FAS raises its voice

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unique today as a public-interest scientific lobby.

Its major lobbying tool is a monthly newsletter, *FAS Public Interest Report*. "The purpose of the newsletter," Stone states simply, "is advice to government." Stone writes the newsletter himself with input and review by various FAS and non-FAS experts on the subject in question. Newsletters are distributed to key Congressmen and other policy makers, as well as to all FAS members.

Each newsletter confronts a single topic. Last year's topics ran the gamut from inflation to health insurance to a call for a blue-ribbon commission to investigate naval general-purpose forces. Usually the newsletter takes a position on the issue—a position that represents a consensus in the scientific community. If a consensus does not exist, the newsletter presents all sides of the issue. Stone believes that the lack of a consensus is in itself a powerful lobbying tool—Congressmen, he says, should be made aware that not all issues are clear cut.

For example, the January issue of the newsletter was devoted to the question of nuclear power, a particularly timely subject in view of President Ford's stated intention to bring 200 nuclear reactors onstream in 10 years. In writing the newsletter Stone talked to more than 25 experts representing all views. A consensus could not be reached; so all views appear. Stone plans to devote this month's issue to FAS members' response to the January newsletter.

Physicists' role. In taking on issues outside of arms control, FAS has changed in other ways. The proportion of physicists, both the founders and the backbone of the organization, has dropped from nearly 100% to 25%. There are now nearly equal numbers of physicists, chemists, biologists and physician-researchers in FAS. However, physicists still play an important if not dominant role—FAS president Philip Morrison, treasurer Herbert F. York, and nearly a third of the FAS National Council are physicists.

We interviewed a number of FAS council members and sponsors who see the changing character of the membership as a crucial change in the organization. "For years FAS tried to broaden its membership," says William Higinbotham, one of the original founders and a physicist at Brookhaven National Laboratory, "but we were never successful in recruiting non-physicists until we took up other issues."

Physics Nobel laureate Donald Glaser agrees. Now in the physics and molecular-biology departments at University of California, Berkeley, Glaser notes, "The government needs good science advice in a number of areas and FAS provides a fine forum for that. For instance, the critical issues today have a large component of health and biology. FAS is increasingly a platform for biologists who really have not had one like the physicists have had in the Federation."

How effective FAS is as a scientific lobbying organization is difficult to evaluate—it varies with the subject matter. Francis Low, director of the MIT Center for Theoretical Physics, admits he does not know the answer, but he says he is glad FAS exists. "The social structure in this country seems to be in real trouble," Low said. "It's important there be the kind of pressure on Congress that FAS exerts."

Stone says he cannot predict what pressures FAS will bring to bear on Congress this year, because they will be dictated largely by events. There will probably be interest in reactor safety, energy, the defense budget, arms control and health. And, although Rockefeller may be occupied temporarily with the Central Intelligence Agency investigation, when he returns to the problem of presidential science advice FAS is sure to be involved. —*Madeleine Jacobs*

New Earth resources satellite starts work

A second Earth resources satellite is operating satisfactorily in orbit after successful launch on 22 January. The satellite, LANDSAT 2, will orbit the globe 14 times a day and send a new set of surface pictures every 18 days. One of the important missions of the satellite is to provide pictures of North American wheat crops to be used in conjunction with meteorological data from weather satellites and ground stations. Optical systems include a multispectral scanner (operable in two visible and two near-infrared bands) and a return beam vidicon, a set of three cameras taking simultaneous images of a given area but sensitive to different parts of the visible spectrum.

Krupp announces new award for energy R&D

The board of trustees of the Krupp Foundation has announced the existence of an annual award—the Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach Prize for Energy Research. The award, to be given first in 1975, carries a value of DM 500 000 (approximately $200 000) and will be given for "particularly outstanding work, inventions and developments, in production, utilization and transmission of primary energy, which help to make best possible use of the Earth's energy reserves, have a high development potential and no adverse effects on the environment."

The prize can go to one or more persons and, in exceptional cases, to an organization. The prize winner will be selected by the foundation's board of trustees according to proposals submitted by a board-appointed adjudicating committee. The award presentation will be accompanied by a symposium to discuss the results and practical implications of the prize-winning accomplishment.

States' R&D spending has tripled since 1964

State governments spent $273 million for research, development and R&D plant during fiscal-year 1973, according to a recently completed NSF survey. This represents a three-fold increase (in constant value dollars) over 1964. Half of the FY 1973 money was provided by the federal government with New York (24%) and California (13%) spending over one-third of the total spent by states. State agencies continue to perform approximately two-thirds of the work themselves ($175 million), the survey states, with the remainder contracted out. Total personnel engaged in state agency intramural R&D activities were 11 500 for FY 1973, of which 4900 were classified as scientists and engineers.

in brief

Harrison Brown, former foreign secretary of the National Academy of Sciences, is the newly elected president of the International Council of Scientific Unions, succeeding Jean Coulomb of France. Brown is the first American to be ICSU president since 1955.

Two feasibility studies for floating power plants using ocean temperature differences to generate electric power have been funded by NSF. TRW Systems and Energy Group, and Ocean Systems, a part of Lockheed, have received grants in the $300 000 to $400 000 range for studies of 100 megawatt plants or larger.

A $700 000 AEC program to drill an 8000-foot geothermal exploratory hole in Idaho is the first attempt in the US to utilize water cooler than 160°C for generating electric power.

An agreement signed by the US Dept. of Commerce's National Technical Information Service and the Engineering Sciences Data Unit (London) will provide NTIS customers with access to ESDU's collection of evaluated engineering design data. □