expectations. The future of these nations, and of the world society of which they are as yet only the smaller part, depends in considerable measure on whether the needed resources can be found.

At such a crossroads, the intellectual resources of the big sciences we have nurtured must not be overlooked, and that is the central problem we address in Houston. These are unique resources that are depleted through neglect rather than use, and they are the resources that, with prudent management, can help chart the path between the hope and the reality. In nine public lectures and 138 symposia, the Annual Meeting will deal with many of these resources and the successes and failures in their application. The full program of the meeting (see page 865) is rich and extensive and deserves your careful attention. However, some of its substance can be conveyed by focusing on a few symposia in the "general interest" category.

In "Frontiers of the Natural Sciences" and "Frontiers of the Social Sciences," nine eminent scientists—from mathematics, physics, chemistry, astronomy, biology, geology, anthropology, psychology, and sociology—will examine, concisely and without jargon, the outer limits of knowledge as it now exists in their respective disciplines. In other symposia in this category, scholars will address the questions of whether there are, in fact, physical or social limitations to usable knowledge; what the role of industry is in promoting scientific innovation (and application); what the space program has achieved in this tenth year since the lunar landing; and what the economic, esthetic, and technological problems of macroengineering projects are likely to be. As a group, these symposia represent a "microcosm" of the meeting—dealing with the extent of our scientific knowledge, its possible limits, and the problems found or anticipated in its application. Yet throughout runs the thread of the interrelations among and the needed interpretations between the branches of science in addressing our central problems.

As concerned citizens and scientists, it behooves us all to lend our voices to the discussions in Houston this January. It is your Annual National Meeting.—ARTHUR HERSCHMAN