

Taking the longer view

Science is a body of knowledge which has been estimated to be the equivalent of some 10,000,000 books on science and its applications. More important, this body of knowledge is increasing at a rate estimated to be about 1,000,000 book equivalents a year, or on the order of 100 books an hour.

This torrent of information has significant implications for three very important but different groups—interested citizens, teachers, and engineers, doctors and scientists themselves.

The citizen must have some understanding of new developments in science and of their implications in order to fulfill his role as a decision-making member of a democratic society. Such an understanding is essential today, for at every turn there are science-and-society decisions: the wise use and control of pesticides, the true extent of the dangers of marijuana, the problems relating to transplant surgery and decisions on the goals of the space program.

The teacher must keep abreast of scientific achievement, for the body of knowledge is increasing and changing so rapidly that no curriculum reform can possibly keep up with it. In addition, science now touches almost every aspect of life and, consequently, almost every aspect of what is taught.

The scientist must keep in close contact with new ideas and discoveries, not only in his own field but in other disciplines as well. For increasingly developments in one field affect those in another.

For many years, our primary concern was with the interested citizen.

But we have come to realize that his needs are not substantially different from those of the teacher, who at best is familiar with only one area of science, or of the scientist, who is a layman in every discipline but his own. As a consequence, we prepare the material in *SCIENCE NEWS* with all three groups in mind, and try to provide carefully selected and carefully written accounts of current developments.

But there is a transience about news that seems to conflict with the permanence of the work we report each week, and we have long felt the need for another perspective—one which would provide a broader view than is possible on a weekly basis. This has resulted in the *Science News Yearbook*, a new annual publication, which we are pleased to have published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Science News Yearbook will cover the developments of a year. In so doing, it will not attempt to provide a definitive history, but rather will represent a review of the year's developments and their implications in the longer perspective necessary to a reference volume.

Over the year, more than 1,200 pages of *SCIENCE NEWS* are devoted to more than 5,000 reports and articles. From this pool of material, plus additional matter especially prepared for this volume, we have tried to present a balanced picture of the year.

The first *Science News Yearbook* has just been published; future editions will appear in the spring of each year. We feel that its publication fills an important gap in the general coverage of scientific developments, and we believe it will provide a useful reference work to the public we are now serving.

E. G. Sherburne Jr.