

NEWS IN BRIEF

● **FDA CONTRACTS WITH YUGOSLAVIA FOR PILL STUDY:** The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has signed contracts with the Yugoslavian government to conduct a major series of studies on the safety of oral contraceptives. This research, which will be conducted under the first FDA contracts for oral contraceptive studies granted outside the United States, will be financed with U.S. counterpart funds. (Last year, under Public Law 480, population research was approved as a use for U.S. funds that are made available in a foreign country to repay foreign aid commitments to the United States.) One project, a 4-year \$130,000 study on the relation of the pill to diabetes among some users, is already under way at the Institute for Maternal and Child Welfare, Zagreb. Another project, a 6-year \$200,000 study on the relation of the pill to cervical cancer among users, and the effects of pill use on rates of fertility, is expected to be approved soon by FDA Commissioner Herbert L. Ley, Jr. FDA officials say the research on contraceptives is expected to be about five times less expensive to conduct in Yugoslavia than in the United States.

● **ASTRONAUT APPOINTED TO SPACE COUNCIL:** President Nixon has named an astronaut, Lt. Col. William A. Anders, as the new executive secretary of the National Science Council. He succeeds Edward C. Welsh as chief of staff for the White House council, which advises the President on aeronautics and space matters. The 35-year-old Anders has been an astronaut since October 1963. He was a member of the back-up crew of the Gemini II program and a crew member on the Apollo 8, around-the-moon manned flight in December 1968. He will be a member of the back-up crew for the Apollo 11 moon landing scheduled for July, after which time he plans to retire from the Air Force to accept his new position. Anders graduated in 1955 from the U.S. Naval Academy and then served as a nuclear engineer and test pilot at the Air Force Weapons Laboratory in New Mexico. In 1962, he received a master of science degree in nuclear engineering at the Air Force Institute of Technology at Wright-Patterson in Ohio. Anders appointment must still be confirmed by the Senate.

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tion of this class of weapons applies as much to the developing as it does to developed countries.

The momentum of the arms race would clearly decrease if the production of these weapons were effectively and unconditionally banned. Their use, which could cause an enormous loss of human life, has already been condemned and prohibited by international agreements, in particular the Geneva protocol of 1925 and more recently in resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The prospects for general and complete disarmament under effective international control and hence for peace throughout the world would brighten significantly if the development, production, and stockpiling of chemical and bacteriological agents for purposes of war were to end and if they were eliminated from all military arsenals.

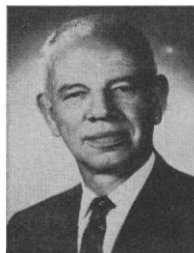
The report now goes back to the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Conference, to the General Assembly, and to the U.N. member governments. What happens next is not exactly clear, but a number of observers feel that, if steps are ever taken to curb CBW, they will be taken now. In America

there are a number of straws in the wind: the sheep kill in Utah; the opposition to the Army's plan to ship poison gas across the country for dumping in the ocean; a policy review on CBW ordered by President Nixon; and, most recently, the elimination by the conservative Senate Armed Services Committee of funds for research on offensive chemical and biological weapons. In England public agitation is high, and observers report that in the U.S.S.R.—at least in the scientific community—interest in the CBW situation is nearly as intense as it is here. The solid agreement of the 14 experts is in itself significant. Whether the action will take the form of a drive for universal ratification of the Geneva protocol (the U.S. is not a signatory), with an explicit understanding that it be applied to tear gas, or whether some form of active CBW disarmament negotiations will begin, it is still too early to say. But the feeling is widespread that there is a chance this year to close Pandora's box before it opens any wider.—ELINOR LANGER

APPOINTMENTS



M. C. McLaughlin



L. J. Haworth

Mary C. McLaughlin, deputy health commissioner for New York City, elevated to commissioner. . . . Leland J. Haworth, director of the National Science Foundation, to assistant to the president, Associated Universities, Inc. . . . Robert S. Edgar, professor of biology at California Institute of Technology, to provost of "College Six" at University of California, Santa Cruz. . . . Ervin J. Hawrylewicz, assistant director of life sciences research at Illinois Institute of Technology, to director of research for Mercy Hospital and Medical Center. . . . William L. Blockstein, chairman of extension services in pharmacy, University of Wisconsin, to chairman of the health unit at the university. . . . L. H. Schmidt, director, National Center for Primate

Biology, University of California, Davis, to associate director, chemotherapy research, Southern Research Institute, Birmingham, Alabama. . . . Peter C. Badgley, executive director, Gulf Universities Research Corporation, Texas, to director of the earth sciences division, Office of Naval Research. . . . Arnold Schein, associate professor of biochemistry, University of Vermont College of Medicine, to chairman, department of chemistry, San Jose State College, California. . . . Roger H. Hildebrand, professor of physics, to dean of the College of the University of Chicago. . . . Stephen I. Morse, associate professor of immunology, Rockefeller University, to chairman, department of microbiology and immunology, State University of New York. . . . Louis T. Rader, vice president of General Electric Company, to chairman of the electrical engineering department, University of Virginia, and Edward W. Hook, professor of internal medicine at Cornell University, to chairman of the department of internal medicine at the University of Virginia School of Medicine. . . . Ralph A. Burton, liaison scientist, U.S. Office of Naval Research, London, to chairman of the mechanical engineering and astronautical sciences department, Northwestern University, Illinois.