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## Control of Science Ominous

**C**URRENT hassles over banning of laetrile, saccharin and sodium nitrite point up a growing but largely unnoticed development. This is political control of science for political objectives.

The threat is real and ominous. The National Science Foundation is a primary source of money for support of research at virtually all major institutions and total federal outlay for research and development will be around \$28 billion this year.

The Senate has approved a proposal to use federal funds to pay for science consultants to citizens' groups and to support basic research at profit-making institutions.

Just as federal funds give government power to decide where roads or bridges will be built, federal funds will decide which research will be undertaken and by whom.

As pointed out by John Ziman in his book, "The Force of Knowledge," scientific authority is very real, and it comes in many different forms. Unfortunately, scientists do

not always have final answers when they may seem to or claim to have them.

Ziman reviews discoveries by noted scientists which have later been displaced by new knowledge. Earlier findings were valuable, but there was a great deal more to be learned.

Scientists themselves have not been placed in a convincing position by this fact. Too often the larger body of scientists has failed to step forward to denounce fallacious conclusions based upon shoddy or inadequate research reported by a few.

This allows scientific speculations to be presented as scientific facts. Writers and communications media may be guilty of overemphasizing sensational speculations which, in fact, may be little more than science fiction.

Recently, selections of a scientific book club, for example, presented "the probable truth" concerning the first three minutes of the origin of the universe "through its expansion and evolution" and "fascinating speculations of its far future."

Scientists can't even predict the weather very far into the future and aren't agreed among themselves as to whether the earth is getting warmer, colder or remaining stable.

Presenting theories in the guise of proven facts may mislead readers into acceptance of hypotheses as truth. Is it fact or speculation that your bathroom spray can or garden fertilizer is endangering the existence of the lofty ozone?

Add the element of politics to such speculations and the situation becomes hazardous to people. The Carter administration has proposed that scientists involved in genetic research be federally licensed and regulated. Who is next?

Because their own projects are using federal funds, many scientists are meekly going along with federal planning and regulation proposals for scientific research.

When it is considered that this research may affect or control personalities and mental capacities of unborn children, the political implications loom large and frightening.