

APS to Consider Whether It Should Discuss Public Issues

The 24 000 members of The American Physical Society will soon consider proposals that their organization broaden its purpose and aims to include discussion of public issues. A discussion of this matter by the membership-at-large is tentatively scheduled for the society's annual meeting in Chicago, from 29 Jan.-1 Feb. Copies of a constitutional amendment, proposed by a group of members and oriented toward discussion of public issues, and ballots for voting on the adoption of this amendment will subsequently be distributed to the APS membership.

In recent months the APS council has received suggestions from several APS members that the APS should encourage discussions of public issues at meetings and in its publications. APS president Charles Townes has also received a petition proposing an amendment to the constitution, signed by more than 1% of the APS membership (a requirement for proposing an amendment). The proposed amendment is designed to allow the membership-at-large to initiate a vote of APS members on any issue of concern to APS and on the public stand the society should take on these issues. This proposed amendment states:

Under Article III add the section: "6, *Resolutions*. The members may express their opinion, will, or intent on any matter of concern to the society by voting on one or several resolutions formally presented for their consideration. The procedures required for this action shall be the same as those specified for amending this constitution, with the following changes. The council may require additions to the ballot form to allow the registration of an abstaining vote on any question. The executive secretary shall prepare and distribute along with the ballots a summary of the arguments pro and con. The adoption of any proposed resolution shall require the affirmative votes of a majority of the members voting on that resolution."

RESONANCES

Federal support of higher education from 1963 to 1966 indicates increasing emphasis on nonscience activities, and within science, a definite trend toward education, notes a recent National Science Foundation report. In 1963 science accounted for 94% of federal academic support but in 1966 for only 72% as a result of a ninefold increase in nonscience support (mostly facilities in developing institutions). Within science, support for R&D grew by 55% while support for other activities (mostly education) more than doubled.

... meanwhile **US R&D expenditures** are about three times as great as that for all Western Europe, reports the Organization for Economic Coöperation and Development. The US has one and a half times the scientific and technical manpower of Western Europe and leads all other non-communist nations in spending 3.4% of its gross national product on R&D; second is Britain with 2.3%.

The waste of competitive spacemanship should end, urged President Johnson on 10 Oct. in proclaiming the start of the treaty to limit military activities in space. In again offering to collaborate with the Russians, the President said the expense of resources caused by duplicated or overlapping effort should give way to partnership.

Since the issue is a very important one, bearing not only on the content of APS meetings and publications but on the very nature of the society itself, *PHYSICS TODAY*, at the request of The American Physical Society, will publish a sample of letters to the editor expressive of different shades of opinion on the proposed amendment (not on specific public issues). Further discussion of this issue appears in the November *Bulletin of The American Physical Society*.

Physics Students in the Army: A Lab Tour of Duty

A draftee performs nuclear research on a 3-MeV Van de Graaff, another studies thermodynamics of flame reactions, another measures nuclear radiation under all detonation conditions.

With the step-up in the Vietnam war and higher draft levels, many local boards across the country are calling up increasing numbers of physics students and young industrial scientists for service in the armed forces. Most of these men, the army told *PHYSICS TODAY*, are sent not to fighting areas, but to military laboratories where, during their two-year tour of duty, they work as scientific and engineering assistants (S&E's) to civilian and army scientists. At the present time, over 1100 students and scientists are working in the S&E program, including several hundred physics, astronomy and geophysics assistants. In a recent visit to the army's Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory at Hanover, N.H., we found these physics students generally highly appreciated by their scientist advisors and glad to