

Jan. 29: "Taxation for Prosperity"

Willard Chevalier, vice-president, McGraw-Hill Publishing Company  
Harold S. Buttenheim, editor, *American City Magazine*

**Conference on Research Sponsored by the Sub-Committee on Research of the Committee on Policy.** The Sub-Committee on Research invited some twenty members of the American Political Science Association to participate in a three-day conference on research, held at the University of Chicago on September 16, 17 and 18. The purpose of the conference was to secure a free and stimulating discussion of what seem to be the basic emerging problems of research in the field of government and politics. The committee hoped that there might develop a consensus of opinion as to what are some of the most fundamental problems now calling for research and as to how they might be most effectively attacked by the profession. Particularly, the committee sought advice as to questions of professional responsibility and leadership in the field of research. Throughout the conference, the chair was occupied by Professor Charles E. Merriam, of the University of Chicago.

Three topics were submitted, not as a restrictive agenda, but merely as points of departure for the discussion: (1) adaptation of the democratic process to the speed and technical requirements of the modern age; (2) the problem of areas, regionalism, federalism, and inter-governmental relationships in America today; and (3) the problem of financing governmental functions, with particular reference to the poorer states and communities. The first of these topics was utilized in the opening sessions as a broad province affording opportunity to mark out some of the important phases of the general interests of research. In the discussions of the following day, the second agenda item was narrowed down to consideration of research having particular reference to the Tennessee Valley Authority and to local rural areas. The more particularized discussion of these two focal points of curiosity developed a fair variety of suggestions that could be applied in other directions. On the third day, the last item of the agenda was disregarded and attention centered on summarization of the conference experience and formulation of specific advice to the sponsoring committee.

Obviously, the details of the discussions must be left to the record submitted to the Sub-Committee, and possibly it is in the by-products of the discussion rather than in the actual record itself that largest results are to be found. Broadly, however, the discussion permits of summary under seven rather distinct headings.

The first is the matter of aids to research. Consideration was given to the possible establishment of a periodical informational service to make available to research men information, suggestion, and direction, particularly information from government sources. The possible establishment of

a research clearing house to facilitate exchange of information and suggestion as to research in progress or contemplated was also discussed.

A second topic was that of greater coöperation among research groups and agencies. The various groups and organizations of related workers, both within and without the discipline of political science, were canvassed with a view to modes of possible coöperation.

Reporting and reception of research product, particularly popular and practical use of research findings, was a third topic to which the discussion frequently returned. Consideration was given to the inadequacy of publication facilities, the rôle of the expert in government, the nature of possible contributions of the expert to the governmental practitioner, the instrumentation of inventions and solutions devised by the expert, and means of popularizing the product of research and of reaching the layman leader.

At nearly every session the discussion also returned to the possibility of enumerating challenging questions for research. The proposal was deemed by some to be a means of wholesome direction and guidance; by others, to offer greater likelihood of misdirecting inquiry. The tendency of the conferees to break down broad topics for detailed attack and their interest in unexpected behavior in governmental situations might be thought to point the way to consideration of neglected sectors involved in all topics of political research.

A fifth matter that made its appearance again and again throughout the deliberations was the general nature of research, particularly the type of inquiry appropriate for those immediately in touch with practitioners, the type of research appropriate to the independent worker in the university, and the conditions, characteristics, opportunities, limitations, and interrelation of both divisions of investigation.

Frequently, too, the discussion approached the matter of particular workways of research. Needed development, adaptation, and integration of a variety of approaches and techniques were stressed; and apparently the disposition developed to ask for a later opportunity at which such matters could be considered in connection with the appraisal of several actual pieces of inquiry employing different approaches to the same substantive problem. For such an agenda, a number of items were suggested: the rôle of logical analysis, the rôle of ideology, the rôle of observation and the collection of data, modes of treating data, and the rôle of insight.

Finally, some attention was given to special need for the protection of the general interests of research; the problems raised by increasing censorship in many countries, the proprietary idea among research workers, and the opportunities for creating increasing relationships between researchers and practitioners in connection with the development of general planning staffs within the governmental organization.—H. C. BEYLE.