

M. P. Rebuked for CBW Disclosure

London. When it comes to withholding information, the U.S. Congress is as tight as a wormy canoe, and, though it is routine for offended parties to protest raucously, steps are rarely ever taken to punish the passers or recipients of embargoed material. It's different here; and as evidence of this, we can consider the case of Tam Dalyell, a young Labor M.P. from Scotland, who, as a member of the Select Committee on Science and Technology, has achieved distinction for persistent inquiry into the mysteries of research policy making. Often, this has been to the embarrassment of the government, which, as is the case in the United States, generally takes the position that everything either is fine or is in the process of becoming so.

Of late, Dalyell has been particularly interested in the politically volatile subject of chemical and biological weapons (CBW) and has been campaigning to eliminate secrecy at the Porton Down research facilities, some 80 miles southwest of London, where the Defence Ministry carries on work in these fields (*Science*, 21 June). Last week, Dalyell's campaigning brought him further distinction when the House voted, 244 to 252, that in the zealotry of his antisecrecy campaign, he had violated venerable rules of parliamentary conduct last spring by handing a copy of an unpublished Select Committee document on CBW to an inquiring reporter from the *Observer*.

"Breach of Privilege and Gross Contempt"

Dalyell humbly pleaded guilty, though explaining that he had passed the document—a transcript of the Select Committee's hearings into what goes on at Porton—in the belief that it was to be published without change within a few days. The House then reprimanded him for "breach of privilege and gross contempt," and the matter ended there, amidst a good deal of private talk, however, to the effect that Dalyell had offended more by making a nuisance of himself on the politically volatile subject of CBW than by transgressing Parliament's publication procedures. Prior to the vote, there was speculation that a severe reprimand might force him to resign his seat, but, by and large, there was more sympathy for Dalyell than is suggested by the vote; and the press, of course, generally took the position that there is nothing wrong with slipping papers to the press. (The *Guardian* headlined its account, "Medieval rebuke for Mr. Dalyell," and noted that, prior to delivering the reprimand, the Speaker donned a three-cornered black hat "which he keeps under his seat for such rare occasions.") This was the first time such a case had come up in 21 years.

The committee on privilege, which conducted a hearing into the matter also concluded that both the author of the article and the editor of the *Observer* had committed contempt of the House, but the committee recommended that no action be taken against them.

The *Observer* article, published 26 May, did not contain any information that was deleted from the published version of the Select Committee transcript. But having gotten a good scoop, the *Observer* made the most of it. What it took special note of, in a front-page story headlined, "Biological Warfare: Dons Named," was that the chemical and microbiological establishments at Porton had contracted for research to be conducted at some 25 universities and research centers throughout Britain. Though individual researchers were not named in the transcript, there were sufficient leads for identifying a good number by name, and, once this was done, the usual barrages and counter-barrages began to fly on the subject of the propriety of academics engaging in CBW research. It is said by some who are in a position to know that, at that point, the Defence Ministry proceeded to offer encouragement for the House to take disciplinary action against Dalyell.—D. S. GREENBERG

However lax they may have been in the past, the Lake Michigan states now approach pollution problems with greater urgency. The agreement reached in a four-state pollution abatement conference held in Chicago early this year included a provision especially significant for the lake's fishery ecology. By the end of 1972, all cities in the watershed are to start removing from their wastes at least 80 percent of the phosphorus—a nutrient which plays a key part in the eutrophication process. Other forms of municipal and industrial pollution also are covered by the agreement, and, according to Murray Stein, chief of enforcement for the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration, abatement schedules are being followed in good faith. The Michigan Department of Conservation is campaigning for a \$335-million "clean water" bond issue proposal, which is to be voted on this November. The bonds would help finance municipal sewage treatment facilities.

Remedies far more radical than anything now planned are being advocated by some, however. For instance, the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries has taken the position—in a paper prepared by Stanford Smith of its Ann Arbor laboratory—that, ultimately, all wastes must be diverted from the Lake Michigan drainage into the Mississippi drainage. Otherwise, the Bureau says, accelerated eutrophication will be inevitable. Yet diversions from the lake on the scale suggested would affect water levels, and, as the 30-year history of Chicago's diversion of Lake Michigan water into the Illinois River attests, major political and legal problems involving all the Great Lakes states and Canada would be unavoidable.

Even though the future is clouded with uncertainty by pollution problems, the Michigan Department of Conservation is going all out in a program of fishery management believed to be unprecedented in scope and complexity. In addition to its rapidly expanding hatchery operations, the Department will improve stream habitat and build fishways for coho and other lake-run species. Further, it is trying to manage the lake fishery so as to keep a balance between predator and prey. The Department has just been given regulatory powers which, in their comprehensiveness, can be matched in only one other state (Minnesota, which has no large fishery).