

Harvard professors William A. Shurcliff and John T. Edsall—believes the SST will cause substantial property damage if it flies over land. If they are right, the anti-boom fight will be much easier. But most studies so far have shown that planes creating boom overpressures similar to those expected for the SST have not had an extensive effect on buildings. How much noise, then, is “acceptable”?

To read some government statements, not very much. “My mail indicates that there is only one thing that can drown out a jet on takeoff and that is the roar of protest from outraged citizens who live in airport neighborhoods,” Secretary Boyd said recently. Yet, the most recent government-sponsored sonic boom experiments showed that test subjects found booms to be as objectionable as subsonic planes flying low just before landing or just after takeoff. In a recent interview with *Science*, Boyd belittled this comparison between sonic booms and subsonic plane noise, because, he said, people living near airports object not only to the noise per se but also to the frequency of overflights.

Sonic booms are not popular, however, as most tests over populated areas have shown. After the overflights of Oklahoma City, 2000 people were surveyed and 27 percent said they could not “learn to live” with sonic booms. A recent overflight of Boston prompted the tabloid *Record-American* to headline its story: “Sonic Boom Leaves Hub Trail of Terror.”

The government is not unaware, of course, that planes make noise, and the SST has created some apparent contradictions in official policy. “The Department of Transportation assumes and welcomes leadership and responsibility in the aircraft noise abatement area,” Secretary Boyd recently told a congressional subcommittee studying noise around airports. “What I am saying is that when we can obtain complete statutory authority, this noisy buck will stop with me.” There was no mention of the SST, though Boyd characterized his department’s “long-range objective [as the] producing of substantially quieter aircraft.”

Government officials leave the clear impression that the decision on sonic boom restrictions will be decided by, among other things, popular and congressional pressure. The tempo of journalistic criticism clearly has been mounting. A number of prominent periodicals—the *Wall Street Journal*, the

## NEWS IN BRIEF

● **ECOLOGY:** Nine grants, totaling nearly \$2.5 million, have been awarded by the Ford Foundation to support ecological studies and the development of programs in ecology for natural resource planners and administrators. Awards were made to: the University of Chicago (\$1.04 million) and Princeton University (\$372,000) for expanded ecology programs; the Organization for Tropical Studies, a consortium of universities, \$180,000 for pilot investigations of special problems in tropical field biology; Oak Ridge Associated Universities, \$90,000 for analysis of the use of mathematical models to study natural systems; University of Michigan, \$32,400 for the development and testing of a correspondence course on water pollution; Student Conservation Association, \$75,000 for scholarships and administrative support; and Conservation Foundation (\$450,000) and University of Pennsylvania (\$200,000) for regional planning training.

● **GRANTS FOR SCIENCE DEVELOPMENT:** NSF has awarded \$8.8 million to two universities under its University Science Development Program. The University of Georgia, Athens, was awarded \$3.72 million, and the University of Iowa was given \$5.1 million. Both are 3-year grants. The purpose of the Science Development Program is to increase the number of first-rate science programs in U.S. institutions. According to the NSF grant announcement, “Support is granted to institutions judged to have substantial potential for elevating the quality of their scientific activities and for maintaining this new high level of excellence.” Both the University of Georgia and the University of Iowa will use the grants to support new faculty members and their supporting staffs, additional graduate students, new construction, and the acquisition of research equipment. During the 2 years in which the NSF program has been underway, \$105 million has been awarded to 27 institutions.

● **BEHAVIORAL BIOLOGY JOURNAL:** A completely computerized journal in behavioral biology that is expected to reduce substantially the time between acceptance and publication of articles is underway at Johns Hopkins University. The first issue of *Communications in Behavioral Biology*, which

will consist of one edition of abstracts and one of original articles, is scheduled for January. Both editions will be loose leaf for insertion into binders that will be supplied to subscribers. The Brain Information Center at UCLA is collaborating with Johns Hopkins on the journal. Stephen A. Weinstein is editor-in-chief of the publication, which is being aided by a 2-year, \$40,000 NSF grant. Subscriptions may be obtained by writing to *Communications in Behavioral Biology*, Johns Hopkins University, 615 N. Wolfe St., Baltimore, Md. 21205. Rates for 6-month subscriptions are \$22.50 for the abstracts and \$9 for the articles.

● **STUDENT LOANS:** The U.S. Office of Education (OE) has announced the allocation of \$189 million to 1701 colleges and universities to aid students under the National Defense Student Loan Program during the 1967–68 academic year. OE anticipates that one-half million students will receive loans under the program which enables undergraduates to borrow up to \$1000 during each academic year and graduate students to borrow up to \$2500 a year.

● **COLLEGE COSTS:** Increasing costs at state colleges and universities are threatening the educational chances of girls, minority groups, and children from low-income families, a booklet published by the Public Affairs Committee notes. The booklet by consumer affairs specialist Sidney Margolius, *Paying for a College Education*, states that girls are particularly handicapped in obtaining higher education because they earn less than boys and because their “parents are usually more reluctant to borrow money to finance the education of their daughters.” According to Margolius, rising costs have forced state institutions to raise admission requirements which also adversely affects the underprivileged. The booklet indicates that publicly supported colleges now educate two-thirds of the college students compared with 50 percent 15 years ago. A reason cited for the increasing role of education in state schools was that annual costs at prestige institutions now are about \$3500. Copies of the booklet may be obtained for 25 cents each from Public Affairs Pamphlets, 381 Park Ave. South, New York 10016.