

Letters

Chicago Boycott Defended

Let me reaffirm the view that a boycott of Chicago, as a place for large meetings in the next few years, would be an appropriate response to the events of last August. One need not sympathize with the demonstrators in order to condemn the behavior of the Chicago police.

R. M. Carlton (Letters, 17 Jan.) justifies the behavior of the police, largely on the ground that the demonstrators goaded them into violence by obscene and infuriating language. This is no excuse. A policeman is, or should be, a professional. It is his responsibility not to respond to words by physical violence, no matter how foul those words may be. Words break no bones. Moreover, the violence of the police, once unleashed, vented itself not only on the demonstrators but on dozens of newsmen and hundreds of innocent bystanders. The recent official report to the Commission on Civil Disorders, based on an intensive investigation directed by a prominent Chicago lawyer, characterized the event as a "police riot." Many of the Chicago police, indeed, according to the testimony, behaved with discipline and restraint; but one cannot dismiss the violence of hundreds of others as simply the excesses of a small group of policemen who got out of hand. The words and actions of Mayor Daley, before the event, implicitly encouraged such violence; and afterwards he explicitly justified it. The primary responsibility, therefore, lies with officials of the city of Chicago for events that disgraced this country.

E. G. Brunngraber holds that a boycott of Chicago as a meeting place is a political act that is incompatible with the stated aims of scientific societies. Personally I do not think that scientific societies can or should refuse entirely to take stands on political issues (see D. K. Price, "Purists and politicians," 3 Jan., p. 25). In this case, however, the political implications are minimal. We are protesting the actions of a city

government that needs to put its house in order. If such meetings as those of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology are shifted to other cities, I would regard this simply as a decent response to indecent behavior that imperiled the safety of innocent people.

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Tektite I: Who Can Use It?

On 15 February, General Electric's highly sophisticated sealab, *Tektite I*, was placed in position between two reefs in the Caribbean near St. John's National Park, U.S. Virgin Islands. This sealab, developed jointly by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Departments of Navy and Interior, has a capacity of four "live-in" divers and is capable of underwater operations of a long duration providing for research in biology, geology, oceanography, and engineering. Two vertical circular towers of the lab are set on a large rectangular shark cage and storage area. Each tower has two stacked rooms with a connecting passageway at the top. The diving port is in the base of one tower and leads to a wet lab and scuba storage area with hot freshwater showers. Above this is the main equipment room, food storage, backup air and electric systems, and so forth, topped with a 360-degree flat glass viewing cupola. The second tower has living quarters for four at the base, complete with stove, refrigerator, commercial TV and FM radio, and individual headsets for any circuit. The main dry lab and communications bridge are located on top with ship-to-shore and commercial telephone systems, monitoring devices, and closed circuit underwater TV screens. All rooms have ground plexiglass viewing bubbles which can be used for wide-angle or flat vision. The lab is connected to shore support with backup

systems, good for 72 hours. A decompression chamber in a mobile barge near the shore stands by to insure the safety of the divers.

Tektite I is situated within reach of a great variety of shallow shelf environments up to 100 feet (30.48 meters) in depth. Lights and underwater closed-circuit TV allow 24-hour observation. Samples are carried to the surface and supplies are sent down via an underwater dumbwaiter of waterproof containers.

During the 2 months of *Tektite's* operation, a diving team will carry out research on lobster, mollusk, and echinoid behavior and distribution, plankton composition and variation, benthos distribution and activity, and reef fishes, in addition to recording extensive environmental data. At the same time, the diving team, operating under stress environment, will be studied by NASA scientists who seek data on man's ability to work under such conditions. This program will provide a broad base for further research at the same site.

Many federal and private institutions are very interested in using *Tektite* after the project is completed in mid-April, and the operating hardware is deactivated. If more extensive use of this sealab is to be made, then effective scientific proposals must be presented to the funding agencies without delay. The Smithsonian Institution is taking the initiative in calling attention to the prompt and vigorous action needed for making the *Tektite* sealab a national facility. The costs of operating undersea vehicles is generally prohibitive for most institutions. But this investment of several million dollars *could* be utilized by the scientific community, if the latter will only make its proposed uses known immediately.

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CMI: No Closer than the Moon

Brudner's enthusiasm for computer-managed instruction (29 Nov., p. 970) as a vehicle for "transforming the educational process by giving the teacher a sophisticated aid to allow for flexible, multimedia, individualized education at a relatively small increase in cost" is commendable. However, the experience of the Southwest Regional Laboratory in developing a CMI system provides