NEWS IN BRIEF

• **SEXUALITY STUDY**: A task force has been named by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to develop a research program on human sexuality, with emphasis on homosexuality. The group, which includes psychiatrists, sociologists, clergymen, lawyers, psychologists, and anthropologists, "will examine current laws and practices through which society deals with the homosexual and examine the effects of such policies on the individual." Stanley F. Yolles, director of NIMH, stated that conservative estimates place the number of adult men who are exclusively homosexual at 4 percent. He noted that although homosexuality is widely regarded as a social problem of considerable magnitude, it has been somewhat neglected by scientists, "partially due to the stigma which attaches to work in the field." UCLA research psychologist Evelyn Hooker will be chairman of the group. Members of the task force are: Judge David L. Bazelon, U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit; Jerome D. Frank, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; Paul Gebhard, Indiana University; Seward Hiltner, Princeton Theological Seminary; Robert Katz, Hebrew Union College; Judd Marmor, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center; John Money, Johns Hopkins University; Morris Ploscowe, New York University School of Law; Henry W. Riecken, Social Science Research Council, Washington, D.C.; Edwin M. Schur, Tufts University; and Stanton Wheeler, Russell Sage Foundation.

• **ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND**: A fund to support court cases involving conservation problems has been proposed. According to a statement issued by the scientists forming the fund, "The Fund would act whenever serious, permanent, and irreparable damage was threatening the nation's natural resources." Although it is currently without assets, a spokesman said it is hoped that various foundations will make funds available. A group of five scientists will serve as the nucleus of a scientific advisory committee for the fund. The committee will decide which cases are worthy of support and attempt to find appropriate witnesses to testify in cases. Committee members are: George M. Woodwell, Brookhaven National Laboratory; F. Herbert Bormann, Yale University; Charles F. Wurster, State University of New York, Stony Brook; Robert H. Whitaker, University of California, Irvine; and Anthony S. Taormina, regional supervisor of fish and game, New York State Conservation Department.

• **HEALTH FACILITIES STUDY**: A 15-member advisory commission has been named by President Johnson to look into the nation's long-range needs for health facilities. In a statement the President said, "We cannot look at hospital facilities alone. They must be examined in relation to community and regional health needs and resources." The commission's report is expected in about 1 year. Named as chairman was Boisfeuillet Jones, formerly special assistant to the secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare for medical affairs. Jones is now president of the Emily and Ernest Woodruff Foundation.

• **NEUROSCIENCE TRANSLATIONS**: The first issue of a quarterly journal specializing in translations of current Russian literature on the experimental neural sciences is scheduled for publication in November. The journal, *Neuroscience Translations,* will be published by the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), under a $50,000, 1-year grant from the National Institute of Mental Health. A total of about 80 articles will be published during the year. The first issue will be mailed free of charge to subscribers to the *Journal of Neurophysiology* and the *Journal of Comparative and Physiological Psychology*. A year's subscription to the journal may be obtained without charge by writing to: Raymund L. Zwemer, executive editor, *Neuroscience Translations,* FASEB, 9650 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, Md. 20014. Robert W. Doty, editor of the journal, stated that the future of the publication will depend upon reader rseponse.

• **COMPTON MEDAL**: Alan T. Waterman, first director of the National Science Foundation, has been awarded the Karl Taylor Compton Gold Medal by the American Institute of Physics "for distinguished statesmanship in science."

the detergent industry began an intramural program of phosphate research in 1958, and that even if a substitute were discovered today it would be 7 to 10 years before an industry changeover could be completed. Just how much the industry is spending on the research is a secret. Bueltman says no figures are released because they would appear miniscule beside the industry's annual expenditure on advertising. He adds, however, that about 150 people are now working on research for the industry, and that as much money is being spent as can be effectively used.

Bueltman admits the industry has been approached by government agencies regarding federal support for its research, in an attempt to speed solution of the problem. He says his reply has been, "You do not legislate an invention."

Because phosphates have many advantages, they have proved difficult to replace. In detergents, sodium tripolyphosphate acts to soften water; sequester objectionable elements such as iron, thus preventing rust; disperse and suspend dirt; emulsify grease; and buffer alkalinity. When sodium tripolyphosphate is combined with surfactant, the other major ingredient in detergents, the two have a synergic action.

Though the industry has often pointed out that it is not the sole source of phosphates linked with eutrophication, if a substitute product were found, Bueltman says, it probably would be cheaper for the industry to convert to its use than to continue to argue, against public opinion. He notes that the total effects of any phosphate substitute on eutrophication would be unknown, and possibly would be more detrimental than phosphates.

A viable argument for reduction, if not elimination, of phosphates from detergents is the fact that the percentage of phosphates in detergents varies substantially between products designed to perform the same duties, The phosphate content of heavy-duty laundry powders ranges from 35 to 57 percent. That of powders for automatic dishwashers ranges from 25 to 50 percent. Liquid detergents contain the smallest quantities of phosphates; the range is between 15 and 25 percent for heavy-duty cleaners and between 0 and 10 percent for detergents designed for light cleaning.

In Cleveland, where the Cuyahoga River empties into Lake Erie, the problem of pollution is readily apparent.