



—Berryman in the Washington Evening Star

—Herblock in the Washington Post

## GENERAL SCIENCE

## Standards May Be Raided

Scientists at National Bureau of Standards, heretofore held by high sense of public duty, may become reluctant to refuse tempting job offers received from industry and colleges.

► PERSONNEL RAIDS by industrial and college research laboratories upon the National Bureau of Standards will have more chance of success as the result of lowered morale due to the dismissal of Director A. V. Astin.

Always vulnerable because industry and even colleges can often offer higher salaries, the sense of public service and contribution to the defense effort has served to hold most scientists at the bureau despite attractive opportunities elsewhere.

Now fear of insecurity and disgust at the possible further entrance of political pressure into this scientific bureau combine to make the scientists look more favorably upon outside offers.

More than 50 top level bureau scientists have submitted undated resignations, threatening to quit unless the Astin affair is given a thorough investigation.

Although Secretary of Commerce Weeks has appointed a committee to "evaluate the present functions" of the Bureau of Standards, such action does not necessarily mean the investigation of the ouster of

Dr. Astin as Bureau of Standards head.

The committee's chairman is Dr. M. J. Kelly, president of Bell Telephone Laboratories. No other appointments have as yet been announced.

And scientists are mystified because Mr. Weeks did not appoint such a committee, or consult the visiting committee of the National Bureau of Standards or the National Academy of Sciences concerning the controversy before Dr. Astin's forced resignation.

The Academy, a quasi-official agency chartered by Congress in 1863 at the request of President Lincoln, was set up to be the scientific adviser to the government.

It is considered by scientists as the final board of arbitration on scientific disputes. In its first year of existence, during the Civil War, the Academy set up six investigating committees. One of them concerned the value of continued publication of certain navigation charts and sailing directions, a controversial issue at that time.

"If all examination is refused, the good is confounded with the bad, and the gov-

ernment may lose a most important advantage. If a decision is left to influence, or to imperfect knowledge, the worst consequences follow."

So said Prof. Alexander Bache, in 1851, in urging the establishment of a scientific institution to "guide public action in reference to scientific matters."

The Senate Small Business Committee announced on April 9 that it plans to look into the "fairness" of the tests during hearings in May, but will not investigate the reasons why those tests got Dr. Astin ousted as bureau chief. This group originated the request for the report on AD-X2 by MIT scientists.

Senator Edward J. Thye (R-Minn.), committee chairman, stated that the committee was "not out to injure anyone," and wanted to make sure that the Bureau of Standards "is not injured. That is one agency above all that the public must have confidence in," he said.

Sen. Thye also stated that the committee's concern is "to make sure that small business receives fair treatment in its dealing with government agencies."

The committee is expected to call in other witnesses after hearing Dr. Astin and perhaps other bureau scientists. These would include industrial users of the product, Massachusetts Institute of Technology scientists and armed services' representatives.

It is believed also that Jess Ritchie of Oakland, Calif., manufacturer of AD-X2, will be called on to testify.

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