



AEC

*Seaborg: Elected despite controversy.*

Dr. Seaborg the concerns of some of the board members. After consultation he decided to continue as a candidate. Mail ballots were subsequently sent out to the 530 voting members of the AAAS Council.

One of the main objections of dissident board members to Dr. Seaborg's candidacy was that it came at a time when the AAAS was becoming increasingly involved in environmental issues and the AEC was coming under increasing attack by environmentalists. They pointed out that the AAAS Committee on Environmental Alteration plans to study the effect of power plants on the environment and that Sen. Edmund Muskie (D-Me.) had asked AAAS to make a scientific judgment on the controversy between the AEC and Drs. John Gofman and Arthur Tamplin (SN: 5/23, p. 500) on the safety of nuclear power plants. With Dr. Seaborg as head of both organizations, the appearance of a conflict of interest would be hard to avoid, they argued.

Dr. Seaborg maintains that there would be no such danger, since he would withdraw from any considerations in which his role as AEC Chairman might be considered to be in conflict with AAAS matters.

Another argument was that the AAAS is currently trying to attract more young scientists as members, and Dr. Seaborg's identification with the AEC would harm that effort.

Still another concerned his role as president of the board of Science Service, publisher of SCIENCE NEWS. There has been some discussion this year of a merger of Science Service with AAAS, but conditions were not ripe for the move and the talks were abandoned. In the remote event that the discussions were reopened, opponents argued, Dr. Seaborg could find himself on both sides of the street. But that eventuality was considered extremely unlikely.

When Seaborg opponents brought

these objections to the attention of the news staff of SCIENCE, one of its reporters, Philip M. Boffey, prepared a news article on the controversy. SCIENCE editor Philip H. Abelson refused to allow it to be published, and news editor Greenberg resigned. The resignation prompted newspaper stories into the whole controversy. Because of this public attention, and the fact that the mail balloting was by then concluded, Dr. Abelson decided an article would then be appropriate, and a full updated report on the entire sequence of events appeared in the Dec. 11 SCIENCE.

Despite this fairly extraordinary in-house dispute, Dr. Seaborg easily won the election. The tally was not announced, but it was said to be by about a 10-to-1 margin. Supporters could well claim this vindicated Dr. Seaborg, but all the effects of the wounds caused by the incident will not be known for a long time. □

#### INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY

### A flurry in space

This week, after the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's space shuttle program (SN: 8/29, p. 178) survived this year's final assault from priorities-minded Senators, new spacecraft, all unmanned, filled the skies. Three satellites, a Venus probe and the reanimation of Russia's unmanned moonwalker Lunokhod I (SN: 11/21, p. 397) took part in the international fireworks.

The NASA budget, voted by the Senate and sent on to the White House, was part of an omnibus appropriation bill previously vetoed by President Nixon on the grounds that it was inflationary. During Senate debate on the bill, a move to eliminate \$110 million for initial studies of a space shuttle and space station was defeated. The total NASA budget for fiscal 1971 is \$3.26 billion, \$65 million less than the President's original request in January.

In addition to the awakening of the sun-powered Lunokhod after the lunar night, there were:

■ The descent of Russia's Venus 7 space probe (SN: 8/29, p. 173) through the Venusian atmosphere.

The Soviets made no advance claims that Venus 7 would soft-land via a parachute on Venus. Three previous probes in the last three years apparently did not reach the surface intact (SN: 6/28/69, p. 610). The current spacecraft, some 120 pounds heavier than its predecessors, transmitted signals for about 35 minutes during its descent through the dense, hot Venusian atmosphere.

■ The French launch of a scientific satellite from the South American test base in Kourou, French Guiana. The

satellite will test various instruments to be installed in France's meteorological satellite, Eole, in 1971.

■ The Italian launch of a United States satellite, SAS (Small Astronomy Satellite), (SN: 9/12, p. 225), off San Marcos Island, Kenya. The satellite will detect high-energy X-ray sources in space.

■ And the United States' launch of a new weather satellite, ITOS, redesignated NOAA-1 for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The meteorological satellite contains four camera systems—two for global picture coverage of the earth's weather and two for immediate transmission of cloud photographs directly to receiving stations around the world. □

#### ATHEROSCLEROSIS

### The role of diet

Anyone who wants to avoid hardening of the arteries, which can lead to heart attacks and strokes, should avoid fat cuts of meat, shellfish, organ meats such as liver, butter, egg yolk, bacon and baked goods high in saturated fats and cholesterol. Cigarettes are also taboo, according to a report issued this week by a group of 100 medical scientists.

In a position paper from the Inter-Society Commission for Heart Disease Resources, headquartered in New York City, panelists acknowledged that the several epidemiological studies conducted thus far, both in the United States and abroad, have failed to yield conclusive evidence of a cause-and-effect relationship between heart disease and diet. Nevertheless, authorities working under the chairmanship of Dr. Irving S. Wright, professor emeritus at Cornell University Medical School, agreed that there is sufficient circumstantial evidence to support their plea that the public modify its eating and smoking habits.

The scientists also called upon the food industry to revise processing procedures to moderate fat and cholesterol content, urged new laws to require that foods be clearly labeled as to fat content and recommended that cattle ranchers shift to range feeding and earlier slaughter of animals to yield leaner meat.

Even if such precautionary, and presumably preventive, measures are taken to guard against heart disease, definitive studies are still essential, the panel maintains, to answer the diet-heart disease question once and for all. Such research could take up to 10 years to produce clear answers. To obtain them, the panel urged a "decisive national policy commitment and corresponding allocation of resources over the next years." □

