annual stipend of $35,000 for as long as 10 years to investigators working in areas directly related to diabetes. The report suggests that six such awards be authorized in 1976, with the number growing to 25 per year in 1980. These awards would not be included in regular research funding.

Finally, the report recommends that a National Diabetes Advisory Board be created to serve as a focal point for coordinating information and research about diabetes. The commission encountered some pressure for the creation of a National Institute of Diabetes to provide such a focus. It concluded, though, that the need for a multidisciplinary approach to diabetes research could best be met by continuing funding through the seven institutes that now sponsor it, with coordination provided by the board.

The proposed advisory board would be unique among health agencies. The report recommends that it be established in the office of the Assistant Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. Its membership would include six other health officials from the Administration, two senators, two congressmen, seven diabetes investigators, and five interested laymen. Crofford suggests that such an advisory board might alleviate some of the conflicts between the Administration and Congress that have been apparent on other health issues.

The report was presented to Congress on 10 December, and several members of Congress have responded with enthusiasm.

# Accelerated OCS Leasing Program Is Running into Trouble

On 19 December the Department of the Interior announced the results of the first lease sale of oil and gas tracts in as yet unexplored "frontier" areas of the outercontinental shelf (OCS). This area is off the coast of southern California, and the results were considerably below expectations. Of the 1.25 million acres offered, bids were accepted on only 413,000, and they totaled only $438 million. The department's original estimate was $1.9 billion.

The disappointing sale results are regarded by many observers as proof that the accelerated offshore leasing schedule, initiated by President Nixon and continued in modified form by the present Administration, is premature and ill-conceived. The Administration abandoned its earlier goal of leasing 10 million acres a year—a goal almost everyone agreed was absurd long before it was officially dropped—and now the talk is no longer of acreage figures. Plans are, instead, to conduct 6 lease sales per year in "frontier" areas in the Gulf of Alaska, the Atlantic seaboard, and the California coast. The next sale is to be in the Gulf of Alaska, but the government may meet with even greater resistance there than in California.

The Department of the Interior is apparently plunging ahead with more of an eye to swift development of OCS holdings than to getting good prices or waiting until all parties concerned are fully prepared to participate. Oil companies are eyeing the goodies being offered them with great caution these days, restricted as they are by shortage of capital, tightened environmental protection requirements, uncertainty about future oil prices, and trepidation about pending national legislation relating to OCS development, not to mention the litigation, public and private, that is following them everywhere. The affected states are seeking delays in leasing until they have completed their coastal zone management plans (as provided for by the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972) and have established mechanisms to deal with the onshore aspects of offshore oil production.

All this notwithstanding, the Department of the Interior chooses not to see the California sale as a bad omen. An Interior spokesman acknowledged that the department did an unusually poor job of predicting the take—usually bids are accepted for about half the land offered in a sale—and admitted that enthusiasm on the part of the oil people had been overestimated. The reasons for the discrepancy, he said, were that oil people interpreted the results of stratigraphic tests more pessimistically than did the department, and that the companies were not as optimistic about the time it would take to start production. The tracts are in fairly deep water, posing technical and environmental challenges greater than in the Gulf of Mexico, where most offshore drilling now takes place. He also noted that the environment on land was not very friendly either—three lawsuits had been filed (unsuccessfully) to delay the sale.

Others believe the poor showing in California was evidence of the faulty nature of the whole leasing program. Promptly after the sale, an I-told-you-so press release was issued by Senator Ernest F. Hollings (D-S.C.), chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee's National Ocean Policy Study Group. Calling the sale results "dismal," he decried the "bargain basement" prices at which the leases were sold. His staff calculated that the average price per acre (omitting one particularly expensive tract) amounted to only $1000 (prices in the Gulf of Mexico average around $2500). Hollings said the public was being "ripped off" and urged House passage of two Senate-passed pieces of legislation (*Science*, 12 September 1975) that would change the bidding procedures so as to encourage bids by smaller companies and allay state anxieties by giving them more resources and more control over onshore aspects of development.

The adventurousness of oil companies will be put to its next test at a sale of leases in the northeast Gulf of Alaska which was scheduled for next month but is now likely to be delayed. The Environmental Protection Agency last month pronounced the environmental impact statement for the sale unsatisfactory, and the leasing decision must now await recommendations by the Council on Environmental Quality. Meanwhile, the state is in an uproar over the proposed sale and plans to bring a suit against Interior if there is no delay. Governor Jay Hammond has written a strong letter to Interior Secretary Thomas Kleppe complaining of "serious defects" in the national OCS program and saying it is "so inflexible as to be arbitrary." Guy Martin, Alaska's commissioner of natural resources, told *Science* the state is opposed to being "virtually the first area (aside from California) to go on the block." There is "nothing right" about this sale, he says: environmental baseline studies have not been completed; physical conditions are unfavorable (efforts at drilling a test hole were foiled by bad bottom conditions and bad weather); exploration would have disastrous social and economic impacts on coastal areas, and the state has neither had the time nor received the funds necessary to calculate and plan for the impact of OCS explorations.

Despite all this, an Interior official predicted confidently that the sale will bring in $1.2 billion worth of bids. But if the department continues to downplay or ignore the obstacles, its forecasting record seems unlikely to improve.—C.H.