

views a given product in terms of volume usage, rather than avoirdupois weight. Although net weight . . . is included on the package because the law so decrees, the consumer views his purchase by so many cupsful, so many servings, or so many teaspoonsful. . . . The housewife," he declared, "is buying performance and service, in terms of usage. Fractional weights are actually of minor significance when compared to product performance."

While spokesmen for the industry have attempted point-by-point refutations of criticisms made at the hearings, various parts of the industry have taken steps which indicate a realization that the resentment expressed by consumers is intense and has now found an open channel for political action. One major chain store recently undertook a survey to make certain that its so-called large economy sizes cost less per ounce than the smaller sizes. A spokesman said it found a few that did not. And several associations of food packers have urged their member firms to reexamine their practices in the light of complaints made at the hearings.

These industry efforts will probably lead to a number of reforms which will be held up to the committee as proof that self-regulation and enlightened policies have removed whatever need there may have been for Federal action. The committee, however, has set forth consumer rationality as the value it wishes to support. The industry, by its own testimony, has come to regard this as an illusion, and whatever efforts it may make at self-control, the dynamics of the highly competitive, \$55 billion a year food business are likely to overwhelm any voluntary effort to encourage consumer rationality in the supermarket.—D.S.G.

### A Boost for Educational TV

With few exceptions, educational television has been blocked from the pathways to large audiences. This has come about because the very-high-frequency band, for which most sets are exclusively equipped, is almost fully occupied by commercial stations. Educational television has a standing invitation to set up shop on the ultra-high-frequency band, but generally has been reluctant to do so because the number of UHF-equipped receivers is negligible.

Last week, the Federal Communications Commission acted to open the way for educational television broad-

casts that can be received on standard sets in the New York Metropolitan area. In an action still subject to court review, the FCC approved the sale of WNTA-TV, Channel 13, to Educational Television for the Metropolitan Area, Inc. The purchase price, \$6.2 million, has been subscribed by five commercial stations in the New York area, a number of foundations, and individual contributions. The operating expenses, estimated at \$2 million annually, will be solicited from the public.

The new station is expected to become the anchor of a thriving "fourth network" of some 50 educational television stations now in operation across the nation. These have provided elevated TV fare by pooling their resources for taped productions which they circulate among themselves. The new station's relatively substantial resources, along with the vast audience within its reach, will make this fourth network an increasingly influential force on millions of TV screens, much along the lines of what Walter Lippmann suggested when he wrote that the solution to the ills of television may be establishment of a network "run as a public service with its criterion not what will be most popular but what is good."

### West Ford: Outcome Uncertain

The uncertainties of space technology have provided an anticlimax for the first attempt to carry out the controversial Project West Ford. At midweek, it appeared that the 350-million hairlike copper filaments that were carried aloft 21 October by a Midas satellite had failed to form the intended earth-circling belt.

West Ford's goal was to create an artificial ionosphere for experiments in long-range communications. Military planners regard the project as holding promise for a jam-proof communications system.

The announcement of West Ford brought protests from astronomers who contended it might interfere with radio and optical observations. Their fears were discounted by the President's Science Advisory Committee and the Space Science Board of the National Academy of Sciences.

It was reported that the canister containing the filaments apparently had separated from the satellite but had failed to discharge its load. Present plans call for another attempt if the belt fails to develop.

## Announcements

A **science resources planning office** has been established by the National Science Foundation to study the nation's future needs and resources for research and education in science. The new office, headed by Richard H. Bolt, NSF's associate director of research, will use information developed in cooperation with educational institutions, industrial firms, and government agencies, and will sponsor relevant studies by other organizations, both public and private.

The American Academy of Allergy is requesting physicians to submit names and addresses of persons who experience severe **allergic reactions to insect stings**. Questionnaires on the subsequent sting history of persons in these various categories (to be completed by the patient) will enable the academy to determine how much treatment should be given, or what happens to the majority of these people if they remain untreated. (Executive Office, American Academy of Allergy, 756 N. Milwaukee St., Milwaukee 2, Wis.)

The Public Health Service's Communicable Disease Center in Atlanta, Georgia, has been designated the inter-American **arthropod-borne virus regional reference laboratory** for the World Health Organization, in recognition of the growing number of viruses carried by insects, spiders, and ticks. The new unit will offer reference diagnostic services to public health laboratories for detailed identification of arboviruses, and limited quantities of reference diagnostic materials to laboratories concerned with these diseases.

Psychologists who have recently completed research studies in **human factors engineering** under government contract are invited to submit manuscripts based on their findings for publication in the *Journal of Engineering Psychology*. (Elias Publications, P.O. Box 662, Washington 4, D.C.)

The American Board of Nutrition will hold the next examinations for **certification in human nutrition** on 8 April 1962 in Atlantic City, N.J. Deadline for receipt of applications: *1 March 1962*. (Robert E. Shank, Department of Preventive Medicine, Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis 10, Mo.)