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We Are the Government, You and I

This past December, for the first time since 1896, the election of the AAAS's new officers reflected the expressed preference of the Association's members. The election results are given in the report of the 1972 Council meeting contained in this issue of *Science*. That meeting was of historic importance, for the new constitution, approved a year ago and put in force with the adoption of bylaws presented to the 1972 Council, gives rank-and-file members rights they did not even have when the Association was so young and small that its entire membership could meet together in one room and elect officers on the spot.

First, all members are eligible to hold elective positions in the Association.

Second, all members are eligible to participate in the annual election of the President-Elect, members of the Board of Directors, and members of the Committee on Nominations. In addition, they may petition to place names in nomination for any of these positions.

Third, the Council, now to be composed of some 95 members, will be elected by the membership, acting through particular constituencies. Accordingly, the Association will be divided into electorates, each with proportional representation on the Council. The 20 sections of the Association and the new Section X-General, to be established this year, will serve as the electorates.

I have recently written to all members to ask them to designate the section through which they wish to exercise their right of franchise. Let me urge now that each member give this request his prompt and serious attention, for if he is to be eligible for positions to be filled by his electorate and if he is to participate in its election process, his name must appear on its rolls.

Members of each electorate will fill the following positions: Council delegates, members of the electorate's nominating committee, section chairman-elect, and member-at-large of the section committee. As in the case of the general officers, candidates may be nominated by petition.

Fourth, members will have the right—which I hope they shall never have occasion to exercise—of recalling elected members of the Board. A proposal to recall may be initiated by a member of Council during a meeting of the Council. If three-fourths of the members present so vote, the issue will be submitted to the membership by mail ballot.

Finally, to ensure these rights in perpetuity, the new constitution can be amended only by vote of the membership at large. While the bylaws are amendable by the Council, members may also propose amendments by petition.

The new constitution and bylaws were published in the November 1972 *AAAS Bulletin*. A list of changes approved at the 1972 Council meeting is given on pages 823 and 824 of this issue.

The AAAS officers and staff now face the monumental task of developing and instituting the complicated procedures required by the new constitution and bylaws. The election schedule this year will be tight, for we must first convert the present addressing system to computer, as well as ascertain the electorate in which each member wishes to vote. A final reminder: We have mailed each of you who is a member a postcard on which to designate your electorate. By returning it without delay, you can help us keep on schedule and at the same time ensure that you will be able to exercise your full rights as a member.—WILLIAM BEVAN