

OST's energy expert, expressed it in an interview: "Environmental problems, superimposed on an already fragile supply-demand relationship, may be the straw that broke the camel's back." One reason the Minneapolis-St. Paul area will have essentially no reserve generating capacity this summer is because of citizen opposition to new nuclear power plants. Similarly, the Consolidated Edison Company, serving metropolitan New York, is in a delicate reserve position at least partly because of environmental opposition to a proposed pumped storage hydroelectric plant at Storm King mountain. And a proposed extra-high-voltage transmission line connecting New York City with the mid-Atlantic systems has been delayed for years, largely by problems in acquiring rights-of-way through the congested metropolitan area. As Edwin H. Snyder, board chairman of a New Jersey utility noted with some exasperation in congressional testimony last month: "In 1964 we signed a letter of intent [to build the transmission line] with Con Edison and we went to work immediately. We have moved that line, I would say, a hundred times . . . Why? To accommodate the local residents, and yet it is not finished. We need it at this time, this summer, but it is not finished."

Though environmental issues have not yet become the major factor behind the power crisis, they will almost certainly become so in the near future. As George E. Tomlinson, acting chief of the Bureau of Power in the Federal Power Commission, told *Science*: "From here on out, in my opinion, site location, overhead transmission lines, water pollution, air pollution, fear of atomic plants—that whole family of environmental considerations—will be the most important factor [in slowing electric utility growth]. In some cases it will add 2, 3 or 4 years [to the time needed to bring plants on line]."

Virtually all of the industry's problems so far have been caused by its explosive growth, and this same growth will almost inevitably force environmental considerations to the fore. The rough rule of thumb has been that electric power in the United States doubles every decade. That worked fine when the industry was small, but today it is the nation's largest industry in terms of capital investment, with roughly \$100 billion worth of facilities. Doubling and redoubling from this base would be a gigantic undertaking. And

it could have a profound effect on the environment. There will be problems finding suitable sites for power plants, obtaining rights-of-way for transmission lines, and coping with waste heat and other pollutants. The St. Louis-based

Committee for Environmental Information recently predicted, in a report published in the March 1970 issue of *Environment* magazine, that "by the year 2000 we will be in serious environmental trouble unless the increase in

HEW Decentralizers Exempt Research

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) announced last week that it is decentralizing 11 grant programs, primarily in the Social Services Rehabilitation agency and in the mental health programs, and that the decisions as to who gets money will be made in ten different regions rather than in Washington. Regionalization to date is affecting service rather than research agencies.

For the past year, a Federal Assistance Task Force (FAST) has studied the various procedures which HEW granting agencies use in determining which applicants receive awards (*Science*, 10 April). FAST hopes to streamline the money-awarding process by eliminating some of the paper work and removing some of the links in the necessary chain of approvals. Consequently, the time lapse between the filing of applications and the grant decisions should shorten, and thus money and man-days will be saved both for HEW and for those whom it funds. FAST, which has studied the review procedures of 75 of the 260 HEW grant programs, has promised to complete its analysis of the remaining grant programs by June 1971. Until last week Fred V. Malek, HEW deputy undersecretary in charge of FAST, remained uncertain about the fate of the review process for grant applications for basic research. He had previously indicated that review of basic research programs might be partially or completely decentralized.

However, at a news briefing last week, Malek said, "Research grants—these will not be decentralized. We will study the research programs, but will not recommend decentralization. The peer-group view of bringing together the best men in the field is imperative to basic research."

Of the 11 announced moves toward decentralization, that to regionalize community mental health center staffing is undoubtedly the most controversial. In his 2 June letter of resignation, former National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) director Dr. Stanley F. Yolles remarked on "the premature decentralization of program administration without provision for developing an adequate number of qualified personnel in the regional offices." Yolles stated that regionalization of the decisions in awarding grants would undermine "quality standard-setting now vested in the National Advisory Mental Health Council."

Yolles's successor, Dr. Bertram S. Brown, said that when he took over the NIMH directorship he promised the Administration that he would be "quite willing to work with decentralization that is in the public interest."

Regionalization of decision-making in staff grants for community mental health centers is getting a far from enthusiastic response from other leaders in the mental health field. Dr. Kenneth Little, executive director of the American Psychological Association, said, "I approve of the idea of community involvement. But I'm very leery of complete decisions being made in the regions. There is the danger that, if the final decision is made regionally, the decisions can be politically motivated."

Malek insists that regional men will be held strictly accountable to Washington headquarters and explained that "each regional program representative and program head is required to develop objectives for the coming year and detailed plans as to how they're going to achieve these objectives." Malek said that regional heads will submit monthly reports and attend in-depth quarterly meetings.—SAMUEL Z. GOLDBABER