The American Institute of Biological Sciences' original goal of developing a unified force to represent biology on the national scene is as sound today as when proposed by its founders more than 25 years ago.

Science, including biology, prospered in the late 1950's through the 1960's, and scientists were bathed with respect. Basic research was the thing to do. Federal funds, in particular, were available in relative abundance for research and other programs designed to meet the real and fancied needs of scientists. The AIBS flourished, too. Individual biologists and their societies developed pride in their profession and began to work together for the common good.

Precipitated, perhaps, by changes in federal policy relative to the support of science, the spirit of unity among biologists began to wane. What happened to AIBS and the biological community reminds one of Aesop's Fable, "The Lion and the Four Bulls":

"Four Bulls, which had entered into a very strict friendship, kept always near one another, and fed together. The Lion often saw them, and as often had a mind to make one of them his prey; but, though he could have subdued any of them singly, yet he was afraid to attack the whole alliance, as knowing they would have been too strong for him, and therefore he contented himself, for the present, with keeping at a distance. At last, perceiving no attempt was to be made upon them as long as this combination held, he took occasion, by whispers and hints, to foment jealousies, and raise divisions among them. This stratagem succeeded so well, that the Bulls grew cold and reserved one another, and fed together. The Lion often saw them, and as often had a mind to make one of them his prey; but, though he could have subdued any of them singly, yet he was afraid to attack the whole alliance, as knowing they would have been too strong for him, and therefore he contented himself, for the present, with keeping at a distance. At last, perceiving no attempt was to be made upon them as long as this combination held, he took occasion, by whispers and hints, to foment jealousies, and raise divisions among them. This stratagem succeeded so well, that the Bulls grew cold and reserved towards one another, which soon after ripened into a downright hatred and aversion; and, at last, ended in a total separation. The Lion had now obtained his end and, as impossible as it was for him to hurt them while they were united, he found no difficulty now, they were parted, to seize and devour every Bull of them, one after another.

"United we stand,—"

The Lion has not yet "obtained his ends" among biologists, but one sometimes wonders how far away the fall may be. The AIBS has made great progress in recent years toward becoming an organization whose advice is sought and respected at the highest levels in our government. However, this and other equally significant achievements have been made with the sacrifice of some of the services demanded by adherent societies—demanded with no accompanying willingness to help financially in making the services possible. Each of us should recognize that, since the AIBS is not in the counterfeiting business, there must be a tangible source of funding. While the "something for nothing" philosophy surely cannot be espoused for any length of time in any system, neither the adherent societies nor individual biologists are lending the moral and financial support the AIBS must have.

The time is long overdue for us to put an end to our attitudes of indifference, our petty bickerings, and our "each man for himself" behavior in favor of renewed cooperative efforts to mold a fortress of united strength that can represent biology with authority in the arenas where momentous decisions are being made. We should be fully aware by now that those decisions affect us individually and collectively. The AIBS, in its present understaffed and underfunded state, cannot do the job alone and without the united strength and determination of the biological community.

Let us not have to relearn, too late, the lesson of the Bulls.

GEORGE SPRUGEL, JR.
AIBS President

1Translation by Rev. George Fyler Townsend, 1890. Donahue, Henneberry and Co., Chicago, Ill.