

"Both of these studies are in accord with prior recommendations made by me to the Secretary, and my remaining as Director until such studies are completed is in accord with requests made by a number of members of the Congress, by a number of scientific organizations, and by many individual scientists.

"The Visiting Committee of the National Bureau of Standards has also agreed that this represents the only practicable solution to the present problem. I, therefore, believe that regardless of my personal opinions or wishes I should continue as Director during this interim period.

"The professional integrity of the Bureau and my own integrity and competence have during recent weeks seemed to be in question. I am gratified that the Secretary has seen fit to reassure me and the Bureau on these particular points."

Science and Congress

New Joint Committee Proposed

Early in February, Representative Carl Hinshaw, Republican from California, introduced a joint resolution in the House of Representatives calling for the formation of a Joint Congressional Committee on Science to keep the members of Congress informed as to the results of scientific research and technical development bearing upon public affairs. The proposed committee would be concerned with "problems encountered in maintaining in the United States a scientific and technical effort of outstanding quality and accomplishment" and with the promotion of "better understanding of the actual and potential impact of science upon public affairs, including human and natural resources, interstate and foreign commerce, relations with foreign nations, the common defense and security, and the national health, prosperity, and welfare".

Contacts between science and Congress have not been altogether lacking in recent years. For example, the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, established under the Atomic Energy Act of 1946 to make continuing studies of AEC activities and of problems relating to the development, use, and control of atomic energy, has been obliged to deal with a variety of questions concerning science and public affairs. Similarly, the Armed Services Committees have had some familiarity with research and development carried out under funds administered by the Department of Defense. The two billion dollars being spent annually by agencies of the federal government on science and technology, furthermore, is a significant item in the federal budget, and thus is of specific interest to the Appropriations Committees and to Congress as a whole.

The proposed Joint Committee on Science would, however, occupy an entirely different position than do these and other Congressional committees. Its functions would be purely educational in nature and, in the language of the resolution, "shall not supersede in any way the duties and responsibilities of any standing or select committee of the Senate or House of Representatives or any joint committee of the Senate and

House of Representatives". It would be remarkable also in its composition. According to the resolution, the committee would consist of fourteen appointed members (seven from each house of Congress) and "such other members of the Senate and the House of Representatives as shall signify their intention of becoming members of the committee by filing a declaration to that effect in writing with the chairman of the committee".

The committee would be authorized to utilize the services, facilities, and personnel of the National Science Foundation and of other federal departments or agencies with their consent, and it would hold at least one meeting annually with the National Science Board of NSF.

The reaction of scientists to the resolution has been favorable—prevalent opinion being that a somewhat broader base of informed opinion on scientific matters in Congress would be very much in the national interest. The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 166; 83rd Congress, 1st Session) is now in the hands of the Committee on Rules of the House of Representatives, where its fate is uncertain. Whether or not it will be released by the Rules Committee is thought to depend largely on the extent and nature of public response to the resolution.

Miscellany

The Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, after being deadlocked for several weeks over the question of whether a new chairman should be elected from the Senate or from the House of Representatives, finally has settled the issue by naming Representative W. Sterling Cole of New York to fill the post. A bipartisan conference of leaders of both houses of Congress is reported to have approved Mr. Cole's election and to have established a policy whereby chairmanships of all joint committees shall be rotated every two years between the Senate and the House.

The Lorentz Medal of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences will be awarded to Fritz London, professor of chemistry at Duke University, at a meeting in Amsterdam on June 27th, immediately following the commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the late H. A. Lorentz to be held in the last week of June. Professor London was chosen to receive the award in recognition of: his contribution to the theory of chemical binding, in particular of homopolar molecules; his interpretation of the Van der Waals forces on a quantum-mechanical basis; his contributions toward the development of a phenomenological theory of superconduction; and his theoretical explanation of the behavior of helium below the lambda-point. Previous awards of the Lorentz Medal have been made to Max Planck (1927), W. Pauli (1931), P. Debye (1935), and H. A. Kramers (1948).

Delegates appointed by the National Research Council to represent the United States at the Third International Commission of Optics in Madrid, Spain, on April 20-21 were Brian O'Brien (chairman of the delegation), Deane B. Judd, Irvine C. Gardner, and Stanley S. Ballard. Dr. O'Brien is president of the Optical Society of