

port. The effect of the plan will be to demote vehicular thoroughfares to a functional role, rather than to allow them to dominate the urban environment.

A centerpiece of the city, and the thing that may end up putting Vaudreuil on the map, is a planned international conference center, the first of its kind, to be devoted exclusively to environmental studies. The government has allotted \$5.5 million for initial work on the center, which will be equipped with its own laboratory. The center is expected, through continuous on-site monitoring, to provide crucial guidance for the city; it will also be a mecca for students of the environment and a clearinghouse for studies conducted at other new cities.

The French government plans to start work on the *germe de ville* next year with the construction of 4000 subsidized housing units; these will take the form of suburban extensions of two villages, L  ry and Le Vaudreuil, that flank the core. Work will also begin on the infrastructure of one of the industrial zones. Once the government has laid the framework, private money, initiative, and ingenuity are expected to shape the town, which will gradually extend toward the river between two man-made lakes to be modeled from worked-out gravel pits. The challenges will be many, including that of fashioning surroundings which will incorporate without destroying the character of the half-dozen old Norman villages that dot the site.

What are the United States and France getting out of this mutual undertaking? At this point it is hard to tell, since the machinery of the arrangement is just starting to roll. The American Vaudreuil team, made up of 14 representatives of various agencies, including five HUD men, recently returned from its second visit to France, and Paul V. Brace, HUD's man in Paris for the project, has been assigned to stay on a second year. Lacaze's team is coming to Washington this month to talk with building experts, ecologists, and community planning experts around the country.

The Americans are watching the venture with tactful excitement and regard it as a unique opportunity to witness from the inside the French decision-making process. Furthermore, says Dale Barnes of HUD, "The French are way out on the leading edge" in developing new towns. "We are getting the results of millions of dollars of

planning and development," which should be of considerable value when the Americans start building pollution-controlled towns. (The only such experiment to date is the Minnesota Experimental City, a domed affair that exists only on the drawing boards.)

For the French, the Vaudreuil project is a test of the kind of bilateral arrangements it hopes to make extensive use of in other regional plans.

Richard Langendorf of HUD points out that this type of arrangement not only gives the French free advice and moral support but assures them of keeping up with the latest relevant developments in another country so they don't have to "reinvent the wheel." An attach   with the French scientific mission in Washington says that in the Vaudreuil arrangement the French are not so much interested in American

Briefing

Moths 65 . . . USDA 0

Since 1906 the Department of Agriculture has fought a yearly battle with *Porthetria dispar*, the gypsy moth, and each year the silken canopies spun by the moth's caterpillars have reappeared in the woodlands of Pennsylvania and New England, generally in greater numbers than before, to emblazon the failure of yet another eradication campaign. The department has emptied a war chest of more than \$100 million in showering the countryside first with DDT, until that became unfashionable, then with the nonpersistent insecticide carbaryl. Despite these tactics, or because of them, some say—blind spraying of insecticide also destroys the parasites that must help bring gypsy moth populations under control—the moth has steadily expanded its range and depredations. This year, according to preliminary reckonings, its caterpillars have wrought medium to heavy defoliation over 1½ million acres of woodland and light defoliation in another half million. Next year's visitation, to judge from the egg batches already deposited, promises to be at least as scourge-like. Could something be awry with the department's gameplan for combating the moth?

Under the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, the Department of Agriculture has had for the first time to disclose the strategy of its antimothe campaign. The disclosure, in the form of an environmental impact statement, has not won universal praise. The opinion of the Environmental Protection Agency, in comments made public last month, was that the impact

statement failed to justify the spraying program on either economic or esthetic grounds and failed also to prove that the spraying would do no damage to the environment. This verdict—which did not prevent the program from going ahead—left something to be desired as an accolade for the Department of Agriculture's 65-year, \$100-million struggle against its lepidopteran adversary.

The EPA's comments (which followed in outline a scholarly critique prepared by the Environmental Defense Fund) implied the existence of remarkable lacunae in basic scientific knowledge about the gypsy moth and its consequences. The EPA pointed out that the Department of Agriculture failed to supply in its impact statement such elementary information as the usual rate of tree mortality in the absence of the gypsy moth, the percentage of defoliated trees that actually die, the effect of natural controls upon the moth population, the basic data needed to assess the effect of carbaryl on fish, birds, and other insects, a fuller discussion of alternative methods of control, or even a map of the areas to be sprayed. The Department of Agriculture, the EPA comments imply, has not done its homework—which could have something to do with the success of its gypsy moth gameplan.

More intelligent methods of control are now under study by Department of Agriculture scientists, in particular the possibility of confusing the male moths with the chemical used by the female as a come-hither scent. The criticisms of the department's impact statement by the EPA and the Environmental Defense Fund may have some influence on the budget for next year's antimothe campaign and the share of it accorded science-based methods of control.—N.W.