names of study section members were a matter of public record, so that secrecy, in that sense, was not a question.

Complaints over peer review are perennial, and, to a certain extent, are understandable. The process is a brutal one in which only a few can win. On the larger question of getting nutrition grants into the gears of NIH, Upton certainly can't be charged with ignoring the subject. He told the subcommittee that "NCI contacted more than 20,000 people identified as having an interest in nutrition research, and announced the availability of funds in 32 of the major medical and nutrition journals." In response to this call, he continued, "The total number of nutrition grants funded in 1979 was 143 . . . a 32 percent increase over the 103 funded in fiscal 1978."

Heat from McGovern continues to be applied, however. His staffers say the 143 figure is not correct, and they are checking into the situation. They also say the GAO peer review investigation will be launched in November. Pressure of this sort has an effect. It is clear that the NCI diet would not have been composed and released had it not been for the persistent prodding of McGovern. Whether he will have a similar impact on peer review in nutrition remains to be seen.

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In the larger picture, McGovern is clearly a powerful force. It was his own Select Committee on Nutrition that told Americans in 1977 that if they wanted to live longer and better they should cut back on fat, sugar, salt, and cholesterol and eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. He also called for more research into the problem. Since then, the government has more than tripled the amount it spends on research in human nutrition, from $50 to $170 million a year. It's hard to believe, but the whole thing got started back in 1977 when McGovern piled up 125 pounds of sugar, 100 pounds of lard, and 300 cans of soda pop into a hearing room before the assembled biomedical press corps and announced the publication of *Dietary Goals for the United States*.—WILLIAM J. BROAD

RFF Back on Its Feet

Resources for the Future (RFF) is out of the woods financially and will not have to merge with the Brookings Institution, an outcome which seemed unavoidable until this fall. Last year RFF, a resource and environmental research group largely funded by the Ford Foundation, was on the verge of losing its cherished autonomy because of the fund squeeze suffered by most nonprofit groups these days (*Science*, 7 July 1978). However, a year-long fund drive has boosted the organization's reserves from $8 million to $22 million, and RFF's independence seems assured.

Seven foundations and many corporate contributors kicked in. The largest single donation, for $7 million, came in the form of a challenge grant from the Ford Foundation. It was to be made available only if RFF could come up with an equal sum on its own. That goal was achieved at the end of September, when the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation approved a grant of $1.5 million which had been under consideration all year. (The request was taken before the Mott board by a family member who was enlisted in the cause by an RFF staffer visiting the Mott's ranch in Montana.) Other large donations came earlier from the Andrew Mellon Foundation ($2.5 million) and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation ($1 million), the largest new philanthropy in the country.

Nevada Closes Low-Level Radioactive Waste Dump

The biomedical garbage crisis deepened on 25 October when Governor Robert List of Nevada closed one of the two remaining sites in the country still accepting low-level radioactive wastes. Several weeks earlier, on 4 October, Governor Dixy Lee Ray had closed the site in Hanford, Washington, the only one receiving liquid low-level wastes (*Science*, 26 October). Now trouble is brewing at the third and final site. Governor Dick Riley of South Carolina plans to announce soon that the dump in Barnwell, the only one in operation, will impose a "significant reduction" on the quantity of wastes accepted each year.

Riley has announced already that South Carolina will not accept any diverted shipments originally destined for Nevada or Washington. The governor's press secretary said that although Riley has been trying to reduce shipments into the state for at least 6 months, "It's only in the last few days that people have begun to ask questions" about the appropriateness of having their state serve as the nation's only low-level waste dump. He suggested that South Carolina will not serve in that role for long.

Governors Ray and List closed the sites in Washington and Nevada, they said, because shipments from out of state were badly packaged and unsafe. They insisted last July that the federal government, through the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), must step up its policing of waste handlers. The governors are plainly dissatisfied with the response. Many observers believe the governors are also hoping to push the federal government into adopting a national program requiring the states in the Northeast that produce most of the waste to share in the politically unwelcome task of disposing of it. As a minimum, the federal government will be asked to develop a regional plan, so that garbage from Boston need not be shipped across the continent for disposal. An amendment to the Department of Energy (DOE) authorization bill, which passed the House on 23 October, asks the DOE to make a 6-month study of the idea and propose 12 regional burial sites. These would be administered by DOE.

In the meantime, the waste backup continues to cause problems for biomedical research laboratories and hospitals, which must dispose of thousands of gallons of radioactive liquids each year. Yale University, for example, decided simply to store its wastes indefinitely in an unused accelerator building. Harvard is less fortunate. It had almost decided last week to order a halt to research in which certain radioactive liquids are used, but was spared at the last moment when its waste hauler found a company that would accept the garbage: Todd Shipyards of Galveston, Texas. But one Harvard radiation safety officer said that this is only a

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temporary solution, for eventually "each state will have to come to grips with the toxic waste problem within its own borders." Much of the low-level waste generated on the East Coast, deprived of a resting place in South Carolina, Washington, or Nevada, is making its way to Todd Shipyards. A company official said he would let the waste accumulate in his warehouse until one of the authorized burial sites reopens.

The DOE could accept commercial low-level wastes at some of its 14 national laboratories, if it were necessary. But a DOE spokesman said that these sites would remain closed to commercial haulers unless the Nuclear Regulatory Commission declares that a national emergency exists. There was no sign last week that the NRC was prepared to take this step.

Helms and Colby Clash on Sharing CIA Data

Two former directors of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)—Richard Helms and William Colby—recently gave Congress conflicting advice on how the government should use research produced by the CIA. Speaking before the oversight subcommittee of the House Intelligence Committee, Helms said on 22 October that he held what he called the "old-fashioned" attitude that none of the CIA's analytical papers, however bland, should be released to the public. "I can't think of anything we would have enjoyed more over the years," Helms said, "than to have the Russians put out this kind of information" on a regular basis.

Colby spoke in direct opposition: "The affairs and the work of the government should be open to the people unless there is some substantial reason to the contrary." The unclassified research done at the CIA should be bound by the same rules that apply to similar research at other agencies, Colby said, particularly because the bulk of it is not derived from clandestine sources in any case. Colby added: "The immense technological enterprise and the multibillion [dollar] investment which constitute the modern American intelligence community simply cannot be treated as a traditional spy service, whose very existence was denied by the monarchs it served." The animosity between the two ex-directors was such that Helms refused to testify alongside Colby, who, accordingly, was asked to wait in an anteroom until Helms had finished and departed.

The CIA's policy at present, according to its spokesman John Hicks, more closely reflects Colby's outlook than Helms'. In addition to putting out noncontroversial publications—maps, lists of world leaders, and transcripts of foreign broadcasts—the CIA in the last 7 years has begun to release unclassified or purged versions of many political, military, scientific, and other studies written by the CIA staff. In 1978, for example, the agency published 62 reports and seven serials, such as the National Basic Intelligence Factbook (available from the Document Expediting Project of the Library of Congress). The CIA does this, Hicks said, to inform the public and earn popular goodwill. He added, with a dash of institutional prose, that the practice "facilitates our exchange of ideas with people in academia and in the business world, helping us to be objective and aware of real world concerns."

The chairman of the oversight subcommittee, Representative Les Aspin (D-Wis.), called the hearing because he had qualms about the President's recent release of CIA studies ("Prospects for Soviet Oil Production" and the "World Oil Outlook") to help persuade Congress to pass an energy bill. Aspin thought there was a danger that the technical expertise of the CIA might be traded on to win political battles. This, in turn, might corrupt the quality of the CIA's work.

Colby argued that the risks of politicization could be overcome by issuing CIA reports through other channels, such as the research offices of the Commerce, State, or Agriculture Departments, which are used already for releasing some CIA data. Colby suggested that it might have been possible to avoid some of the "excess rhetoric" earlier this year over the Soviet brigade in Cuba if the CIA had had a routine system in place for making available new intelligence findings. As it happened, the CIA relied on Congress to make the information public, with less than happy results. Colby also thought it would be useful to publish satellite photographs, because they would make known to "other nations and even to the Soviet people . . . the degree and precision of American knowledge about things that are kept most secret by the Soviet authorities." These revelations could have a positive and "stunning effect" on diplomatic debate, he said.

Harvard Medicine Takes a Lesson from Dalai Lama

The modern emphasis on technology in medicine may have obscured some valuable healing techniques, according to Herbert Benson, an associate professor at the Harvard Medical School. Physicians generally lump these nontechnical methods together in a category known as the "placebo effect." Benson, who has been investigating the physiological effects of meditation for over a decade, recently won a grant of $150,000 from the Max C. Fleischmann Foundation of Nevada to pursue this theory and make a 3-year study of religious and meditational disciplines in other cultures.

As part of the study, Benson says, a group at the Harvard Medical School will look into advanced meditational practices in Tibet and investigate claims of "striking physiological feats," such as the report that some people are able to keep themselves alive and warm at 14,000 feet simply by willing an increase in their body temperature.

The Dalai Lama, the chief priest of Tibet, visited the Harvard Divinity School in October, and while he was there, Benson and some medical school colleagues interviewed him. They persuaded him of their good intentions and won his official blessing for their study.

In addition to teaching behavioral medicine at Harvard, Benson has published two popular books (*The Relaxation Response* and *The Mind-Body Effect*). In a recent article in *The New England Journal of Medicine* (21 June 1979), he and David McCallie, Jr., argue that the placebo effect may be used legitimately as a cure for some ailments such as angina pectoris. Unlike other remedies, they say, the placebo is safe and inexpensive.

Eliot Marshall