

NEWS IN BRIEF

● **THERMAL POLLUTION HEARINGS:** Dates of field hearings on thermal pollution from nuclear power facilities in Maine and Vermont have been set by the Subcommittee on Air and Water Pollution of the Senate Committee on Public Works. The hearings will be in Portland, Maine, on 13 February and in Montpelier, Vt., on the 14th. Senator Edmund S. Muskie (D-Me.), chairman of the subcommittee, stated that because of increasing public concern about the effects of thermal pollution, the subcommittee may expand its field hearings to include a review of the proposed nuclear power plants on Biscayne Bay, Florida, Lake Michigan, and thermal pollution of the Columbia River and of the coastal waters of Hawaii.

● **SONIC BOOM REDUCTION:** The most realistic prospects for reducing aircraft sonic booms are for minor reductions brought about by refinements in conventional aircraft design, a better understanding of theory, and improvements in propulsive efficiency and operating procedure, according to a National Academy of Sciences report. The report was pessimistic about the likelihood of a dramatic solution to the sonic boom problem through unconventional aircraft designs. The brief report, *Generation and Propagation of Sonic Boom*, recommended five areas in which additional study of the problem is needed: theory, topographic effects, acceleration and maneuvers, design, and statistical compilations. The subcommittee on Research of the National Academy's Committee on the SST-Sonic Boom Study prepared the report which is available at \$2 a copy from the Printing and Publishing Office, NAS-NRC, 2101 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20418.

● **NATIONAL PARKS HEARINGS:** The House Interior Committee has announced plans for field hearings on the proposed Redwoods and North Cascades national parks. Hearings on the Redwoods measure will be in California on 16 and 17 April, while those on the North Cascades bill will be in the state of Washington on 19 and 20 April. Specific sites for the hearings have not been selected. The Senate approved the creation of the parks late last year.

● **R&D COMPILATION:** The fifteenth publication in the National Science Foundation series, *Current R&D in Scientific Documentation*, is now being prepared. Individuals or organizations in research and development activities who would like to complete questionnaires for the study should contact the NSF contractor preparing the publication at Project CRDSD No. 15, Herner and Company, 2431 K St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20037.

● **LOYALTY OATH RULING:** The Supreme Court on 22 January affirmed a lower court ruling which upholds a 1934 New York law requiring New York teachers to swear to uphold the constitutions of the United States and the State of New York. The New York law, which is similar to laws in several other states, requires all teachers in public schools and teachers in private schools with tax-exempt status to take the oath. The question of the constitutionality of the New York law was carried to the Supreme Court after a three-judge federal panel ruled against a suit brought by 27 members of the teaching staff of Adelphi University. Their suit contended the required oath "infringed freedom of speech." The Supreme Court decision would appear to mean the court has no objection to affirmative loyalty oaths. In the past, the court has overturned loyalty oaths which require public employees to swear that they were not members of subversive organizations.

● **LABORATORY ACCIDENTS:** A woman technician was killed and four other persons were injured on 26 January when an oven exploded in a Harvard Medical School laboratory in Thorndike Memorial Building of Boston City Hospital. Miss Urda Traenkee was killed by fragments of glass from the oven doors. The explosion was the third within a month in facilities affiliated with the medical school. On 5 January a woman technician was burned during an explosion and fire in a histology laboratory in the medical school, and on 18 January a woman physician received burns when fumes ignited in Children's Hospital Medical Center in Boston. The center is affiliated with Harvard Medical School; however, the physician was not a Harvard employee.

test, among other things, dormitory crowding, inadequate garbage collection, and poor lighting. The effect of all this was to sensitize the new and, in large part, relatively inexperienced administration to the need for tactful and explosion-free dealings with the student body. Those were charged with building a great university in the state which had been the last in the Union to adopt a system of public higher education did not want to see their baby battered by any intensification of student-administration hostility. And so, despite nudgings from the police, the administration, in response to the drug problem, adopted what can only be described as a fairly permissive attitude backed up by gentle and low-keyed admonitions and urgings to stay away from drugs.

As was stated in a revised set of campus regulations issued last September, "The University believes that the most effective approach to drug and alcohol misuse is prevention through educational and counseling programs." The regulations, which permitted, for the first time, consumption of alcohol in dormitory rooms by students over 18, stressed that disciplinary action would be taken for any use of drugs, or for abuse of the alcohol privileges. But, as one of the students who was arrested—an extremely bright science major about 20 years old—pointed out in an interview with *Science*, "At first we used to look over our shoulder when we took 'pot,' but we never saw anything, so we even stopped bothering to look. You know," he added, "it's like atomic weapons. When you first learn about them, you're scared. But they never go off, so you stop worrying about it." While the students apparently stopped worrying about it, and even got the idea that the administration was shielding them from police action, the administration was actually groping for methods to deal with the problem. An open symposium on drug problems was held last fall; the student resident assistants in the dormitories were sent articles and other literature on drugs, and the administration sought counsel from drug authorities at nearby public institutions.

Meanwhile, the administration was under the impression that it had arrived at some sort of *modus vivendi* with the local police. The nature of these arrangements, to the extent that they actually existed, is impossible to determine, for, quite obviously, whatever deal was made was *sub rosa* and, in the final analysis, illegal. But among per-