

NEWS IN BRIEF

● **HARRIS' COMMITTEE MAY BE PHASED OUT:** The Senate Government Research Subcommittee, which gave Senator Fred Harris (D-Okla.) a foothold as an influence on scientific affairs in the Senate, is scheduled to be phased out in September. Harris, who is chairman of the subcommittee, has also been serving as Democratic National Committee Chairman since his appointments to the post in January. He will continue to serve as chairman of the Government Research Subcommittee until it is disbanded. Senate sources say the committee phaseout is part of a plan to reduce the number of Government Operations Committee subcommittees. These sources say that Harris' subcommittee would be the first to go because Harris has less seniority than other subcommittee chairmen. There is some speculation, however, that in the politicking that is likely to occur his subcommittee could be saved.

● **SST REVIEW:** President Nixon has approved the membership of an ad hoc committee to review all aspects of the Supersonic Transport (SST) program. The committee includes the President's Science Advisor Lee A. DuBridge and Air Force Secretary Robert C. Seamans, Jr. The 11-member committee, chaired by Transportation Undersecretary James M. Beggs, is expected to make its recommendation to the President in March. The selection of the ad hoc committee is the third step in a federal review of the SST program to determine whether the government will continue subsidizing its development. Other reviews, with particular emphasis on Boeing's resubmitted SST designs for a fixed-wing aircraft, have been conducted by the Federal Aviation Administration, and by the Transportation Department.

● **ATOMARIUM:** The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) plans to donate a \$1.5-million atomarium, a small nuclear research reactor system, to the New York Hall of Science for use by New York college students interested in conducting nuclear research. The reactor, to be built over a 3-year period at a cost of \$435,000, will be supplemented with a laboratory and nuclear displays. It will be part of a new \$10.8-million science museum, which New York City is expected to finance.

ence included the directorship of Harwell's theoretical physics division; time spent at Berkeley in the physics department, at Harvard's school of engineering and applied physics, and at the Bell Laboratories; and 10 weeks of lecturing at Oak Ridge in 1962, where he struck up a friendship with director Alvin Weinberg, who was doing some reorganizing within that research establishment. (Weinberg, who has long argued that the national laboratories should be turned loose on major national problems, such as air and water pollution, housing, and transportation, is an enthusiastic admirer of Marshall's scientific and administrative abilities.)

The present extent of Harwell's involvement in industrial work is difficult to measure since some industrial research overlaps with activities that would be performed there anyway; some is done on a collaborative basis (that is, Harwell and an industrial firm will team up on a project, with each performing its portion in its own facilities); and some research is carried out in the expectation that an industrial firm will recognize its importance and eventually contract with Harwell to keep it going. At present, Marshall reports, about 35 percent of the staff is engaged in industrial work, and in the fiscal year that ended last 31 March these activities produced about \$360,000 in fees, royalties, and other income; he expects this figure to rise to \$1.2 million in the current year and, after that, to rise even faster, especially from royalties, which are collectible over a 15-year period. Though Marshall and his associates stress that it is difficult to predict the future in industrial research, they think it quite likely that, in another year, these activities may produce as much as \$7 million in cash income.

Harwell's Ceramics Center, which was one of the first to move into the industrial program, currently has a budget of nearly \$1 million a year. Of this amount, about two-thirds is devoted to industry-related research. The Non-Destructive Testing Center operates on a yearly budget of \$420,000, and about half its work is now performed for outside industrial organizations. Over the past years the Center's professional staff has risen from five to 15 persons. The Center performs routine testing of materials for its clients, among whom are 15 firms that retain its services for a \$2400-a-year fee each. In one of Harwell's few departures from its policy of working with individual firms, the Non-

Destructive Testing Center compiles a monthly bibliography of relevant literature, which is published by a commercial firm under the title *NDT Info*. But to stress the fact that clients can expect confidential treatment of their interests, the NDT building has added something that was previously considered unnecessary: a guard at the front door. In desalinization the Atomic Energy Authority authorized Harwell to spend nearly \$5 million in a collaborative program with a British firm that was encountering stiff international competition, Weir Westgarth. The firm has lately been doing extremely well in the sale of flash evaporators, and the Ministry of Technology, which, administratively, sits over the Atomic Energy Authority, has cited this case as an example of Harwell's success in working with industry.

Recalling the early days of Harwell's move into industrial activities, Marshall said, "The beginning of any such enterprise is depressing. The first reaction of industry was that they didn't need any more research. They had lots of doubts as to whether we could be businesslike. It was a very slow process. We got them to visit here, and we argued that we could be hardheaded about business and could give them access to facilities that they couldn't possibly afford themselves. It took a while, but now we have as much as we can handle along with the other responsibilities that we have to meet." One ingredient in gaining industry's confidence was a program analysis unit which was assigned to make cost-effectiveness studies both for Harwell's use and to demonstrate to prospective clients that Harwell is attentive to problems of investment and profit. So far, some of Britain's most technologically advanced industrial firms have signed up for Harwell's services, including Rolls Royce, Imperial Chemical Industries, Pilkington, Unilever, and Courtaulds.

As for morale, Marshall said that, at the time the industrial program got under way, it was so low, because of uncertainty about Harwell's future, that it had nowhere to go but upward. One division head said, "This is a very agreeable place to work, but as the nuclear work was running out, people became understandably fearful about the future. Now the future is bright, and I'd say that most people are quite happy about it. The problem, however, is to get these scientists and engineers to think like businessmen, which isn't easy. We keep stressing that we want to concentrate on work that can make a profit, but our