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After New York—What Next?

A substantial part of this week's issue of *Science* deals with "fallouts" from the 1967 AAAS Annual Meeting in New York. This editorial discusses the future. It has just been announced that the next meeting of the Association in Dallas, Texas, will have as its general chairman the Honorable J. Erik Jonsson, mayor of Dallas and former president of Texas Instruments, Inc.

Three features mark the AAAS and its Meeting: a long past, a broad concern with all aspects of science and technology, and a complex organization. This can lead to stodginess, excessive specialization, and confusion. It can also provide a sense of history, wide-ranging interests, and an opportunity for creative action. For many years the AAAS Meeting, like its British counterpart but for different reasons, has been buffeted by suggestions, criticism, and advice. The most thoughtful response to them was the Arden House Statement of 1951, which warned against too much involvement with the more detailed and more isolated technical aspects of science and suggested that the Meetings ". . . act, in all ways that promise useful results, as a synthesizing and unifying influence. . . ."

Are we now moving in the right direction, and are we moving quickly enough? The Committee on Meetings,* which has general responsibility over the Annual Meetings of the Association, is concerning itself with these questions. It will look at the innovations of the New York Meeting—the extensive involvement with Educational Television, the rejuvenated Science Film Theater, the Faraday Centennial celebration, the numerous tours and open houses. It will judge the increased involvement in discussion of matters of public concern. It will, at some stage, come to grips with the problems of advanced planning, selection of topics for intensive discussion, and ordering of responsibilities among the many persons and organizations who contribute to the Meeting content. These are difficult assessments. They will be made easier if friends and critics of the AAAS Meeting will submit their individual ideas and suggestions.

Constantinos Doxiadis, speaking of the obligations of city planners, pointed out that their task is not well done unless attention is paid to all of man's senses and account is taken of all the differing human interests. So it is with good scientific meetings. Variety, appeal to many levels of sophistication and concern, discussion of exciting discoveries by the experts, reviews of prospering fields for the interested public, lively confrontations, looking beyond narrow geographical and mental borders, listening to critics, celebrating significant events, having time for quiet contemplation—these are the important intellectual ingredients. Judging the right proportions, maintaining high standards, raising the needed funds, and engaging the most effective tools of communication—these are the essential editorial functions. Joined together, they will promote the objectives of the AAAS: To further the work of scientists, to facilitate cooperation among them, to improve the effectiveness of science in the promotion of human welfare, and to increase public understanding and appreciation of the importance and promise of the method of science in human progress.—WALTER G. BERL, *Editor, Annual Meeting*

*Members of the committee are N. C. Brady, Cornell; R. E. Gibson, Applied Physics Laboratory, Johns Hopkins; P. M. Hauser, Chicago; R. B. Livingston, California; D. J. deS. Price, Yale; W. Sullivan, New York Times; A. Spilhaus, Franklin Institute; F. Whitmore, Jr., Geological Survey; W. G. Berl, AAAS; and D. Wolffe, AAAS.