

Paine Resigns from Space Agency

Thomas O. Paine resigned last week from the space agency that he headed during man's first landing on the moon. Paine, who has been administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) for 1½ years, will quit his post on 15 September to assume an executive position—"outside aerospace and defense"—with General Electric (GE).

Paine indicated that he has been feeling a financial pinch, with four children in college and private schools. His NASA salary of \$42,500 is probably less than he will earn at GE. At the same time, he explained, he was becoming restless in government.

At a press conference last week, Paine said he feels now is an appropriate time for a change in command at NASA: Since Congress has just approved the budget for the current fiscal year, his successor will not face financial hassles immediately, and a series of crucial decisions concerning the future tasks of NASA will be made in the next few months. Paine would prefer to leave before the decisions are made rather than after, so that his successor is not bound by his commitments.

Paine came to NASA as deputy administrator in 1968 from GE, where he had worked for 19 years. He was appointed acting administrator in October 1968, when James E. Webb resigned from the top job, and administrator in March 1969.—N.G.

initiative," he said, "but the reaction it got showed it had occurred to others, though they were too polite to say it."

The conflict between student and alumni thinking is probably greater at Stanford than at most other prestige universities, a fact which undoubtedly made Pitzer's role as a mediator between the contending forces more difficult. Stanford has changed character dramatically over the past decade or so. When asked if it would be fair to say that most alumni knew Stanford as a regional school that catered to the not-so-bright sons of rich Californians who were out to get their "gentlemen's C's" in contrast to the current student body which is selected nationally from a broad social spectrum on a highly competitive basis, Pitzer said that such a characterization would be overdrawn but that the point it makes is valid. "All alumni, unless they are very actively involved with the institution, tend to react to the university's difficulties in terms of how the institution was when they were students," he said. "The greater the changes since they were students, the more they tend to put current problems into a false context."

Oddly enough, though Pitzer was subjected to a high degree of personal abuse from radical students, this does not seem to have loomed as a major factor in his resignation. Pitzer was in trouble with the students even before

he arrived on campus in December 1968. When his appointment was announced, student spokesmen sharply criticized the lack of student involvement in the selection process. Pitzer says he did not realize how widespread the complaints were till he arrived at Stanford. But he says that after several meetings with student leaders this turned out "not to be a major problem." Pitzer says he had generally good support from the elected student leadership and was only opposed by a "hard radical fringe," but he adds that the controversy over the selection process continued to cause difficulties between the students and the trustees.

For much of his presidency Pitzer's office was in a virtual state of siege, with students or other young people tossing rocks through the windows and occupying the premises. Pitzer's home was also spray-painted with slogans, and rocks were thrown through his house windows one night when no one was home. On at least two occasions demonstrators staged late night marches on his home and delivered speeches through loudspeakers. Pitzer said the demonstrators made no effort to break in, but he considered the rallies "a threatening sort of thing in a general way—it was not pleasant." Perhaps the greatest indignity of all occurred on April Fool's Day this year when an unidentified, masked and robed assailant dumped water-soluble

red paint on Pitzer's shoulders and back while he was attending a dinner with students. Pitzer said he believes the various attacks were directed at authority rather than at him as an individual. And he said that while the attacks "don't add to the attractiveness of the job," they did not influence his decision to resign as much as the other factors he cited. "There was plenty of warm, helpful, supportive action from other students and faculty that would far more than counteract these particular acts," he said.

Pitzer, in fact, barely mentioned radical students as a factor behind his resignation until *Science* asked whether he meant to indicate that his problems were caused almost entirely by reactionary alumni. Then he said that the radical students (and nonstudents as well) were "more than anyone else the basic cause" of Stanford's problems because, if the radicals weren't causing disruption, then the alumni wouldn't be reacting. But he stressed that the radicals are a relatively small part of the Stanford community and he said they are only able to "cause as much difficulty as they do" because "the student body and faculty have not up to this point regarded them as as big a danger as they are."

Pitzer seemed somewhat ambivalent about his relations with the faculty. On the one hand, he said he had received "excellent support in terms of formal faculty action." But, on the other hand, he bemoaned the fact that there had not been "a lot more letters to the student newspaper from respected faculty members expressing a stabilizing point of view and reemphasizing the right of others to carry on their activities free of interference from the radicals." He noted that there are "a few faculty members who say rather outrageous things in support of the student radicals," and he said that if the other faculty members had been more active in criticizing the radicals, this would have helped diminish the influence of the radicals and would have presented "a more balanced picture to the outside community." "I don't want to say that the faculty didn't do a reasonable job in this respect," Pitzer said, "but they could have done better."

Stanford was split by a number of controversial issues during Pitzer's presidency. There were fights over the war in Vietnam, classified research, the Stanford Research Institute, athletic relations with Brigham Young University (because of the Mormon Church's