

NEWS IN BRIEF

● **APOLLO 13 INQUEST:** The final report of the review board investigating the failure of the Apollo 13 moon flight faulted two companies, North American Rockwell and Beech Aircraft, for installing inadequate thermostatic switches in the heater assembly of one of the spacecraft's oxygen tanks, causing the tank to explode. The report also criticized NASA personnel for not catching the mistake in preflight tests. The board made several recommendations for extensive reviews of NASA manufacturing and testing procedures. The space agency's director, Thomas O. Paine, said that it was still too early to tell whether the recommendations would cause a delay in the flight of Apollo 14, scheduled to be launched in December.

● **POPULATION COMMISSION:** Charles F. Westoff, chairman of the sociology department at Princeton University, has been appointed executive director of the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future by President Nixon. The Commission will study the probable growth of population between now and the year 2000 and what impact this growth will have upon public resources and governmental activities. Establishment of the Commission was requested by the Nixon Administration last summer. The bill, which provided for a 2-year term for the Commission, was signed on 15 March, and John D. Rockefeller III was named Commission Chairman. No further appointments were announced until Westoff's on 15 June.

● **FERMI AWARD:** Dr. Norris E. Bradbury, head of the Atomic Energy Commission's (AEC) Los Alamos laboratory, has been awarded the Enrico Fermi Award for 1970. The AEC's award, worth \$25,000, was given for Bradbury's key role in helping revolutionize nuclear weaponry and for his contributions to peacetime uses of atomic energy. Bradbury will receive the award in Los Alamos on 29 August as part of a public ceremony planned in honor of his retirement, which is set for 1 September.

● **VIETNAM ECOLOGY STUDY:** Nine Republican Congressmen, expressing concern about the ecological effects of the war in Vietnam on that country,

have asked the President to appoint a study commission of American scientists to work with Vietnamese scientists in recommending steps to rebuild the agriculture, ecology, and industry of Vietnam after the war. The letter writers, led by John Dellenback (Ore.), have received a noncommittal answer from White House aide William Timmons.

● **FEDERAL AID TO DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS:** The Office of Education has reported that federal aid for 676 students was cut off between 16 October 1968 and 1 July 1969 because of their role in campus disorders. Aid to 92 students was terminated under the provisions of various higher education laws. Aid to the other 584 students was cut off when the students were suspended or expelled by their colleges acting in accord with the institutions' own rules.

● **WATER SURVEY:** About 30 percent of the public water supply samples taken in a recent federal survey contained germs and chemicals in amounts that violated at least one federal purity standard. The survey, which was conducted by the Environmental Control Administration, took 3563 samples from the public water supplies of Vermont and nine metropolitan areas. A full report of the survey, complete with statistics and recommendations, will be issued in a few weeks.

● **BARIUM RELEASE EXPERIMENT:** The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the German Ministry for Education and Science have planned a barium release experiment for the second half of 1970. An 18-kilogram mixture of barium metal and copper oxide powder will be ignited and released at an altitude of approximately 5 earth radii. The resulting barium ion cloud is expected to be visible throughout much of the Western Hemisphere. The objective of the participating scientists will be to study the interaction of the cloud with the surrounding collision-free magnetospheric plasma and to investigate magnetic and electric fields in the magnetosphere. Interested parties should contact William A. Brence, Wallops Station, NASA, Wallops Island, Virginia 23337.

sary certifications and other regulatory impediments."

Two of the most savage indictments of industry's failure are contained in the November 1969 issue of *Fortune* magazine, a Bible of the business community. One article, which describes the electric power industry as "clumsy" and "sluggish," asserts that "utility executives are generally unimaginative men, grown complacent on private monopoly and regulated profits." It contends that many utilities "bet too heavily and too hastily on nuclear plants," that they ordered equipment "in fits and starts," and that they do very little research, among other sins of omission and commission. Another article describes the "great nuclear fizzle" at Babcock & Wilcox Co., a highly respected manufacturer of boilers for steam generating plants. Babcock & Wilcox became a major producer of nuclear pressure vessels, but did so poorly at it that customers had to take back some \$40 million worth of partially completed vessels and place the business elsewhere, a process which delayed power plants badly needed by the utilities. "The failure, basically, was a management failure, and on a scale that would be cause for concern even in a fly-by-night newcomer to the nuclear industry," *Fortune* concludes.

Industry executives would probably not accept the harsh phrasing of these indictments but, when pressed, they are sometimes willing to concede that industry has played a part in bringing on its own problems. Under questioning before the House Subcommittee on Communications and Power last month, A. H. Aymond, president of the Edison Electric Institute, the national trade association for the investor-owned electric power industry, acknowledged: "The growth [of demand] in the last several years has been above our forecast of five years ago. That is one of the problems. Another problem is we failed to forecast that it is going to take longer to get these facilities built. We failed to forecast the outage rate—the unplanned outage rate—of new facilities would be as high as it has been." Aymond also said the equipment manufacturers "are having difficulty in the shops in meeting specifications to reach the standards that the industry needs for these high temperatures and pressures."

Environmental issues have unquestionably played a role in exacerbating the industry's problems. As Freeman,