

with its hundred years of experience in fields of scientific endeavour, has much to offer in assisting the Congress: "We recognize the importance of science to our national progress, and to the attainment of our national goals. The unchallengeable standards and authority of the Academy, with its ability to draw upon the best talents in the country, is a reassuring factor in the consideration of public policy". . . .

Mr. Daddario, expressing his determination to implement the agreement in the immediate future, commented: "The House Committee on Science and Astronautics has been charged with general jurisdiction in an area that has come to have great significance in recent years—science and technology. At the same time there is a growing need to spend the vast Federal funds devoted to this field as fruitfully as possible, to provide stability to national policies and to give proper emphasis to creative research. Thus the Academy's advice will receive the most careful consideration in our future work. To-day's world places critical priority on scientific progress to shape the character of future civilization. Our basic problem in Government has been to bring the force of science and technology to serve the needs of our people. I am confident that this new arrangement will make a major contribution to that end". Mr. Daddario said that the agreement with the Academy is one of several such arrangements which his Sub-committee is working out with both private and Governmental groups to aid the full Committee with its future work on fundamental Government-science problems.

U.S. Support for Research on Cotton, Silk and Man-made Fibres in Britain

THE United States Department of Agriculture is to make a grant of £40,902 to the Cotton, Silk and Man-made Fibres Research Association's Shirley Institute, Didsbury, Manchester. The grant, which will be paid during the next five years, is for the support of an investigation of the effect of caustic soda and other swelling agents on the fine structure of cotton. The work to be carried out under the grant will consist of: (a) a comprehensive, critical survey of the literature on swelling treatments of cotton; (b) an experimental investigation on the effect of swelling agents (principally with caustic soda, but including other agents), on the fine structure of cotton cellulose, and on some physical properties which are changed by swelling treatments, to obtain information needed to improve cotton products. The work will take place over the next five years, the first two of which will be concentrated on section (a), and the last three on the experimental investigation of section (b). The research is under the general direction of Dr. J. Honeyman, and the team will be headed by Dr. J. O. Warwick. In addition to its importance for mercerization, treatment of cotton with swelling agents is necessary as preliminary to the application of many easy-care and crease-resistant finishes. Although quite a lot is known about the technological aspects of these processes, it is hoped that by a fundamental study of the changes brought about in the fine structure of cotton by swelling agents, new and better processes for the modification of cotton will result. The research work embraced within the project is part of the Institute's approved research programme so that the grant provided by the United States Department of Agriculture will not only enable the Institute to undertake research for the benefit of the industry at no cost to the trade but will also make it possible to meet the increasing demands of members for services of a more immediate nature.

Co-ordination and Development of the Earth Sciences

In a memorandum recently submitted by the Geological Society of London to the Minister for Science on the Trend Report, grave concern is expressed at the lack of adequate provision in the Report for the co-ordination and

development of the Earth sciences. Geology, with minor exceptions, was excluded from the terms of reference of the Slater Committee, whose conclusions essentially form the basis of the Natural Resources Research Council as proposed by the Trend Committee (*Nature*, 200, 1029; 1963). The Society fears that the Trend Committee was handicapped in its work and recommendations by a lack of formulated geological opinion. To avoid fragmentation of basic geological science and to remedy the omissions inherent in the proposed Natural Resources Research Council, the Geological Society recommends for consideration the setting up of a unified administrative body to match the scientific coherence of the Earth sciences.

"This could be done in two ways indicated below (a) and (b) of which the former is preferred: (a) The formation of an Earth Sciences Research Council which would take over the functions of: (i) The Earth Sciences division of the proposed Science Research Council. (ii) The Geological Survey and Museum including its hydrological and atomic energy research. (iii) The Overseas Geological Surveys, not mentioned in the Trend Report, but considered together with the Geological Survey and Museum by the Brundrett Committee. (iv) The non-biological research of the National Institute of Oceanography. (v) Other functions which the present arrangements are ill-adapted to fulfil, such as investigation of mineral resources throughout the world and co-ordination of scattered information in these respects. (b) If an Earth Sciences Research Council as outlined above should prove to be impracticable, the same advantages could to some extent be obtained by taking over all the above activities under the Earth Sciences division of the proposed Science Research Council. Responsibility for finance and organization of the Geological Survey and Museum, Overseas Geological Surveys, and National Institute of Oceanography would be analogous to the proposal in the Trend Report to allocate the Royal Observatories to the Astronomy division of the proposed Science Research Council."

The Society believes that considerable advantages would accrue from a co-ordinated policy in financing related research in universities, the Geological Survey and Museum, the Overseas Geological Survey, the National Institute of Oceanography, etc. Certainly in view of the activities which have come to the forefront recently—underground oil or gas storage, large-scale mineral developments in Britain or abroad, major tunnelling schemes, the disposal of radioactive waste, exploration of the continental shelf, world mineral (including oil) reserves—the Government should consider this memorandum with care and foresight.

Purchase Grants for Museums and Galleries

In a written answer in the House of Commons on January 16, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Mr. J. Boyd-Carpenter, announced purchase grants for museums and galleries of £728,000 annually for the quinquennium, an increase of £300,000 on the annual level at the end of the previous quinquennium. This includes £217,000 for the British Museum, £24,000 for the British Museum (Natural History), £8,000 for the Science Museum, £7,500 for the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, £25,000 for the National Library of Scotland and £18,000 for the National Library of Wales. In addition, there are two special allocations, one of £45,000 a year to the British Museum for the initial stocking of the National Science Reference Library, and the other of £50,000 a year to the Tate Gallery. Mr. Boyd-Carpenter added that the Government had completed its consideration of the major recommendations of the report of the Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries on its survey of provincial museums and galleries. Projects to which financial assistance was proposed included establishment by the Science Museum of a service of circulating exhibitions to provincial museums similar to that already proposed for the Victoria and Albert Museum.