should be aware that operating power reactors have utilized less than 1 percent of their permissible discharge rates which are, in themselves, harmless to the general population. This experience can be compared to present emissions from fossil fuel plants which present an identified health hazard to the public in the form of sulphur oxides and other contaminants. The National Academy of Sciences has stated that more is known about the effects of radiation and radioactive materials than of any other toxic materials. This would appear to refute the statement that the effects of radioactive contaminants are comparatively unknown. Similarly, Novick's comment with respect to the "enormous expense of reactor development" is refuted by the rapid rate at which utility organizations are hastening to purchase this replacement for oil- or coal-fired boilers. At the recent National Conference on Air Pollution, both industrial and governmental representatives affirmed the fact that man's environment is improved by replacing fossil-fueled power plants with those powered by the atom.

MORTON I. GOLDMAN
NUS Corporation, 1730 M Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036

A Larger Scope for AEC Laboratories

Recently in remarks delivered to the Southern Governors' Conference on 19 September, Representative Chet Holifield, chairman of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, proposed that the national laboratories undertake research bearing on urban technology and pollution control.

Many of my colleagues at Argonne National Laboratory, who would be most affected by such a proposal, strongly favor it. We believe if this fact were publicized, swifter action would follow. To this end, I have prepared a declaration, the text of which follows.

As scientists and engineers in the national laboratories of the Atomic Energy Commission, we have a responsibility for assuring that the fruits of science and technology be made available to the public because (i) we are supported by public funds; (ii) our facilities are both expensive and extensive; (iii) professionally we represent unusual diversity; and (iv) under the Atomic Energy Acts our research should strive toward the maximum public benefit.

We take this responsibility seriously. Many of us sought employment in these laboratories because they offered a combination of scientific integrity and work of social importance and impact. Further, we take pride in the achievements of the past 20 years which we believe are significant, both scientifically and socially. However, among the new world problems and emergencies that have developed are pollution, food and water shortages, urban overcrowding, and education in a complex society. Our laboratories have the equipment, personnel, and organization to perform significant researches and develop significant systems in response to these universal needs. Much time and effort would be wasted in forming similar new laboratories to cope with these needs, one specialty at a time. But the current administration of the franchise of the Atomic Energy Commission has not encouraged the expansion or diversion of our programs into such problem areas. We therefore urge the President, Congress, Atomic Energy Commission, and other government agencies to take the appropriate steps to permit us to work to our full capacity on the vital problems of society.

This declaration might form the basis of a petition.

BERNARD I. SPINRAD
845 Wellner Road, Naperville, Illinois

Project Foresight

The report on Project Hindsight (News and Comment, 18 Nov., p. 872) has prompted me to make a similar study which I call Project Foresight for obvious reasons. Project Hindsight studied the contribution made to the national defense by post-1945 science and technology. It was found that, while basic research dating back over 30 years (such as the nuclear physics of the thirties) has had a revolutionary impact on military arms and strategy, the basic research of recent years has made only a small contribution to weaponry.

Project Foresight studied the contribution that has been made to the national defense by various age groups in the population. It was found that while those male citizens born between 18 and 30 years ago have made a very large contribution, children born in recent years have made essentially none. However, unlike Project Hindsight, Project Foresight takes due note of the time scale involved in this problem. Consequently, no recommendation is made to reduce the number of new children being produced.

ALLEN M. LENCHEK
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Maryland, College Park