IV

It goes without saying that political developments are more difficult to foresee than economic trends. Public administration, to be sure, covers the "routine affairs of state" which suggests that each new case is dealt with in a manner prescribed by firm precedent. Politics, on the other hand, is characterized by rapidly changing situations; it thus presents unique problems which require novel solutions. In the words of Professor MacIver, "every situation is for the policymaker a new one". A great deal of political action takes place

> "..... on a darkling plain
> Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night."
> (Matthew Arnold, Dover Beach)

Hence to the English historian Buckle politics is not a true "science", but "one of the most backward of all the arts." But whether art or science, politics presents wide areas of behavior that can be investigated scientifically and that are not totally immune to the art (call it art if you prefer!) of prediction either.

Starting with the most obvious, do we not foresee with a considerable degree of accuracy the future of the national debt or the income and expenditure of the Government for the coming fiscal year? Do we not assume that the number of American states will either remain at 48 (written in 1952!) or, at the most, increase to 50, if Alaska and Hawai were to reach statehood - wars, revolutions, and other major disturbances excluded? Or considering another area of political life, we can anticipate some features of the organization, the composition and the policies of Congress regardless of the outcome of the 1952 elections. Similarly the organizational structure and the judicial functions of the Supreme Court can be projected into the future. We cannot state in terms of mathematical probability who will sit on its bench or what particular decisions will be handed down a decade hence, but a careful study of all factors involved may lead us to conclude that a woman or a Negro will sit on its bench within the next 20 years.

Indeed, more recently quantitative and statistical methods have been employed so widely in the fields of election behavior and public opinion movements that the man in the street writes to Dr. Gallup to complain that he has not yet been polled. Louis H. Bean tells us that polls are scientific devices for obtaining a cross-section of public opinion at a given time, a cross-section that enables us to bring historical trends up-to-date and to project them into the future. True, the art or science of predicting election results is still far from perfect. This was brought home to us by the failure of all public opinion polls in 1948 to predict the re-election of Truman. But why did they fail? An inquiry committee set up by the Social Science Research Council criticized the sampling me-