

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO DR. DONALD F. HORNIG BY THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, RESEARCH, AND DEVELOPMENT

Question 1. To what extent does section 8 of Executive Order 10521 represent the policy of the present Administration with respect to the efficient use of scientific research equipment and facilities held by Federal agencies?

Answer. Section 8 of Executive Order 10521 (March 26, 1954), as amended by Section 6 of E.O. 10807 (March 13, 1959), correctly states the general policy of the present Administration with respect to the efficient use of scientific research equipment and facilities held by Federal agencies. This section reads as follows:

"Sec. 8. To facilitate the efficient use of scientific research equipment and facilities held by Federal agencies: (a) the head of each such agency engaged in scientific research shall, to the extent practicable, encourage and facilitate the sharing with other Federal agencies of major equipment and facilities; and (b) a Federal agency shall procure new major equipment or facilities for scientific research purposes only after taking suitable steps to ascertain that the need cannot be met adequately from existing inventories or facilities of its own or of other agencies."

Question 2. What information about Federal laboratories—including both directly and contractor operated laboratories—is maintained by OST and the Federal Council?

Answer. Neither OST nor FCST maintains information on individual laboratories, just as they do not maintain complete information on research projects or on Federal research funds supplied to individual universities. OST and FCST endeavor (1) to ensure that systems for collecting and analyzing important data exist so that appropriate information will be available to OST and FCST on call, and (2) to promote good administration of laboratories, including efficient use of equipment and facilities.

The National Science Foundation maintains information on Federal research funds, and the Science Information Exchange (SIE) maintains information on research projects in progress. Some of the FCST Committees maintain information on research funds and projects of special interest to them. The Federal Council's Committee on Scientific and Technical Information has worked steadily on the improvement of Government-wide information systems for managers, as well as for bench workers. For example, a 1966 DOD-NASA agreement to use common research project formats for information reporting is being expanded to other agencies as a result of a 1967 FCST agreement, and a contract study is underway to improve agency project reporting activities.

As noted below, the Federal Council is considering the maintenance of an inventory of Federal laboratories and facilities.

The attention given by OST to the question of the efficiency of Federal laboratories has been directed at issues that are considered to be more central than the efficient use of research equipment and facilities, although this element of efficiency is encompassed within the broader questions. The role of Federal laboratories, the criteria for deciding whether work should be done in in-house labs or under contract, personnel policies, adaptation of laboratories to changes in missions, and means of up-grading management capability have been matters of primary concern.

Question 2(a). How does this compare with what you would consider to be the ideal information for fostering full and effective use of government laboratories and their capabilities?

Question 2(b). What guidance has OST or the Federal Council given to agency heads about information they should maintain?

Answer. FCST has instructed its Committee on Federal Laboratories to develop a plan for an inventory of all Federal laboratories, building upon the substantial experience that has accumulated in preparing agency-wide or special purpose inventories. It is not yet clear that the benefits from compiling and publishing an inventory of laboratories will equal the cost of doing it. Accordingly, we expect that any plan approved by the FCST will be on an experimental basis and that the plan will provide for an assessment of the value of the inventory.

Question 2(c). Without information about what work the various Federal laboratories are doing and whether or not they are being used to capacity, is it realistic to say that an agency should make use of existing resources?

Answer. The existing system rests on the assumption that scientists, engineers and research administrators in Federal laboratories are well acquainted with their scientific colleagues in and out of government, and that they have a realistic