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Dael Wolffe at AAAS

This month, after more than 16 years' service as Executive Officer, Dael Wolffe leaves AAAS. During that period, to a large extent he has shaped the evolution of the organization. This has come about in part because of the nature of the organization and in part because of Dael Wolffe's character.

The primary electorate in AAAS is a Council of about 500 members, selected mainly by scientific societies as their representatives. The Council elects a Board of Directors which is responsible for governing the Association. The Board meets four times a year, and its policies are implemented by a full-time Executive Officer. In principle the Executive Officer is the servant of the Board. Dael Wolffe has been that and much more.

Illustrative of Dael Wolffe's constructive efforts are the changes he effected in publications. In 1954 AAAS published *Science* (circulation 32,000) and *Scientific Monthly* (circulation 27,000). *Science* was of little consequence and did not enjoy substantial advertising revenue. Soon the format of *Science* was made more attractive, and an effective advertising agency was created. The two magazines were merged, providing a better base for revenue. With more funds it was possible to improve the content of the magazine, and Dr. Wolffe initiated the News and Comment section, in the early 1960's. Subsequently a vigorous and successful membership program was begun. This expanded the financial base and made possible further improvements in the content of *Science*.

Another important activity that has undergone constructive evolution has been the annual meeting. While retaining aspects of traditional scientific gatherings, the meeting has come to have a public impact much greater than that of any other meeting of its kind. This is attributable to the numerous high-quality interdisciplinary scientific symposia and the many symposia devoted to problems of science and society. The meeting is accorded extremely effective coverage by the mass media. A recent and expanding development has been coverage of the meeting on radio and television.

Improvement of science education for the young is another area of activity that Dael Wolffe has fostered. Particularly effective is a long-term effort that is now having an impact at the kindergarten and primary school levels. An AAAS Commission on Science Education has developed a program called *Science—A Process Approach*, consisting of teaching materials and a curriculum for teachers of science at these grade levels. The materials have been used in actual classes, and revised, summer after summer, on the basis of these experiences. Some 50,000 elementary school teachers are now using this system of instruction. Distribution is being handled commercially, and a further expansion in use of the program is likely.

One of the key factors in Dael Wolffe's ability to function effectively is an unusual quality of self-discipline that enables him to be self-effacing when this is appropriate, yet decisive when decisions are required. Typically, he is silent during several hours of discussion, at the end of which time he summarizes succinctly, retaining that which is cogent and useful while quietly discarding the irrelevant or worthless. Flexible in accepting the ideas and opinions of others, he is inflexible in matters of principle, such as honesty and financial rectitude.

Dael Wolffe leaves a vital, financially sound AAAS and a solid base for future achievement. We wish him success, good fortune, and happiness as he begins a new life as professor of public affairs at the University of Washington.—PHILIP H. ABELSON