

of each lab. But Raymond Kammer, the NBS deputy director, declared that these were reasonable and generally acceptable approaches, so long as EPA carefully described these procedures in its final report.

Shortly thereafter, the report was released without the benefit of an additional NBS examination. This sequence of events has raised questions about whether EPA actually met all NBS objections. At a House hearing on 9 August, NBS officials said that they had not yet had time to study the final report, and thus

had no opinion about whether their criticisms had been adequately addressed. Kammer says that NBS wanted to examine the final report, but that pressures from Love Canal residents and New York politicians were too strong to permit any further delay. He says that the EPA report has "not yet been given a full peer review," and that it needs one.

The reason that such uncertainties seem important is that contamination was not detected in 90 percent of the samples and, was at or near the limit of detection in many others. The degree of

chemical migration was determined by comparing the frequency, not the amount, of chemical detection in various areas.

EPA says that it is untroubled by the methodological peccadillos because the contamination was rare and consistently low. Silbergeld and several of the consultants to HHS worry about the health effects of exposure to even low amounts, which EPA may not have uncovered.

—R. JEFFREY SMITH

Next week: The risks of living near Love Canal.

Reagan Alters Makeup of Ethics Panel

New appointees named to commission slated to go out of business in December

The White House recently named four Republican scientists to the President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research which is slated to go out of business at the end of the year. In the few months remaining, the commission must complete reports on five sensitive subjects including decisions to forgo life-sustaining treatment, and genetic screening. The appointment of new commissioners at this stage of the game raises questions about what they can usefully contribute to a body that has been debating the issues for the past 2½ years. The fact that the four new Reagan appointees appear to have been chosen as much for their Republican connections as for their scientific qualifications has also raised apprehension that the newcomers will try to infuse the deliberation with stereotypically "conservative Republican" views.

The President's commission is the intellectual successor to the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, which issued influential guidelines on topics including fetal research and experimental psychosurgery. The present commission, which came into being in January 1980 as an advisory group to President Jimmy Carter, has also had its influence felt, particularly with its report on the definition of death, which has been adopted by more than a dozen state legislatures.

The new members bring to eight the number of Reagan Administration appointees to the 11-person commission whose makeup is somewhat altered as

individuals with strong academic affiliations are replaced by commissioners whose backgrounds tend more to business and private medical practice. In addition, some of its sexual and racial diversity has been lost as the panel is now principally composed of white male physicians ranging in age from their mid-fifties to mid-seventies. Among those previous commissioners whose terms expired were four women—a nurse, a sociologist, a psychologist, and a health economist.

The newest Reagan appointees will attend their first commission meeting this month; the previous Reagan commissioners came on board in February.

In addition to reports on sustaining the lives of the terminally ill and on genetic screening, the commission's agenda includes the issuance of reports, now in draft, on informed consent, genetic engineering, and access to health care. Whether the Reagan commissioners will wish to substantially alter the tone or substance of the reports is difficult to predict. However, conversations with those who were available to be interviewed indicate that the Reagan appointees are as diverse (and sometimes as liberal) in their thinking as those who came before them. The one apparent difference is that many of the Reagan people have more explicit ties to Republican Party politics than did their Democratically appointed predecessors.

One of the new commissioners is John J. Moran, 62, who recently sold a chemical company he had built up over 25 years. He then established the Moran Foundation in Houston to support scien-

tific research. The majority of its funds which, he says, come to approximately \$100,000 a year, are awarded to investigators at Baylor College of Medicine. Moran's résumé identifies him as being "independently wealthy" in "eight figures." He has, he told *Science*, actively supported every Republican presidential candidate since Goldwater but believes that his nomination to the commission most likely came from someone at Baylor or at Harvard where he has been asked to serve as an adviser to the biochemistry department.

Although he has no graduate degree in science (he says he left a graduate program at UCLA in 1950 because of scientific disagreements with a senior researcher), Moran has "some 50 patents" to his name and his company was active in the field of developing diagnostic reagents. Perhaps for this reason, he is particularly interested in the commission's forthcoming report on genetic screening, an endeavor he favors as long as the costs do not outweigh the benefits. "With my business background, I look at the economics of things," he says. "If we go into widespread genetic screening, we have to ask questions about the cost." He thinks, for example, that amniocentesis for Down's Syndrome is warranted when there is a family history, and for women over 40, but "is not so sure" about routine screening of women over 35. His views on abortion, which he prefers not to discuss at length, are, he says, known to the White House. Moran does not support the Right-to-Life view.

Kay Toma, president of the Bell Medical Center and of the Bell Shopping

Center in Bell, California, is another new commissioner who takes a liberal stand on questions of abortion. The 69-year-old physician told *Science* that he believes genetic screening should be carried out and that someone who carries a deformed child, such as a Down's Syndrome baby, should not have it. "I have very definite views on this," he said. Toma also expressed a strong opinion of the commission's definition of death which, he said, "should be adopted nationally."

H. Thomas Ballantine, 70, also thinks that national guidelines for defining death are useful, although he, like Moran, commented that the commission's definition (which includes total cessation of brainstem activity) is "a little too strict." Ballantine is clinical professor of surgery emeritus and senior neurosurgeon at the Massachusetts General Hospital where he did pioneering work in psychosurgery. In fact, it was on the basis of some of Ballantine's successful studies in that area that the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects issued a surprisingly favorable report on the appropriateness of psychosurgery research in certain selective circumstances when it studied the matter in 1977. Ballantine, who has published on medical ethics, says that although it is hard to measure the effects of the commission in "real terms," it is "setting ethical milestones." Named to the commission after "somebody from Republican circles in Massachusetts" asked him whether he'd be interested in a Washington appointment, Ballantine says the issues it deals with are "fascinating" and "need to be brought to public attention." In particular, he cited decisions to forgo life-sustaining treatment, which he prefers to call "letting nature take its course," as a "huge problem" for the public and the medical profession.

The fourth recently appointed commissioner is Bruce Kelton Jacobson, 56, who is director of the family practice residency program at the John Peter Smith Hospital in Fort Worth, Texas. According to his résumé, it is "the largest Family Practice residency training program in the Southwestern U.S.A. with sixty-four residents in training." Jacobson, who also is on the staff of the University of Texas, Southwestern Medical School in Dallas, has been active in medical society and Republican affairs. He is, for example, on the board of directors of the Tarrant County Medical Society, and, from 1974 to 1976, was finance chairman of the Tarrant County Republican Party. In 1980, his wife was,

his résumé states, a member of the National Committee, Reagan for President, and two of his children were active in the President's campaign.

The previous group of Reagan appointees, named to replace persons whose terms expired in January, include a Massachusetts surgeon, an osteopath, a rabbi (perhaps chosen to replace the commission's former Jesuit scholar), and a Colorado housewife.

George R. Dunlop, 76, professor of surgery at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester, is a past-president of the American College of Surgeons and the American Cancer Society. A member of the board of directors of Medical Indemnity of America, his bibliography includes articles on the cost and appropriate use of medical technology.

Daher B. Rahi, 52, was born in Lebanon and emigrated to the United States where he received a degree from the College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery of Des Moines, Iowa. Currently a resident of St. Clair Shores, Michigan, Rahi's résumé lists a host of civic activities, including "Member of the Board of Trustees of the Community Health Planning Council, an organization serving the needs of six million people in Michigan." He serves by gubernatorial appointment on the Michigan Certificate-of-Need Board and, "In his position as leader of the Lebanese people throughout the world, Dr. Rahi has traveled extensively in Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Europe, Africa, Lebanon and the Middle East."

Lynda Smith, 42, of Colorado Springs, is now the only woman on the commission; there used to be five. She told *Science* that "President Reagan appointed me because I am a housewife and a mother. I am there to represent 70 million people." Smith's résumé identifies her as a founding member of the Young Republicans at the University of Texas, Austin, where she was voted "Sweetheart" of the university. An active Republican, Smith sponsored Reagan-for-President parties throughout Colorado before the last election. At present, she is a member of the University of Colorado Medical Center Advisory Committee, where she is particularly concerned with issues having to do with maternal health and counseling of pregnant teen-agers. "I advise teen-agers that there is an alternative to abortion," says Smith who is the mother of three children, one of whom is adopted. "We're grateful her mother loved her enough to allow her to be born," says Smith, who opposes abortion. "There are many loving couples who even are willing to adopt chil-

dren with Down's Syndrome," she commented in response to a question on the subject. In Smith's opinion, the commissioners' views on abortion have not been central to any discussions so far and may not be.

Seymour Siegel, 55, a rabbi who is presently the commission's only scholar in ethics, tends to agree. "So far we have bracketed the abortion question" as far as consideration of the genetic screening report is concerned, he told *Science*, adding that you couldn't put together a commission whose members were worthy of appointment if you limited it to persons who all took the same stand on such a difficult issue. Although Siegel is identified by his colleagues as an anti-abortionist, he does not oppose therapeutic abortion to save the life of the mother or the abortion of hopelessly afflicted fetuses, such as those with Tay-Sachs disease. "In fact, we advise that," says Siegel, who is professor of humanities and medicine at the Medical College of Pennsylvania and a professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. In addition to his background in academia, his résumé identifies him as a past chairman of the fair practices committee at Ruder and Finn, a large public relations firm, and as a member of the biohazards committee of Hoffmann-La Roche. In 1972, Siegel was cochairman of Democrats for Nixon. During the past election campaign, he was chairman of "Scholars for Reagan."

Although the President's commission is destined to die a statutory death on 31 December, some steps have been taken to extend its life for another 2 years. With the support of Senator Orrin G. Hatch (R-Utah), chairman of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources, a provision for its extension has been tacked on to the National Institutes of Health appropriation bill. However, no comparable action has been taken in the House and congressional aides note that, in light of Congress's preoccupation with major budgetary issues, the life or death of the President's commission is not at the top of the list right now. Nevertheless, several of the commissioners have spoken to friends in Congress and the Administration about an extension and they are moderately optimistic.

Says Siegel, "The commission serves an important role as a national forum for discussion of these kinds of issues." To date, perhaps its greatest value has been in demonstrating that persons of divergent points of view can reach a consensus on questions that do not lend themselves to simple answers.

—BARBARA J. CULLITON