

the opportunity to bring in people of his own choice for policy-level staff positions. Todd said he "can't argue with that concept," but was "surprised" at his dismissal.

By Academy norms, Todd's firing is unusual. The organization has no fixed policy on such matters, but the practice has been to give long-term senior staff a sort of tacit tenure. Some staffers, on occasion, have been moved to lesser jobs. Academy president Philip Handler, whose term ends on 30 June, said that he had not been involved in the action "directly or indirectly" and had no comment.

Todd, 52, joined the Academy staff in 1962 to head the international office when it had a staff of eight and an annual budget of \$200,000. It now has a staff of 80 and budget of \$10 million. The Academy council is reported to be working on details of a "golden handshake" in recognition of Todd's service.—**John Walsh**

Breeder Stumbles in House

The Clinch River Breeder Reactor in Tennessee will have to close down if the House Committee on Science and Technology has its way. On 7 May, the committee voted to eliminate \$254 million to continue construction of the breeder from the Department of Energy's authorization bill.

President Reagan favors the breeder but, ironically, it was Republicans who adhere to the Administration's philosophy of thrift who made the difference in the 22 to 18 vote. Representative Claudine Schneider (R-R.I.), author of the antibreeder amendment, said: "The vote was a clear message that the economy cannot support a project of this magnitude with so little surety of its value in the end." The full committee was scheduled to hold a hearing on 11 May to see how much it would cost to shut the breeder down.

The antibreeder amendment stands only a slim chance of surviving its trip through the Senate. James A. McClure (R-Idaho), chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, is a strong advocate of nuclear power, and the breeder is a favorite project of Tennessee Senator Howard Baker, the Senate Majority Leader.—**Constance Holden**

UCLA Designing Big Agent Orange Study

The Veterans Administration has awarded \$114,288 to the University of California at Los Angeles to design a protocol for a study of the effects of Agent Orange and other phenoxy herbicides on Vietnam veterans.

The study, by far the largest concerning Agent Orange, was ordered by Congress in December 1979, in response to pressure from veterans' groups. Gary Spivey of the UCLA School of Public Health, who has 60 days to come up with a protocol, says the study is likely to involve thousands of vets. The protocol is likely to call for tracing the histories of a cohort of men from the time they left the service to the present. This would include detailed physical exams of some of them, with special attention paid to disorders of the reproductive system, the central nervous system, kidneys, and liver, and to the incidence of soft tissue sarcomas. The study is also likely to include investigations of death certificates of those who have died since their return from Vietnam.

Spivey acknowledges that it may never be possible to get definitive answers on the damage done by Agent Orange. A major and insurmountable problem is that there is no way to determine who has been exposed to the herbicide.

The latest initiative is part of an ongoing series of investigations sponsored by the VA. The Air Force also is moving ahead with a long-term \$35 million study designed to reveal ill effects, if any, to the 1198 men engaged in spraying Agent Orange during the war in the operation known as Ranch Hand. The study will involve questionnaires and physical exams for the Ranch Handlers and a control population of 20,000, with periodic follow-ups over the next 20 years.

Veterans' groups continue to press for government action to take care of thousands of vets who claim to have Agent Orange-related disorders. More than 45,000 vets who have suspected such disorders have been examined at Veterans Administration hospitals since 1978. Although the intensity of the problem does not seem to be as great as it was a couple of years ago, veterans are continuing

to file claims for service-connected disability owing to Agent Orange.

Veterans' groups are currently hammering away at Congress to pass several bills introduced over the past year that would make it easier to get medical care and disability benefits for alleged Agent Orange-related problems. They also want to be sure they will have a voice in the design and conduct of the study now on the drawing boards at UCLA.

No one expects science to lay the issue to rest. But as a political problem, Agent Orange may be expected to subside considerably if veterans can be persuaded that the scientific questions are being approached honestly.—**Constance Holden**

Court Gives Blessing To Hospital of Faith Healer

The Oklahoma Supreme Court has given its blessing to television faith healer Oral Roberts, who for the past 4 years has been wrestling with the state's medical establishment in his attempt to build in Tulsa a quarter-billion-dollar monument to the medical arts: the City of Faith and its 777-bed hospital.

In April, the Supreme Court overturned a 1978 lower court ruling that said the hospital was unneeded. Officials from Tulsa-area hospitals had successfully argued in the past that Tulsa already had a 1000-bed surplus (*Science*, 18 April 1980). The Roberts' forces sidestepped an injunction and went to the Supreme Court. They argued that the hospital would be a sort of Mayo Clinic for the faithful and would draw on Roberts' worldwide following of "prayer partners." The Oklahoma Supreme Court in April decided that the City of Faith would indeed not compete with the hospitals of Tulsa.

The Tulsa Area Hospital Council, which has steadfastly fought Roberts since 1977, originally planned to appeal the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court, but in the end decided that the cost would be prohibitive. In any event, time had been running out for the council. Roberts plans to put the finishing touches on the City of Faith by the end of the year.

—**William J. Broad**