

Society looks at public-service role

The members of the Executive and Budget Committees of the American Physical Society will meet during the Salt Lake City meeting later this month (12-14 June) for extended discussions of Society members' responses to a request, published in the May APS *Bulletin*, for commentary on whether or not the Society should indeed perform public-service functions, and, if it does so, how it can organize itself and the energies and talents of its membership.

The Society has responded in recent months, on a trial basis, to requests for assistance on scientific aspects of public issues. President W. K. H. Panofsky (Stanford Linear Accelerator Center) reported, at the joint meeting of

the Executive and Budget Committees in Philadelphia during the March Meeting, on his responses to requests for advice on science-oriented legislation. A preliminary report from the Ad Hoc Committee on a Washington Representative for the APS was another major item on that meeting's agenda.

While it is possible, under present arrangements, for the APS to sustain a modest level of participation in public-service activities, the committees concluded, the responses of the Society will necessarily be limited unless mechanisms can be found to isolate and define scientific questions of social relevance, to inform and focus the attention of APS members and ultimate-

ly to render useful advice. Such activities would primarily involve advice to the legislative branch of the government in developing socially and scientifically responsible legislation.

The Ad Hoc Committee's report clearly indicated that an effective Washington representative cannot function as a lobbyist for physics interests but must instead be directly responsive to public needs. This would include providing the legislative branch with access, in a useful form, to the scientific advice and expertise that resides or may be developed within the Society. Such a representative would also provide information on social and professional issues to the membership. These functions will be of little value, however, without the energetic and active participation of more of the members of the Society.

APS studies radiation effects on materials

An APS Summer Study on Radiation Effects on Materials has been organized by F. L. Vook (Sandia Laboratories). The goal of this summer study will be to review the state of research and development in radiation effects on materials in order to identify basic scientific problems that limit progress in energy applications. Stress will be put on those problems that can be attacked by physicists, especially those in industries.

The study will begin this month (17-28 June) at Brookhaven National Laboratory. During the first week, a research group consisting of junior and senior scientists will confer with various consultants; a preliminary draft of the work to be undertaken will be written during the second week. Further work and revision of the preliminary draft will take place at the members' home institutions. Junior staff may be assigned to closer investigation of particular topics, under the supervision of senior participants.

The complete report is expected to be submitted in the fall of 1974 and will be reviewed for approval by the APS before release. The funding agencies will have no veto over the findings or release of the report. Results of the study will be presented to the APS membership at a special session scheduled at a regular meeting.



VOOK



LEWIS

Lewis, Cowert to head reactor-safety study

Harold W. Lewis (University of California, Santa Barbara) will serve as director and David Cowert (SLAC) will serve as executive secretary of the APS Summer Study on Reactor Safety.

In undertaking this study, the Society proposes to conduct a responsible and unbiased review of existing knowledge concerning the public-safety aspects of fission reactors. The purpose of the study will be to isolate the most critical problems and uncertainties concerning reactor safety. The proposed schedule calls for the study group to meet a few days each month over a period of four or five months.

The formal summer study itself will take place at Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory in August and will last for three or four weeks. By that time the participants will have organized the working groups and will have defined specific subjects needing study. A draft of the study's report will then be written and a final report will be prepared during forums to be held in the fall. The final report is expected to be ready by the end of October.

W. K. H. Panofsky (SLAC), Victor Weisskopf (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and Hans A. Bethe (Cornell University) will supervise the general conduct of the study and review the final report, which will be published by the Society. □