

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

J. H. COMROE, JR.

We have just finished the 12th annual Fall Meeting of the Society. The number of ten-minute papers presented (360) and the registration (775) far exceeded figures for the largest previous meeting -- that in Medford and Boston in 1955. One hundred and four new members and 44 associate members were elected at the business meeting. The APS is growing more rapidly than ever before; growth is a sign of vigor but growth also creates problems. I would like to discuss some of these with you.

A. Communications between APS Members and APS Officers

The Council of the Society meets at least four full days each year to discuss problems of importance to physiology and physiologists. The Council wants and needs to know the views of the members of the Society on many issues. The annual tour of the President-Elect and that of a senior Council member permit two of your officers to hear directly the views of some of you. But valuable though these conferences are, they involve at most 80-100 of our 2,000 members each year and recur for any one of you, only at 6-10 year intervals. Clearly an additional forum is needed for you to express your views to your elected officers. The ideal time and place for this, of course, is the business meeting. But in the past, the election of new members, election of officers and the report of each of the Society's committees have occupied so much of the time allowed for the three business meetings each year that little time remained for serious discussion of old and new business. The result has been either that discussion of important issues was shelved and Council made its own decisions, or issues raised by Council or some of you were voted upon with inadequate discussion and factual background.

It is time to revitalize the business meeting and make it what it was originally intended to be -- a forum for discussion. Our new publication THE PHYSIOLOGIST makes this possible, for in it can be published the complete reports of all APS committees for all members to read and study; only those parts that require the advice and opinion of the Society need be presented at the business meeting.

We tried an experiment at the business meeting on August 24th at the Stanford meetings which appeared to be highly successful. We announced in advance of the business meeting that Committee reports would be published in THE PHYSIOLOGIST and that the business meeting would be used as a discussion period to obtain the views of members of the Society on important issues. Approximately 200 of the 275 APS members registered at the meeting attended the business session. We disposed of routine business in ten minutes and used the remaining time to discuss three important issues. Discussion was free, vigorous, stimulating and as valuable to Council as any President-Elect tour. Straw ballots indicated the sentiments of the members present. The results of these, along with suggestions and questions, were referred to the appropriate committees for their careful consideration.

be changed only by a vote at the Spring session). Burton's suggestion seemed to meet with considerable approval-- the President-Elect would be nominated and elected by ballot at the April meeting as at present but nominees for Council would be selected by a Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee would not be one hastily elected at the end of the business meeting but would consist of the past three presidents of the Society (all of whom had previously been nominated and elected for office by the Society). The Nominating Committee would be responsive to suggestions by members (made in advance of the meetings) and would be bound to include the name of any one proposed jointly by ten APS members.

2. A Finance and Budget Committee. Council unanimously believes that the APS needs a Finance Committee and a single annual budget. Until a dozen years ago, our Society had only several responsibilities--a Spring meeting (with the Federation) and the publication of three journals (Physiological Reviews, American Journal of Physiology and Journal of Applied Physiology). We now have a second annual meeting and several new continuing publications (The Physiol-

ogist and Handbook of Physiology), in addition to the publication of selected monographs. We also have many new responsibilities such as the Teaching Sessions, the Refresher Courses, the Summer Workshop, Summer Research Fellowships for College Teachers of Biology and the Laboratory Manuals in Physiology. We are also concerned with the relationships between biologists in medical schools, colleges and high schools; the status and salaries of physiologists; employment of senior physiologists; better public understanding of physiology and the work of physiologists; recruitment of top talent at the high school and college level; government support of basic medical science; international meetings and animal care legislation. To accomplish these things, we have a national office and a permanent secretariat.

Council feels the need to establish a Finance Committee which would receive budget estimates each year from the Board of Publications, the Committee on Education, the Executive Secretary and the Council, and then formulate a final budget for Council's approval. This committee would also have the responsibility for maintaining adequate reserve funds for all of the operations of the Society; at the moment the reserve fund for publications is adequate (about \$600,000) but that for all of the other functions of the Society is not (about \$20,000).

Council has the authority under the present Bylaws to appoint a new standing committee, such as a Finance Committee. However, the present Bylaws give complete financial control of the Society's publications to a Board of Publication Trustees. Council believes that it is time to reunite the two parts of the Society into one and have one Publications Committee, one Education Committee, one Finance Committee -- all responsible to your elected officers. This requires a change in the Bylaws; such a change will be proposed by Council, with the approval of the Board of Publication Trustees, prior to the April meeting.

3. The Relationship between the Society and the Federation.

At the April 1960 meeting, the Society asked Council to look into all of the relations between the APS and the Federation so that the Society, as a well-informed group, could determine whether we should continue our membership in the Federation (as now organized or in modified form). We will make available to you before April details of (1) the varied services of the Federation to Physiology other than the April meetings, (2) the cost of the Federation to the Society and the cost to us of operating without the Federation and (3) a plan to determine how many members of the Federation "cross-over" to attend meetings of another Society in April. We will also prepare data on the past attendance and the number of simultaneous sessions at the Federation meetings -- with projections to 1965 and 1970 -- and to determine whether the physical convention facilities of any American city can hold an unmodified Federation meeting in 1965 or 1970. We hope to spend a large part of one business meeting in April or September hearing your views on the future of the Federation.

There must be other matters that you consider of importance to the Society. Please write to your officers, or write a "Letter to the Editor" for publication in THE PHYSIOLOGIST; in any case, come to future business meetings to participate in our discussions.



GENETICS TV PROGRAM

Another of the Bell System Science Series TV Programs, "The Thread of Life," dealing with the science of genetics, will seek to explain the processes by which the characteristics of man, animals and plants are transmitted from generation to generation. The most important discoveries about the mechanisms of heredity that have been made in the last 100 years will be shown.

The scientific advisors for the program are Dr. J. F. Crow, University of Wisconsin and Dr. N. H. Horowitz, California Institute of Technology.

The hour-long program will be shown over NBC-TV, Friday, December 9, 1960 at 9:p.m., EST; 8:p.m., CST; 7:p.m., MST; 9:p.m., PST.