

GENERAL SCIENCE

Congress Views Science

Some clear issues emerge in a series of forums held by a House Committee studying the problem of how the Government should go about supporting research projects.

► MANY of the nation's top scientists are taking part in an unprecedented series of seminars with Congressmen in an effort to clear up what the Government's role should be in supporting research.

The scientists seem to be unanimously against the House's decision to limit the funds of the National Science Foundation, the agency that distributes research grants.

But they are divided as to whether the enormous expenditures to put an American on the moon are helping or hurting basic research.

Congressmen, on the other hand, appear to be chiefly concerned over the manner in which federal research money is distributed.

Those, such as Rep. George P. Miller (D-Calif.), from states having big, excellent universities, generally approve of the way grants are doled out.

Others, such as Rep. J. Edward Roush (D-Ind.) and Rep. Joe D. Waggoner Jr. (D-La.), are calling for a "more equitable geographic spread."

Dr. Wernher von Braun, director of the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center, Huntsville, Ala., said the United States will lose its status as the world's leader in scientific research if Government support is put on a "stop-and-go basis."

Dr. George B. Kistiakowsky, presidential science advisor during the Eisenhower Administration, said basic research should be considered an investment.

"Economic progress is dependent on innovation," he said. "Innovation depends on new technology, which in turn depends on research."

Dr. Richard J. Russell of the Louisiana Coastal Studies Institute said the greatest need in basic science is to develop more scientists.

"Short-range programs, such as placing a man on the moon, are draining talent from potential future faculties at what I consider an alarming rate," he said.

But Dr. Fred L. Whipple, director of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Cambridge, Mass., said the moon program has had just the opposite effect. The "consolidated approach toward a goal attracts people into science," he said.

Dr. Whipple added that Negroes can raise the nation's pool of scientific talent 20% if they are given better opportunities.

Rep. Miller, who heads the Science and Astronautics Committee, questioned whether present "centers of excellence" should be penalized in an effort to spread grant money more evenly across the land.

Dr. Leland J. Haworth, director of the National Science Foundation, said no one should be penalized. When a farmer decides to increase his yield, he adds new land,

he said, but he does not abandon his best old plots.

Rep. Roush said that Purdue University, Lafayette, loses 90% of its Ph.D. graduates to big universities on the East and West Coasts.

"This is not good for the full development of our human resources," he said.

Rep. Waggoner said if the money spent for research in California were suddenly put into West Virginia, scientists would move promptly to West Virginia.

Dr. Roger Revelle, oceanographer of the University of California, shot back, claiming that scientists do not "follow the dollar," but seek out the best minds, atmospheres of intellectual freedom and spots with established postgraduate research programs.

"You cannot build a university as you do a grammar school," he said.

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NSF Education Programs Under Investigation

► VARIOUS PROGRAMS for educating scientists, run now by 17 different government agencies, are in the Senate's frying pan.

The Appropriations Committee has been putting the heat on the National Science Foundation's multi-million dollar education programs.

Another burner will be turned on by the Space Committee when it opens hearings on the educational programs financed by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Senators are looking particularly for evidences of overlapping in purposes and favoritism toward certain regions and universities.

Sen. Gordon L. Allott (R-Colo.) predicted that his colleagues will be "shocked" to find that NASA is spending \$20 million on education programs, a field he thinks belongs primarily to NSF.

Sen. Allen J. Ellender (D-La.), chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee considering the NSF, charged the foundation with promoting "pirating" of teachers. He said the following happens:

The NSF lets fellowship winners pick the schools they wish to attend, so students usually pick the prestige universities.

This results in more money for the top schools and they can pay higher salaries. Thus they can lure top faculty members from schools, such as Louisiana State University and Tulane, in Sen. Ellender's home state, giving still more prestige to the big schools and attracting still more.

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