

ten committee recalls that the state agriculture commissioners along with other locals, would appear en masse at the subcommittee hearings, replete with photos of fire ant stings and pledges of state support. Such a barrage made resistance almost impossible for the six Southern members of Holland's 15-member committee, and the three Southerners on Whitten's eight-member body.

Sometimes, however, the state legislatures would not come through with the promised matching funds. Annoyed, for example, by this in 1966, the Whitten committee included a reprimand in its report.

"The Committee is disappointed that local organizations and individuals in some areas have not cooperated more fully in the imported fire ant program. . . . The committee expects the fullest cooperation from local interests in the future."

Indeed, the political fortunes of the program may be changing partly because, with Senator Holland's retirement in 1970, Senator Gale McGee—from the uninfested state of Wyoming—has become chairman of the relevant Appropriations subcommittee.

The Opposition

Against this somewhat uncoordinated coalition of locals (including J. Phil Campbell, formerly agriculture commissioner of Mississippi and now Undersecretary of USDA) and congressional committees, a number of other groups, many federal—while curbing the more toxic chemicals like DDT—tried to throw cold water on Mirex.

An old opponent is the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Division. A scientist there recalls the division's opposition to USDA's heptachlor program as "one of the bloodiest battles we ever fought." Later, under Walter Hickel, Interior placed Mirex on its list of restricted pesticides and refused to use it in quantity on Interior lands.

In 1969, a panel on pesticides appointed by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and chaired by Emil M. Mrak, chancellor emeritus of UCLA at Davis, listed Mirex among "potential" carcinogens, and recommended limited use.

In August, 1970, the EDF filed its motion to halt the program. USDA started its fall applications anyway although the judge ruled on the case only last week.

On 18 March, the Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA), formed by President Nixon last December, issued notices of cancellation on Mirex, a preliminary move to suspending interstate shipments of the chemical. EPA had determined that Mirex did not pose an imminent hazard to health, but there were enough questions about it to warrant a full scientific review, which is now going ahead.

Finally, a second Nixon-appointed environmental body, the Council on Environmental Quality, reviewed USDA's plans for this year's fire ant program in March and asked—apparently despite the President's campaign pledge—that it be limited in scope or that alternate methods of control, other than Mirex, be found.

But despite these governmental and judicial contortions, the spraying bug is dying—mainly because the states can no longer afford to carry low-priority programs. At the moment, only Georgia and Mississippi have pledged matching funds for the 1971 program of any magnitude: Georgia will have 4.1 million acres sprayed, and Mississippi 2.6. South Carolina's program will be in the neighborhood of under 200,000 acres—\$500,000 was cut from the state share last fall.

Florida and Texas are both virtually out of the program—Texas' support has never been that strong, despite warnings of the ants' westward expansion, and Florida because of tight state money and a strong environmental movement. This year, Alabama, Louisiana, Arkansas, and North Carolina are having only 12,000 to 50,000 acres sprayed, although if the local interests lobby for more spray, these numbers could rise.

Press Treatment

Part of the recent history of the Mirex issue is the routine, reflex-action treatment it has received in the press.

A simple example is the fashion in which the Associated Press, and later the *New York Times*, picked up the colorful, but somewhat hysterical, description of the program as an atom bomb dropped on pickpockets. Another is the inferential statements about Allied's involvement in Mississippi politics. Even the recent, very-well-documented *Washington Post* exposé of Whitten's relationship with the pesticide industry left this question up to the reader's imagination. It said:

"The pesticide being used is Mirex, manufactured by the Allied Chemical Co., in its plant at Aberdeen, Missis-

sipi. Whitten's unit appropriated more for this pesticide use program than for total spending on pesticide safety research and regulation."

Meanwhile, although they lost in court, the environmentalists see this slowing of the Mirex program locally as a victory. Mirex has been accused, but not convicted. The ants persist, and the USDA is still, after 13 years, trying to get under way a long-term research effort that can operate independently of the appropriations gimmickry. As one official said, the environmental movement has been "no Sputnik" in persuading Congress to fund environmental research.—DEBORAH SHAPLEY

RECENT DEATHS

John S. Boyce, 81; professor emeritus of forest pathology, Yale University; 20 March.

Ralph R. Coleman, 53; former associate clinical professor of internal medicine, Medical University of South Carolina; 20 February.

William E. Milne, 81; professor emeritus and former chairman, mathematics department, Oregon State University; 19 January.

Robert E. Norris, 66; professor of mathematics, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; 20 March.

Daniel T. O'Connell, 69; retired chairman, geology department, City College, City University of New York; 23 March.

William E. Peterson, 79; former professor of dairy science, University of Minnesota; 13 March.

John E. Sass, 73; professor of plant anatomy, Iowa State University; 17 March.

Raymond E. Shafer, 60; professor of industrial engineering, West Virginia University; 22 February.

Harry A. Waisman, 58; professor of pediatrics, University of Wisconsin Medical School; 19 March.

John Walton, 76; retired professor of botany, University of Glasgow; 13 February.

Robert P. Walton, 66; chairman, pharmacology department, Medical University of South Carolina; 27 March.

Erratum: The price of *Problems of the Logic of Scientific Knowledge* (P. V. Tavanec, Ed.), reviewed 19 February, page 662, is \$28.

Erratum: The publisher of *Women in the Field* (P. Golde, Ed.), reviewed 19 March, page 1135, is Aldine Publishing Company, Chicago.