

GENERAL SCIENCE

Science Office Proposed

► A REORGANIZATION PLAN creating a new Office of Science and Technology within the Executive Office of the President was recommended by staff members of the Senate Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery.

The new science unit would be headed by the President's special assistant for science and technology, a job now held by Dr. Jerome B. Wiesner.

The staff study calls for the plan to be submitted to Congress by next January. The present special assistant post and the Science Advisory Council, both created by President Eisenhower and continued by President Kennedy, would be made "permanent parts of the Government—with statutory underpinning."

The Office's formal responsibilities would include making continuing recommendations to the President for meeting long-term national needs in science, and helping the President and the Budget Bureau coordinate and evaluate agency programs for

scientific research and development.

As Office director, the special assistant would be given "one, or preferably two, full-time deputies," drawn from Science Advisory Committee members and an expanded staff.

Also recommended was a strengthening of "science arrangements" in other departments and agencies, particularly the Department of State and the foreign aid agencies. State, the report said, lacks "a satisfactory level" of technical competence, and foreign aid agencies "have been tardy in taking advantage of the contributions which applied science and technology can make to their planning and operations."

A flexible mode of organization and operation is advocated for the new Office. "Science at the Presidential level must never become bureaucratized."

The subcommittee is headed by Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D.-Wash.) who said he personally agrees with the proposal.

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GENERAL SCIENCE

Loyalty Still Hot Issue

► SHOULD A COLLEGE student who accepts a Federal loan to further his education be required to file an affidavit proclaiming his anti-Communist sympathies and his loyalty to this country?

The question has been hotly debated since 1958, when the National Defense Education Act was passed by Congress. Currently, it is hotter than ever, as the time nears for the House Committee on Education and Labor, headed by Rep. Adam Clayton Powell (D.-N.Y.), to report on proposed amendments to the act.

Outright repeal of the so-called "disclaimer affidavit" provision in the present law is included in the Administration-backed omnibus bill introduced by Rep. Cleveland M. Bailey (D.-W. Va.). It is also the subject of separate bills offered by Reps. Edith Green (D.-Ore.), Thomas L. Ashley (D.-Ohio), John V. Lindsay (R.-N.Y.) and Herbert Zelenko (D.-N.Y.).

These five legislators see eye to eye with officials of the 32 U.S. colleges and universities wanting no part of the loan program as long as the disclaimer affidavit is compulsory, and also with those of 62 other higher-learning institutions where strong objections have been raised.

The bill passed in September, 1958 (Public Law 864), set up a system of loans administered by participating colleges. The Government provides up to eight-ninths of the money, and the college the remainder. The low-interest loans are limited to \$1,000 per academic year, repayable within 11 years after the student leaves school. Special consideration is given student applicants who want to teach, or who have shown superior abilities in science, mathematics, engineering or foreign languages.

The controversy stems from one of the tagged-on "miscellaneous provisions." It stipulates that no loans or payments can be made to students who fail to meet two requirements. They must file a disclaimer affidavit swearing they do not belong to, believe in, or support any organization advocating or teaching overthrow of the U.S. Government by violence or illegal methods. And they must take an oath of loyalty to the United States.

Although the two-part ruling is commonly referred to as the "loyalty oath" provision, it is the first part—the disclaimer affidavit section—that has aroused the most bitter opposition, and is now the target of educators and liberal legislators alike.

The financial aid branch of the Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, reports that 20 institutions in ten states have dropped out of the loan program because of the affidavit requirement. Harvard University, Yale University, Sarah Lawrence College, Smith College, Vassar College and the University of Chicago are included.

Twelve others, ranging from Princeton University and Bryn Mawr College to the Illinois College of Chiropody and Foot Surgery, declined to take part in the program at all, also because of the affidavit.

Of these 32, 24 have filed or stated they would file applications for participation in the 1961-62 program—if the current drive for repeal is successful.

The presidents or governing boards of 62 more institutions in 24 states have registered official disapproval of the disclaimer idea, but continue in the loan program. Brown University, in Rhode Island, has indicated it will drop out in the next

academic year unless the affidavit is no longer required.

The general anti-disclaimer argument is that the requirement infringes on academic freedom and individual freedom of belief.

Others, including former Health, Education and Welfare Secretary Arthur S. Fleming, have pointed out that the clause is essentially useless, since no real Communist would have any scruples about lying and signing the affidavit to get what he wanted.

Also frequently mentioned is the allegation that students are unjustly singled out as "suspicious characters."

Appropriations originally authorized for the loan program totaled \$47,500,000 for fiscal 1959, \$75,000,000 for fiscal 1960, \$82,500,000 for fiscal 1961, and \$90,000,000 for fiscal 1962. No institution can receive more than \$250,000 in any single year.

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