

ment" will be held in Chicago, with one of its major goals being to weld an alliance of population groups, conservation organizations, and other groups such as the American Association of University Women and the National Student Association. Some 1100 delegates from 250 organizations are to be invited, and about 100 scientists and other specialists on population, ecology, and conservation will participate.

The organizers of the congress include such people as Paul R. Ehrlich, professor of population biology at Stanford (and author of *The Population Bomb*, published by the Sierra Club and Ballantine Books), the Reverend Canon Don C. Shaw of the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago (and director of information and education for Planned Parenthood/World Population from 1961 to 1967), and Representative Richard D. Lamm, a member of the Colorado state legislature and a leader of the Colorado Institute on Population Prob-

lems (even Colorado, ranking eighth among the states in land area but only 33rd in population, is finding that its open spaces are neither so wide nor so uncluttered as they once were).

Canon Shaw, executive director of the congress, told *Science* that the hope is that after the Chicago meeting the delegates will encourage their organizations to mount action programs aimed at promoting and attaining the goal of the two-child family. Campaigns might, for example, be focused on such specific objectives as the establishment of state population commissions, the liberalization of state abortion laws, and the elimination of "pro-natalist" bias from federal and state laws and policies (the federal income tax law, for instance, places no limit on the number of children for which the taxpayer can claim exemptions).

The dimensions of the U.S. population problem were explored in September at a 2-day hearing held by the

House Conservation and Natural Resources Subcommittee, chaired by Representative Henry S. Reuss (D-Wis.). A theme stressed by several of the witnesses, such as Jean Mayer, professor of nutrition and member of the Center for Population Studies at Harvard, was that the need to control population growth is no less urgent in the rich countries than in the poor countries. Mayer had developed that argument earlier in an article that appeared in *Columbia Forum* (summer 1969). In that article, he indicated that the environmental degradation that has accompanied population and economic growth in the rich nations is more of a problem to the world than the pressure put on food supplies by the poor nations' burgeoning populations. The food situation, he said, is not worsening and, in 20 or 30 years, with the application of the most advanced agricultural and food production methods, it may be removed altogether as a limiting factor

Yesterday Cyclamates, Today 2,4,5-T, Tomorrow DDT?

Action taken by two government agencies in recent weeks to protect the consumer from potentially harmful chemicals has encouraged some environmentalists to press for a ban on DDT.

On 18 October, only 5 days after learning that cyclamates cause cancer in mice, Health, Education, and Welfare Secretary Robert Finch ordered the sweetener off the market. A few days later, the White House announced that the Department of Agriculture was canceling the registration for use on food crops of the herbicide 2,4,5-T, which has been shown to cause birth defects in animals. The White House also announced that the Defense Department would restrict the use of the herbicide as a defoliant in Vietnam to areas that are remote from population.

Instead of offering it a pat on the back, however, a coalition of environmental activists in effect told the government: Having taken these actions, you simply must ban DDT, which [they said] is more pervasive in the environment and more harmful than either cyclamates or the herbicide. Four organizations—the Environmental Defense Fund, the Sierra Club, the National Audubon Society, and the West Michigan Environmental Action Council—made this argument in a petition last Friday, asking the Secretary of Agriculture to ban immediately the use of DDT. The action against cyclamates and the herbicide, the petition stated, "confirm the federal policy of banning cancer-producing agents by immediate action."

"Cancer-producing," in the case of cyclamates, 2,4,5-T, and DDT, means that very high concentrations of the chemical induce cancer in laboratory animals. The Congressional definition of danger, which appears in the Food

Additives Amendment to the Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Act, is that no additive "shall be deemed to be safe if it is found to induce cancer when ingested by man or animal. . . ."

Attorneys for the four groups would not rule out the possibility of court action against the Department, if it fails to act. The Environmental Defense Fund in particular has often employed litigation as a weapon against polluters.

The decision to cancel the registration of 2,4,5-T, much less publicized than the cyclamate affair, was announced by Presidential Science Adviser Lee DuBridge only a few days before the DDT petition. It came as a result of yet unpublicized experiments conducted by the Bionetics Research Laboratories for the National Cancer Institute. The study, conducted primarily on mice, indicated that the herbicide caused an increase in the incidence of cancer and malformed fetuses.

The evidence against DDT, on the other hand, is not hot out of the lab. While it emphasizes a recent study supported by the National Cancer Institute, the petition cites many older studies showing carcinogenic effects of DDT on laboratory animals.

The petition to Secretary of Agriculture Clifford Hardin drew support from, among others, the United Auto Workers and former Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall. At the press conference announcing the petition, Udall said the Nixon administration "hit a single" in the 2,4,5-T cancellation and a "double" in banning the use of cyclamates. "The best home run for the environment," Udall concluded, "would be to ban the use of DDT in this country."—JOEL R. KRAMER