

research in the future. Ripley, who joined the Smithsonian in 1964, said that when the project was undertaken in 1962-63 the Smithsonian could see "no particular harm" in agreeing to restrictive conditions that seemed "routine boiler plate." But as antipathies have developed toward secret military research in recent years, Ripley said, it has become clear that the Smithsonian must avoid any hint that it is "doing undercover things for the Army."

Ripley says he knows of no other classified research being performed by the Smithsonian. Two years ago, he says, he turned down a project related to Vietnam because "I didn't want to see the Smithsonian mixed up in something that could be assumed to be related to the war." Ripley added that the Smithsonian would hesitate to undertake any research for the Defense Department—even if it were unclassified—in areas of the world that are "pathologically sensitive."

All in all—if one can accept the testimony of the scientists involved—the Smithsonian has behaved much like hundreds of other institutions and researchers who accept Defense Department support. It is conducting a basic research project that it believes has great intrinsic merit; it is accepting Army money to finance the project; and the Army presumably is using the results for military purposes.

But NBC, and some of the newspaper reports, have implied something more: they have suggested that the Smithsonian is serving as a "cover" for military activities. The charges are worth examining in some detail, for, on close inspection, they turn out to be marred by the use of loaded words and guilt-by-association reasoning.

NBC's allegations were aired on 4 February on a program called "First Tuesday." The program, which uses a "magazine format," presented several topics that night, ranging from an examination of ornate bathrooms to a tour of the Sinai peninsula, but its major segment was a long exploration of CBW. The program hit hard at the secrecy surrounding CBW activities, and, in a somewhat doomsday atmosphere, showed animals convulsing and dying from the effects of CBW agents.

The first hint of the revelations to come concerning the Smithsonian was supplied by NBC reporter Tom Pettit, who described the extent of the CBW test programs and then added: "There has even been an ultra-secret test proj-

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### ● SOVIET POLLUTION CONTROL:

The Soviet government is moving to halt pollution of Lake Baikal north of the Mongolian Republic in Eastern Asia in response to conservation pleas by Soviet scientists. Discharges of industrial waste, lumber by-products, and sewage have threatened water quality in Lake Baikal, which is about 400 miles long and 6000 feet deep in some places. A conservation program, including the construction of waste treatment installations and the restriction of certain lumbering and industrial operations in the Baikal Basin area, is planned. No central agency in the Soviet Union controls environmental pollution. Authority is divided among various agencies. In this case, the Ministry of Reclamation and Water Management will monitor pollutant discharges into the Basin. The Government Hydrometeorological Service will regularly test the chemical composition of the lake. The Peoples' Control Committee, a citizens' regulatory group, will urge a cooperative control effort, and the Ministry of Fisheries plans to protect and replenish both the fish and the wildlife.

### ● VENEMAN NAMED TO HEW

**POST:** John G. Veneman has been named Undersecretary of the Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) Department. He will be second in command at HEW and will serve as principal adviser and deputy to the Secretary in all departmental matters. Veneman, who has served the last 7 years as a California state assemblyman, recently led an investigation of the alleged high costs and abuses in California's medical assistance program.

### ● GAO SCORES RESEARCH CENTERS:

Think tanks and other research centers which do business with the federal government come under fire in a General Accounting Office (GAO) report to Congress titled "Need for Improved Guidelines in Contracting for Research with Government-Sponsored Nonprofit Contractors." The report calls for government-wide guidelines on the amounts and use of "fees" or management allowances given by the Defense Department, NASA, and the AEC to federal contract research centers. The GAO found that allowances paid to

nonprofit organizations varied significantly, were not being much used for the conduct of research, and had been spent by some centers, including IDA, MITRE, and RAND, to acquire extensive capital facilities. The report also noted that RAND uses its fees to let its employees fly first-class on trips of more than 1½ hours, contrary to regulations restricting the use of first-class accommodations for government employees and contractors. The report also stated that Aerospace Corporation had used its fees for paying executive salaries which are excessive. (The president of Aerospace receives an annual salary of \$90,000.) The GAO is the budgetary "watchdog" of Congress, and its reports are influential among budget-minded congressmen. The use of government funds by federal contract research centers has been criticized in Congress in the past and is expected to receive congressional attention again this year.

### ● HOLIFIELD NEW AEC COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN:

Representative Chet Holifield (D-Calif.) will serve as chairman of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy during the 91st Congress. Under the 1954 Atomic Energy Act, the chairmanship of the Joint Committee alternates, each Congress, between the House and the Senate. Holifield, senior Democrat on the committee, has changed positions with Senator John Pastore (D-R.I.), who is the new vice chairman.

### ● PITTSBURGH COLLEGES PROTEST TAX:

Six Pittsburgh area colleges and universities are testing the validity of a new Pittsburgh city revenue measure, which college representatives believe violates the traditional tax-exempt status of educational institutions. The new city ordinance, which levies a 0.6 percent tax on the gross receipts for services of colleges and universities, was passed by the Pittsburgh city council in December; it is expected to apply to tuition, room and board charges, rent, and could result in higher student charges and bookkeeping expenditures. Educators fear that the Pittsburgh tax could have widespread ramifications. Communities with a similar taxing authority may attempt to adopt comparable laws.