

knowledge of any facts that might have been the basis for a determination" that his appointment would not be consistent with the interests of national security.

Kahn contends that he has been professionally deprived in a number of ways in being refused his PHS commission. (i) He has been deprived of an opportunity to do a residency as would have been permitted in the PHS program; (ii) he will not be "permitted to work, as previously arranged, in one of the few institutions offering an extensive program in epidemiology and infectious diseases"; and (iii) "I have in effect been labeled a 'subversive' and my loyalty to my country called into doubt and questioned by nameless and faceless persons, following procedures giving me no opportunity to establish my qualifications as a loyal citizen and to rebut any charges or suggestions of disloyalty."

It is impossible to determine precisely what proportion of qualified applicants for medical, scientific and engineering positions in the PHS are turned down on the basis of information developed in the HEW security check, but it probably does not represent a high percentage of the applicants. According to Tamarath Yolles, director of the Commissioned Personnel Operations Division for HEW, about 750 of the 2500 physicians who applied this year for PHS commissions were accepted. Of those selected, reported Dr. Yolles (who is the wife of NIMH director Stanley M. Yolles) only about 1 percent were barred on the basis of the security and suitability check run by HEW. Mrs. Yolles also supplied the additional information that a full-fledged conscientious objector (I-O classification) cannot be given a PHS commission but that a conscientious objector available for noncombatant military service (I-A-O classification) could be given a PHS Commission. (Mrs. Yolles, who supervises the PHS commissioning process, discussed these matters for a few minutes with *Science*, but then declined to answer further questions on how the HEW security check system affected PHS commissioning. After the initial discussion, Mrs. Yolles would not make herself available even for the purpose of ascertaining why she was unwilling to answer questions on this subject.)

Before she refused to answer further questions on the subject, Mrs. Yolles did say that the security check delayed some candidates' applications

past the deadline for processing. Such a delay usually means that doctors are denied a PHS commission since they immediately become available for induction into the military forces. In talking to recent PHS applicants around the country, *Science* found several cases of doctors who had not been denied a commission outright on the basis of the HEW security check but who had been delayed past the PHS cut-off date, thus effectively depriving them of a PHS commission.

Doctors who are facing military induction doubtless feel a special hardship when they are deprived of PHS commissions. The problem of qualified applicants being denied government positions on the basis of their political or other nonprofessional criteria, however, extends all across the vast Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and, indeed to almost every other government agency.

In Senator Brooke's opinion, cases such as that of Dr. Kahn illustrate "how important it is for the Federal government to take a sober and objective look at the justice of procedures whereby an applicant is never precisely informed of or permitted to comment upon information about him which may be frivolous or, indeed, untrue. There are certainly grave questions about the desirability and constitutionality of governmental practices by which anonymous officials use secret information and undisclosed criteria to deny someone a job in a nondefense-related field. Dr. Kahn's case prompts a nagging suspicion that some applicants may be rejected for federal appointment because their beliefs or their efforts in behalf of legitimate causes are deemed contrary to government policy."

Brooke has urged that Secretary Finch initiate a broad reexamination of practices and standards in the security check area. "I hope that you, as Secretary of one of the Departments in which such procedures are especially inappropriate," Brooke wrote Finch, "will see fit to take the lead in such a reexamination. I, for one, will be happy to support any reasonable effort to correct the manifest deficiencies of the present system."

Although the strong support of a well-known Republican such as Brooke is helpful, it is certain to take a lot more pressure—both from individuals and scientific organizations—to persuade the HEW bureaucracy to modify its well-established security procedures.—BRYCE NELSON

## NEWS IN BRIEF

● **ARMY TESTS NERVE GAS:** The Army has disclosed that it is conducting open air tests of lethal nerve gas at three sites in the nation. A Pentagon official acknowledged the open-air testing to a House subcommittee chaired by Representative Henry S. Reuss (D-Wis.). In addition to the Dugway Proving Ground in Utah, tests are being conducted at the Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland and at Fort McClellan in Alabama.

● **INDIAN RESIGNS BUREAU POST:** Robert L. Bennett, the first American Indian to serve as Indian Affairs Commissioner in the Interior Department in 100 years, has resigned his post to protest the Administration's alleged indifference to Indians. Bennett, an Oneida Indian from Wisconsin who has served in the Bureau for 31 years, says he submitted his resignation after he learned through a television program that Interior Secretary Walter Hickel was seeking a new commissioner. A strong advocate of Indian rights, Bennett believes political considerations were behind the Administration's move to replace him. Bennett, who was named commissioner in 1966 by President Johnson, is a Republican. He served from 1961 to 1965 as Indian Affairs Bureau Director for Alaska, the state where Hickel was elected governor in 1966.

● **AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT MORATORIUM ON DDT:** The Agriculture Department has ordered a temporary suspension of the use of DDT and other persistent pesticides containing chlorinated hydrocarbons in its pest control programs for 30 days while a departmental review is undertaken. The suspension will affect government pest control programs conducted by the U.S. Forest Service, the Agricultural Research Service, and departmental pest control operations at military and civilian airports. Agriculture officials say the review will consider possible alternative pest control methods, including other chemicals.

● **SENATE AFFIRMS MCELROY:** The Senate confirmed on 11 July the appointment of William D. McElroy, Johns Hopkins University biologist, as the new National Science Foundation director. He succeeds Leland J. Haworth.