the review committees and the courts to approve sterilizations of minors and mental incompetents even if the parents or guardians do not consent.

In response to criticism of an earlier draft of the regulations, HEW strengthened the requirements for informed consent in all federally aided sterilizations, including those performed on adults. The requirements for informed consent in sterilizations follow the new procedures developed by HEW for human experimentation. These specify that the consent form show that the patient understands the operation, its effects, and alternatives as well as giving consent. Officials of HEW hope that this requirement will prevent the sort of thing that happened in the Relf case—when Mrs. Relf signed a consent form for her daughters' sterilization, but thought that it was for "shots." The new regulations also require a 72-hour waiting period between the signing of the consent form and the operation.

In a number of the lawsuits involving sterilization, critics have raised the question of whether a signed consent form means that the consent is voluntary. A recent study by the Health Research Group found that pressuring poor and black women to consent to sterilization is a widespread practice in American hospitals. In Ruth Nial Cox's case, and in a number of other cases that have been discovered in the South,

The Presidential Prize Caper

The announcement and subsequent silence of the White House on the subject of the Presidential Prizes for Innovation is among the more mysterious episodes in the Nixon Administration's stormy relationship with the science community. Some light was thrown on the subject in February, when the director of the National Science Foundation (NSF), H. Guyford Stever, announced that the prizes program was dead, and the money realloted to other uses. More illumination came when the near-winners of the $50,000 prizes, contacted by *Science*, told their versions of this peculiar tale.

The prizes were announced in March 1972, during a period of warming relations between the White House and scientists; they were to "be awarded by the President for outstanding achievements by individuals and institutions . . . primarily to encourage needed innovation," according to the President's technology message. But last month, almost 2 years later, Stever wrote to Senator William Proxmire (D–Wis.) that the $300,000 set aside for the prizes will be used for other projects. He added that new funds for prizes will be sought from Congress "when needed," but one NSF source advised that: "One should not hold one's breath" waiting for another program. The innovation prizes, it appears, just slipped away, out of sight of White House planners, and died, without even a conspiracy to kill them.

For the record, *Science* obtained the names of the seven winners, or near-winners, of the prizes. Five of them were to receive $50,000 apiece and two of them were to share a sixth prize, thus receiving $25,000 apiece. They are: **John W. Backus**, an IBM fellow, who invented the computer language Fortran in the mid-1950's at IBM; **Edward F. Knipling**, a long-term government employee, formerly science adviser to the Agricultural Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, who dveloped nonchemical means of controlling pests and successfully applied them to screwworms in the 1950's; **Willem Kolff**, head, division of artificial organs, University of Utah, who invented the artificial kidney machine and other artificial organs but until 2 years ago held no patent protection on his inventions; **Harold A. Rosen**, Hughes Aircraft Corp., who invented the synchronous satellite in 1959, making possible low-cost global television, telephone, and radio communications, but who, like most industry inventors, holds no patent on it; **Samuel Ruben** of Ruben Laboratories, inventor of the mercury tube battery and other devices key to radio development. Finally, the co-inventors of the childrens' program "Sesame Street," **Joan Ganz Cooney** and **Lloyd A. Morrisett** of Children's Television Workshop, Inc., were to share a sixth prize.

Most of these near-winners received calls in the fall of 1972 from the White House, indicating that they might receive such a prize and asking them if they would be "willing" to come to Washington to accept it. Some of those who were called suspected that the White House was trying to learn if any of the winners were so disaffected with Nixon, or the war, that they would publicly refuse the prize and embarrass the President. They then heard nothing. As to why nothing happened, opinions vary. Sources on an outside review panel which whittled 500 candidates down to 16, state that in the weeks preceding the election, Nixon was minimizing all public appearances in order to retain his huge lead over McGovern. Others state that the tentative award date for the prizes conflicted with a scheduled presidential meeting with some ethnic group deemed more important.

But aside from the circumstances of the campaign, another force came into play. Apparently some members of the National Science Board (NSB) were fretful that the National Medal of Science (which is after all only a medal) would pale beside the lucrative innovation awards. That old bugaboo—that the prestige of basic research would be threatened by giving visibility to applied work, surfaced on the question of the prizes. Herbert E. Carter, chairman of NSB, says that the board never took up the prizes formally, but he added: "I am not too enthusiastic about alternatives that would seem to be competing with, or more lavishly endowed than, the National Medal of Science."

As for the future of the prizes, one source described the present situation—with responsibility for them resting with NSF, which is guided by NSB—as having "the fox in the chicken coop." It would seem unlikely for Stever to try to get the White House to resurrect the prizes over the opposition of members of his own board. As one of the near-winners sighed when he learned he wouldn't get the award: "I guess I'm happy; I won't have to worry about the prize anymore."—DEBORAH SHAPLEY