

## Science under Ford: Open door, tight budget

Like a refreshing breath of spring in mid-August, the inauguration of Gerald R. Ford as the 38th President of the United States has cooled national tempers and brought a sense of relief to official Washington. The scientific community is no exception. After more than a year and a half of virtual exile from the seat of power—since the Office of Science and Technology (OST) and the President's Science Advisory Committee (PSAC) were unceremoniously dumped from the White House roster (SN: 1/27/73, p. 52)—scientists and technical experts may actually be able to meet with the highest elected official in the land. Considering the growing importance of such science-related problems as possible changes in the global climate, depletion of resources, the threat of famine and the search for energy sources, the change came none too soon.

After the expulsion of OST and PSAC, the director of the National Science Foundation, H. Guyford Stever, was named the official presidential science adviser, but he almost never met his client face to face (SN: 7/28/74, p. 52) and had to work through lower echelon officials or shadowy unofficial advisers with access to the throne (SN: 12/1/73, p. 343). Finally a National Academy of Sciences committee led by James R. Killian pronounced the whole set-up "inherently unsatisfactory and insufficient" and proposed establishment of a new White House advisory apparatus, the Council of Science and Technology (CST) (SN: 7/6/74, p. 4).

Not only is the new President apparently more open to advice—he requested a personal briefing by Stever long before his ascension became likely—he also does his homework. Stever told SCIENCE NEWS he found Ford to be already familiar with the Killian proposal on CST, that the then Vice President showed "great interest" in the status and aims of NSF programs, and that he asked informed questions concerning progress in science.

Rep. Charles A. Mosher (R-Ohio), ranking minority member of the House Science and Astronautics Committee, told SCIENCE NEWS he is confident that President Ford will be "much more open, much more sympathetic" to the views of the scientific community and that "after the dust settles" Mosher intends to personally approach Ford on the subject of reinstating a White House science advisory apparatus. "He's not only willing to listen to ad-



President Ford addresses Congress.

vice; he seeks it," Mosher said. "This lays the basis for a much more open, more useful relationship."

The gathering storm threatening this cheery scene is, of course, burgeoning economic unrest accompanied by thundering inflation. Ford is an economic conservative who is expected to approach the problem through tight budgets and tight money. The fortunes of science cannot stray too far from those of other segments of the economy: Inflation has been a serious malady since 1968, when R&D "real dollar" purchasing power peaked (see story on p. 105), and the technical community will have to accept its share of the remedy. "I think we'll have to make some priority judgments," says Stever—as polite a way as any of warning about budget cuts ahead. □

## Researcher found cheating at psi lab

Fraud has always been a problem for parapsychologists, and notorious cases of deception have kept parapsychology on the fringes of science. Now, from the very center of the parapsychology community, comes another report of fraud. SCIENCE NEWS has learned that a researcher at the Institute for Parapsychology in Durham, N.C., has been caught fudging experimental results and has been forced to resign.

J. B. Rhine of the Institute for Parapsychology has been a moving force since the 1930's in attempts to tighten up parapsychology's procedures and to ensure that experimental subjects have no way of cheating. More recently Rhine has turned to the problem of the possibility of cheating on the part of experimenters.

Ironically, while Rhine was considering the problem of experimenter reliability, a perfect example turned up in his own laboratory. "Not only right here at the Institute for Parapsychology," says Rhine, "but even involving an able and respected colleague and trusted friend." Rhine has outlined the details of the case in an article to appear in an upcoming issue of the JOURNAL OF PARAPSYCHOLOGY, publication of which has been delayed so that the facts of the case could be made public. The institute has drafted a brief news release about the incident, to be issued Aug. 19.

Freud and others have suggested that telepathy may have been a primitive

form of communication that atrophied when humans learned to speak. Following up such suggestions, parapsychologists have attempted to identify psi powers in animals. The results of some of these experiments have been encouraging enough to the investigators and in recent years animal research has become one of the main avenues of research in parapsychology. Some of this animal research has been going on at the Institute for Parapsychology.

In one set of experiments, electrodes were implanted in the brains of rats. Stimulation of the electrodes produced a highly pleasant and desirable sensation in the rats. The number of stimulations was controlled by a random generator—an electronic device that gives stimulations on a purely chance basis. The object of the experiment was to see if the animals could, by psychokinetic powers, influence the generator to give them more than the chance number of stimulations. It was in this set of experiments that the fraud was detected.

The experiments had been going on for more than a year with fairly good results. The animals did seem to be able to influence the machinery. So Rhine urged the experimenters to attempt to have the work independently replicated. But then, the experiment took a bad turn. Results fell back to the chance level and it is not easy to convince other researchers to take up an experiment that does not seem to be successful. Independent replication