

News and views

Federal Funds for Science

GOVERNMENT agencies have allocated about ten percent less for scientific research and development during the present fiscal year than in 1954, but a breakdown of the figures for 1955 indicates that basic research obligations have at the same time been increased almost ten percent over last year. The major decreases, according to estimates contained in the National Science Foundation's third report on federal funds for science, have occurred in obligations for research and development plant and facilities (\$158 million in 1955 as compared with \$227 million in 1954) and applied research and development (\$1669 million in 1955 as compared with \$1703 million in 1954).

The physical sciences account for some 87 percent of this year's obligations for research and development, of which \$1.46 billion is for work in applied fields and \$94 million for basic research. The corresponding figures for last year were \$1.51 billion and \$87 million, respectively. Research and development for national security account for about 85 percent of the 1955 science expenditures, with the remaining 15 percent distributed among other functions of government, including agriculture, health, welfare, transportation, communications, and development of natural resources. More than twenty federal agencies reported on their expenditures and obligations for science. Seven agencies accounted for more than 98 percent of the total funds. The Department of Defense was responsible for about 75 percent of the total; the other six agencies were the Atomic Energy Commission, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, the Departments of Agriculture, Interior, and Commerce, and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Federal Obligations and Expenditures for Research and Development (in millions of dollars)

Fiscal Year	Obligations	Expenditures
1948	877	865
1949	1122	1097
1950	1244	1143
1951	1852	1342
1952	2217	1839
1953	2167	2119
1954*	2225	2133
1955*	1993	2020

* Estimated

Sources: Bureau of the Budget and National Science Foundation

Of the agencies reporting, only two, NSF and the Smithsonian Institution, use their total research funds for basic investigations.

Copies of the current NSF report (*Federal Funds for Science, III. The Federal Research and Development Budget, Fiscal Years 1953, 1954, and 1955*) may be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. at a cost of 30 cents.

Atoms for Peace Proposal

UNANIMOUS approval of the resolution calling for the creation of an international agency for the peaceful use of atomic energy has been voted by the United Nations Political Committee (November 23rd) and by the General Assembly (December 4th). Despite the defeat of Soviet-sponsored amendments calling for Communist Chinese participation in next summer's international scientific conference and for placing the atomic agency under control of the Security Council, all of the Soviet-bloc nations voted to approve the resolution as a whole. United States delegate Henry Cabot Lodge has told the UN that this country will make available to the agency 100 kilograms of fissionable reactor fuel, will provide complete technical libraries of unclassified atomic energy data to nations belonging to the agency, and will make it possible for foreign students and research scientists to study and work in selected training schools and research establishments in the United States.

Atomic Energy Commissioner Lewis L. Strauss, speaking before an Executives Club luncheon in Chicago on December 3rd, announced that Argonne National Laboratory's CP-5 research reactor "has been in the main declassified and pertinent information concerning its construction and operation will be available". Noting that the 100 kilograms of fissionable material earmarked by the United States for use by the international agency would be sufficient to provide the critical inventory for fifteen such reactors for five years of operation and still have most of the fuel unconsumed, Admiral Strauss said, "These fifteen reactors would multiply many times the research reactor capabilities of the free world, excluding the United States. Each of them could produce more radioisotopes of varied types than are presently needed by Holland or Switzerland or Belgium or, for that matter, any country in the world."

Protection of Unclassified Secrets

AN Office of Strategic Information has been created in the Department of Commerce in order to "provide a central location within the government which will work with the business community in voluntary efforts to prevent unclassified strategic data from being made available to those foreign nations which might use such data in a manner harmful to the defense in-