

the physics community

Bok calls for double NSF astronomy-section budget

Assessing the status of US astronomy during the past year, American Astronomical Society president Bart J. Bok delivered a report at the Society's Tucson meeting in December. He opened with a reiteration of his last year's plea for a doubling of the budget of the NSF Astronomy Section. Bok also announced three new educational grants to the Society, in addition to reporting on a wide range of other topics.

Bok said that his was not a case of "special pleading"—the request for an increased budget being simply a reflection of his detailed knowledge of the research needs in his own field. Continuing his discussion of astronomy in NSF, Bok also suggested that the Astronomy Panel, an advisory group made up of prominent astronomers, be kept more adequately informed about NSF activities in astronomy, and that the membership of the Panel be allowed to choose a chairman from within its own ranks. At present Robert Fleischer, head of the Astronomy Section and therefore a representative of management, serves as chairman.

Astronomy and education. The AAS Task Group on Education in Astronomy has received approval of its applications for grants from both NASA and NSF. The \$11 800 grant from the Educational Program Division of NASA's Office of Public Affairs will be used to produce four single-topic brochures for use by high-school teachers. Plans have been made to use the \$30 000 grant from the NSF Office of Public Understanding to support a high-school teacher workshop, in which the brochures will be employed; a program of astronomy education in the National Parks, and design and construction of a travelling exhibit for planetariums at remote locations, especially secondary school and college planetariums.

The AAS Visiting Scientists Program has been given a gift of \$10 000 from the Richard Scott Perkin Memorial Fund, enabling the Society to continue its program of Harlow Shapley Visiting Lectureships in Astronomy during 1974. A permanent endowment for this program is being sought.

Astronomy in NASA. Expressing optimism about on-going space astronomy projects and prospects for future work in this area, Bok was particularly happy to note that the High Energy Astronomy Observatory satellite program (PHYSICS TODAY, March 1973, page 97) has been saved, although reduced in scale. Looking toward the future, he spoke at length about the Space Shuttle



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—probably the only launch vehicle that will be available for astronomical purposes in the 1980's—referring specifically to an article on the Space Shuttle program that appeared in PHYSICS TODAY (November, page 30).

Women in Astronomy. Bok was in agreement with the conclusions of the Working Group on the Status of Women: Women have not received their share of tenured appointments at most major universities, nor have hiring practices in the field yet come into accord with federal law. However, the group's report did note that women seem to be receiving a fair share of time on most major telescopes. Bok called for increased efforts to overcome sexual discrimination in the field.

Air, light and radio pollution. At last year's Las Cruces meeting a Committee on Air, Light and Radio Pollution was appointed with David Crawford (Kitt Peak National Observatory) as chairman. The committee has already begun several projects, Bok reported. It will provide information to anyone interested in astronomy-related forms of pollution; it offers national backing to local groups in their efforts to protect locations with good observing conditions, suggesting specific solutions to problems; it is preparing a "Light Pollution Booklet," and it has embarked upon a rather comprehensive program of data collection with an eye toward protecting and preserving for future use presently known observation sites.

Manpower and employment. Bok was not particularly optimistic about any easing of the unemployment situation in astronomy. After checking the latest manpower statistics supplied by Donald Goldsmith (State University of New York, Stony Brook), chairman of

the Committee on Manpower and Employment, Bok termed the continued increase in the number of doctoral candidates in astronomy an "alarming trend," and he urged US graduate astronomy departments to re-examine their admissions policies. On the brighter side, Bok noted the increasing use of the AAS Placement Career Service and Opportunities Register and the growing cooperation between the AAS manpower committee and the Employment Committee of the Canadian Astronomical Society. Pointing out other healthful signs, he spoke of the trend toward employment of astronomers at small colleges, junior colleges, secondary schools and planetariums, and toward early retirements, both of which should open up positions to unemployed astronomers.

Copies of Bok's report can be obtained by writing to him at the Steward Observatory, University of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz. 85721.

AAPM and radiologists hold joint meeting

The American Association of Physicists in Medicine, recently made a member society of the American Institute of Physics, and the Radiological Society of North America met together in Chicago during the last week of November. Although the two societies have mounted jointly sponsored physics sessions in previous years, this was the first time they held a fully integrated meeting with a single locale and a common registration system.

Sixty-five contributions dealing with the interface between medical physics and radiology, including 15 work-in-progress papers, were presented. One highlight of the meeting was a symposium on recent advances in diagnostic radiology and the physics of diagnostic radiology, held in honor of William D. Coolidge, the inventor of the hot-cathode x-ray tube. Coolidge, an honorary member of both societies, celebrated his one-hundredth birthday in 1973. Of great interest to medical physicists was the technical exhibition, a long-standing feature of the RSNA meeting in years past. This year the exhibition attracted nearly 150 commercial participants. Total attendance at the meeting exceeded 9000.

All physics sessions were organized by a joint program committee drawn from the two societies. The program co-chairmen were Edward R. Epp (Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research) for AAPM and Richard G. Lester (Duke University) for RSNA. Another joint meeting is planned for 1974.