have been exposed to a level of radiation of about 10 times as high as the rest of the race.

It was repeatedly pointed out that, contrary to a widespread feeling among the public, there is nothing unique about the effects of radioactivity. All of the diseases and the genetic effects known to be associated with radiation are also known or suspected to be caused by natural and by man-made contaminants as well. There is no way to tell whether any specific case of leukemia, for example, was caused by radiation. You can only try to find a meaningful correlation between exposure to radiation and some statistical increase in the effect.

Those difficulties put the scientists working in this field in an awkward position. There seems to be a substantial segment of opinion that assumes that because one group of scientists can tell you what the temperature is on a star billions of miles away that the biologists must not be doing their job very well if they can't tell you exactly how many cases of *X* diseases are going to result from *Y* amount of radiation absorbed over a 20- or 30-year period.

Federal Radiation Council

The organization officially charged with formulating a national policy on radiation is the Federal Radiation Council, but the hearings made it clear the FRC, now a year old, has yet to assume any really significant function. Its membership currently consists of the Secretaries of Labor, Commerce, and Defense, the chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, and the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare. But its permanent full-time staff consists of the executive secretary, and the secretary to the executive secretary. Ad hoc committees are named to study the problems that come before the council.

Its principal accomplishment to date has been to replace the term Maximum Permissible Dose with the term Radiation Protection Guide. The change is not as trivial as it may seem and may turn out to be very useful. The older term was unfortunate both because "maximum" suggested a limit that could never be exceeded without getting into an area of gross danger and because "permissible" suggested that there was no need to pay much attention to radiation below the "permissible" level. In fact, it was agreed both that radiation exposure should be kept as far below the permissible levels as possible and, at the same time, that if circumstances demanded, an individual could be exposed to considerably more than the maximum level without exposing him to any more danger than is encountered much more frequently and with much less concern in other fields of work.

Beyond this change in terms the council has yet to do much of significance. It has prepared a directive, which was issued last month over the signature of the President, setting standards for the various government agencies to use. But the standards are essentially identical with those issued by the National Committee on Radiation Protection. These NCRP standards were already accepted by the AEC, the Defense Department, and other agencies. The FRC directive merely serves to make them official rather than semiofficial. It appeared, in fact, that the FRC was formed partly out of a general feeling that the government ought to "do something" about a problem that was of general concern, and partly to resolve a jurisdictional dispute over who should set national policy between the AEC, which has most of the experience, and the Public Health Service, which feels it should have the responsibility. A need was also felt for separating the responsibility for promoting the use of atomic energy from the responsibility of preventing any development that might lead to unwarranted hazards. At present both functions are largely in the hands of the AEC.

The Joint Committee was dissatisfied with the FRC's present situation, and suggested a number of things the council could do to make itself more useful. The committee wanted the FRC to formulate clearer answers than it now appears to have to the questions of: who has the actual responsibility for determining whether any proposed increased use of radioactive materials, including anything planned by the Defense Department, will lead to benefits commensurate with the rise in radiation levels that may result, and what criteria are going to be used to make these decisions? The committee also seemed to feel that if, as it now appears, the principal function of the FRC is to reassure the public that its interest and well-being are being looked after, that its usefulness would be increased by including representatives of labor, management, and other public interests on the council.

Yet despite the questions raised, the general effect of the testimony was reassuring. Even most of the uncertainties, it was clear, were reflections of the precautions being taken to prevent radiation from developing into a major hazard rather than indications of danger. Much more is known, the committee was told, about the hazards of radiation than about any number of other sources of contamination produced by modern society, and much stricter steps are being taken to control the hazard.

Food Additives Law Nears Passage

The House Commerce Committee has approved legislation that includes the "Delaney clause " flatly barring the use in foods or cosmetics of any coloring matter that can produce cancer in man or experimental animals. The bill is expected to pass the House without difficulty, if only because it would take a very brave legislator to take a position in an election year that could be interpreted by his home district opponents as a vote in favor of cancer. A Senate color additives bill went through without the Delaney clause, and the issue will have to be settled in conference.

The issue has been a controversial one, even within the Administration. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has favored the clause on the grounds that the existence of a threshold dose for cancer-producing substances has not been demonstrated, and the benefits derived from the use of these color additives are not sufficient to justify running even a very small risk. The President's Science Advisory Committee, though, has come out for allowing some discretion in deciding whether a substance should be allowed, on the grounds that the Delaney clause could lead in some cases to costly restrictions without adding more than negligibly to the public protection.

New Policy on Grants to Colleges

Beginning this summer the National Science Foundation, the principal government source of support for basic research, will give colleges unrestricted grants amounting to 5 percent of their project grants during the past year.

The total amount of money involved, less than $3 million nationwide, is not large, but these "institutional grants" are viewed as an important step away from the policy of tying all grants to specific, preapproved projects.