

public funds although the recipient is often restricted to studying at a single university by the fund-granting committee. No secret projects are carried out in the universities, Professor Peierls stated, although individual scientists often serve as consultants to government projects. The present policy of the universities of not accepting contracts for secret research, he said, is based on a belief that the long-term aspects of physics research should be stressed in university laboratories—an attitude which is shared by the government.

New York Meeting of FAS

Re-examination of Atomic Control Urged

A conference of the council of the Federation of American Scientists took place at Columbia University on February 2nd, the final day of the annual meeting of the Physical Society. During the Federation's six years of existence it has maintained a clear-cut and consistent attitude regarding the absolute need for some workable means of controlling atomic energy developments under a responsible international authority. In spite of the repeated failures of the nations involved to come to any agreement on the subject, the FAS has held to the position that since international control is both a necessary and possible alternative to an atomic armaments race, it should be the responsibility of the United States to demonstrate beyond question the sincere desire of Americans that the threat of atomic warfare be reduced. In the present situation, the FAS has suggested, this can best be accomplished by making certain that the official attitude of the United States in further international discussions will be as open and flexible as possible, with the way left clear for consideration of alternative proposals so that no opportunities for genuine negotiation will be lost.

With these thoughts in mind, the FAS council directed the officers of the Federation to make every effort to encourage the re-examination of proposals for the international control of atomic energy which have been advanced by the United States. This review should be carried on at the highest possible level, the FAS feels, and preferably within the federal government, but it was suggested that if necessary the job might be done instead by "a group of eminent private citizens willing to devote considerable time to quiet, concentrated study of the problems involved".

The council also unanimously approved a resolution stating that "in the pressing national interest, the Internal Security Act of 1950 be modified to reduce the restrictions on the freedom of international travel, which have especially affected the interchange of scientists between our country and others".

Considerable discussion during the meeting was devoted to the effects of the McCarran Act on international travel by scientists. V. F. Weisskopf summarized the work of the Federation's committee on passport and visa problems, which has had the task of assembling and analyzing data on cases concerning scientists who have experienced difficulty in obtaining

visas. Professor Weisskopf, who spent most of last year in Europe as a visiting lecturer in physics (see the December 1951 issue of *Physics Today*), pointed out that among those whose applications for U. S. visas had been rejected or unaccountably delayed were many foreign scientists who enjoyed unblemished reputations in their own countries. The consequences of the present visa policy of the United States, he indicated, have been sudden and all but catastrophic for American foreign scientific relations.

The Federation is currently in the midst of a drive to increase the number of its members, the total membership now being somewhat less than one thousand. The organization has managed to remain active throughout its six years, and in spite of several severe crises has been able to maintain its office in Washington and to distribute its monthly *Newsletter*. Prospects for 1952, however, are reported to be materially better than had been expected. Information concerning the Federation of American Scientists, together with membership application blanks, may be secured by writing to its office at 1749 L Street, N.W., Washington 6, D. C.

Mexican Physical Society

To Meet this Month in Querétaro

The Mexican Society of Physics has announced that its first Local Convention is to be held from April 22nd to 26th in Querétaro. Founded in Mexico City in the summer of 1950, the Society is reported to be rapidly increasing in size after having started with an initial membership of 164. Carlos Graef Fernandez of the University of Mexico is president of the Society, and Manuel Sandoval Vallarta, of the Comisión Impulsora y Coordinadora de la Investigación Científica, heads the ten-member Consejo Consultivo. Fernando Alba Andrade is vice president, and Salvador Mosqueira R. is secretary general.

APS Spring Meeting

To be Held in Washington Next Month

For the last three or four years it has seemed as though there were a ceiling of three hundred contributed papers, which the New York and Washington meetings of the American Physical Society would regularly approach but would not pierce. The ceiling will be pierced, or probably we should say it will be raised, at the 1952 Washington meeting—May 1, 2, and 3. Three hundred and thirty-five is the number of ten-minute papers whose abstracts pack the forthcoming issue of the *Bulletin*. They could scarcely have been accommodated, and certainly not with ease, but for the availability of the National Bureau of Standards and the two Washington hotels (the Shoreham and the Wardman Park). This highly desirable scheme, introduced last year by the Washington Local Committee, will be practicable again this year. The range of the topics of the ten-minute papers may be succinctly defined by saying that it is conterminous with physics, apart from