

GENERAL SCIENCE

Problems of Scientists

Secret activities of President's loyalty boards and damaging effects of McCarran Act cited as among most serious problems facing scientists as responsible citizens.

By DR. E. U. CONDON

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Excerpts from address delivered at the meeting of the American Chemical Society, Buffalo, N. Y., March 24.

► . . . THE SCIENTISTS of this country are going to have to do a lot of educational work among our fellow-citizens and with Congress. Specifically, the scientists of every community should make it a point to call on and become personally acquainted with their own Senators and Representatives and go over with them carefully and in detail the problems confronting scientific research. This can be done in a spirit of mutual helpfulness—not of lobbying by pressure tactics—and if done in this way I am sure will be received sympathetically and gratefully by the members of Congress. Too much preoccupation with newspaper accounts of the antics of a few of them ought not be allowed to obscure the fact that nearly all of them are first-rate high type citizens who are conscientiously interested in doing a good job.

I want to come to another serious problem that now confronts not only scientists but all people in the service of the Federal Government. I refer to the unfair persecutions and intimidations and character assassinations to which Federal employees are being subjected, not only by Congress, but also at the hands of the President's loyalty boards. I think that the secret activities that are going on within this latter framework are in some ways more evil than the publicized actions of Congress. In any case, the combined effect of all such activities is greatly undermining the morale of the government service and greatly aggravating the difficulty which the Federal Government finds in getting men to expose themselves and their families to these hazards.

No honest person will distort the meaning of my remarks; I do not advocate carelessness about loyalty or trustworthiness of those in the Federal service. I merely ask that these matters be handled with intelligence. (Dr. Condon then cited a "shameless, outrageous and indecent" example of the hardships suffered by a physical chemist who gave money to a friend accused and later acquitted, in the Canadian atomic spy cases.)

I am sure nobody even on the Loyalty Board believes that there is anything wrong

with many people they suspend, but they live in fear that any show of reasonableness will some day form the basis of an attack on their own loyalty.

I do not believe the American people would condone the sort of thing that is going on if they knew about it, either from the point of view of effectiveness of the Federal service now greatly damaged by the excesses of the last few years, or from the point of view of fairness to fellow Americans. We should realize, above all as chemists, that it is not true that where there is smoke there is fire, there may be only a very nasty person with a smoke machine.

Finally, I want to talk briefly about another evil situation that is damaging the progress of science in this country and is doing much to damage the general prestige of our country among intelligent people abroad. I refer to the exclusion, and at best, the long delays and officious red tape where exclusion is not involved, affecting scientists from other countries who plan visits here for conventions and other purposes. This is being done in accordance with provisions of the McCarran Act, passed by Congress over the veto of the President.

As a result of the actual operations of this Act, a number of distinguished scientists have been kept out of this country and have been kept from making contributions at scientific conferences of importance to us. I was told that the situation had gotten so bad that last summer a conference was held on a scientific subject under military auspices in which it was desired to have several outstanding French scientists participate. Because of the delays and probable insurmountable difficulties which would be caused by the McCarran Act, the conference was held in Canada instead of the United States even though this put us to the expense of sending all of our participants out of the country to meet our foreign guests, and certainly put our country in a ridiculous light before the Europeans.

This Act should be amended at the earliest possible moment and it is important that scientists everywhere carefully explain this issue to their Congressmen in personal contacts. It is probably too much to hope that action on such a subject will be taken before the November elections so we will have to continue to have our country's scientific position damaged by this stupidity for some months longer.

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● RADIO

Saturday, April 19, 1952, 3:15-3:30 p.m. EST

"Adventures in Science," with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over Columbia Broadcasting System.

Dr. John C. Bugher, deputy director, division of biology and medicine, U. S. Atomic Energy Commission, discusses "Atomic Radiation Effects."

MEDICINE

Test New TB Drug on Patients if Congress Willing

► PATIENTS IN 16 U. S. Public Health Service cooperating tuberculosis hospitals throughout the country will be the next, and presumably very willing, guinea pigs in trials of the new anti-tuberculosis drug, isonicotinic acid hydrazide, if present plans carry through.

First hurdle to be taken before these patients will start getting the new drug is appropriation by Congress of \$200,000 to finance the study. The 1953 appropriation bill for the Federal Security Agency, which includes the Public Health Service, has already passed the House. But President Truman has sent a request to the president of the Senate asking for the \$200,000 supplemental appropriation.

Budget Bureau Director Frederick J. Lawton explained in a letter of transmittal to the President that because the new drug was not announced until February of this year, funds for a clinical study project to determine its efficiency could not have been included in the original 1953 FSA appropriation bill.

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TECHNOLOGY

Sawdust Feeds Turbine For Running Sawmills

► AN EXPERIMENTAL sawdust-fed gas turbine has been developed which has reached combustion efficiencies up to 99%, bringing one step nearer the lumberman's dream of running his sawmills from waste wood.

George H. Atherton and Stanley E. Corder, engineers with the Oregon Forest Products Laboratory of Corvallis, Ore., reported to the American Society of Mechanical Engineers meeting in Seattle that with respect to furnace volume, the heat release rate in the experimental device is about 15 times greater than usually attained in most boiler installations using wood fuel.

The idea for the project was presented two years ago in a student ASME paper contest. Subsequent studies have indicated that sawmills in Oregon produce more wood waste fuel in the manufacture of lumber than is required to power the sawmills using this method.

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