Despite the NAS committee's view that the proposed study of the effects of low-level radiation on chromosomes and sperm would not be scientifically or medically useful, NIOSH holds to its opinion that the workers should be evaluated and informed of the results. ". . . [I]f it is to be assumed that low dose radiation causes chromosomal breakage [the NAS agrees that it does] workers need to be informed about the potential for genetic damage, although the significance of this damage is unknown," Landrigan wrote.—**Barbara J. Culliton**

Remembering the Bomb, 40 Years After

The impending 40th anniversary of the first artificially induced nuclear chain reaction has prompted unusual efforts to mark the event, commonly regarded as signifying the birth of the nuclear age.

Both the University of Chicago, where the first chain reaction occurred, and the American Nuclear Society (ANS) will hold symposiums memorializing the event. The ANS, which has scheduled the symposium for its winter meeting, is also sponsoring a gathering billed as a reunion of the alumni of the Manhattan Project, the code name for the World War II atom bomb project.

The ANS sessions will be held in Washington, D.C., on 16 November. Scheduled speakers at the symposium include Eugene Wigner, who was present at the first chain reaction; Isador I. Rabi; and General Kenneth D. Nichols, who in 1942 was an assistant to General Leslie R. Groves, the military head of the bomb project. The reunion following the symposium is for individuals who were actively involved in the project.

The University of Chicago symposium is scheduled for 1½ days on 1 and 2 December. The first chain reaction was achieved on 2 December 1942 by the group working under physicist Enrico Fermi with the famous pile under the university's Stagg Field stands. The symposium includes sessions on the scientific and political history surrounding the event, which Wigner will chair, and discussions of nuclear power, nuclear arms, and the contributions of nuclear science to physics and medicine.

Choice of a 40th anniversary for a major effort is somewhat rare, but one of the organizers of the ANS reunion said that in view of the ages of many of the key people involved, "we decided to do it now."—**John Walsh**

The End of an Accelerator Named Isabelle

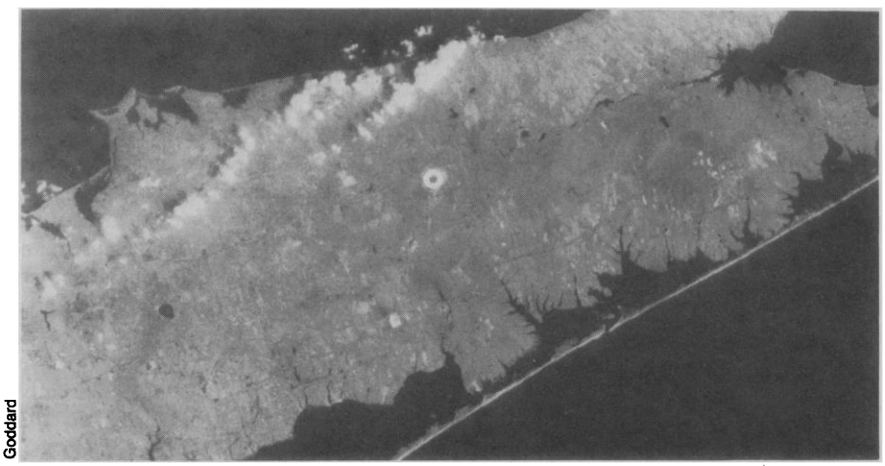
Troubled accelerators don't die, they just get a new name. That at least is the case with Isabelle, a half-built particle accelerator at the Brookhaven National Laboratory on Long Island that has fallen behind schedule and nearly doubled in price because of inflation and a history of problems with the construction of its superconducting magnets.

The christening was quietly alluded to in the pages of the *Brookhaven Bulletin*, which said in its 15 October issue that Isabelle in the future will be known as the Colliding Beam Accelerator (CBA), a name that unfortunately leaves little room for the fancy of headline writers (Perils of Isabelle, and so forth). Said the editor of the *Bulletin* in an announcement remarkable for its brevity: "The original plans for this accelerator are now under review and may be modified. Thus, the generic term CBA has been substituted for the familiar term Isabelle, which denotes a very specific instrument."

On paper the fate of the machine is up in the air, but at the huge construction site on Long Island work is speeding ahead. A production magnet that successfully meets design goals was recently installed in the machine's 2.5-mile circular tunnel, a high-water mark that comes after 2 years of quickened research aimed at removing flaws from the original magnet design. Laboratory officials say seven other magnets will be installed by the spring of 1983, at which time engineers will test how well the superconducting magnets work in unison. The machine's original design calls for 1100 magnets, each weighing nearly 8 tons.

The Administration cut all construction money for the accelerator in fiscal year 1983, but the continuing resolution that now funds the government may allow continued spending at the $15-million level set during the previous fiscal year. (That level, down from a request of $50 million, itself reflected tight budgets and worry about the soundness of the machine.)

In Congress, a move is afoot to fund the latest incarnation of Isabelle after the continuing resolution runs out. The House Appropriations Committee on 21 September approved a bill containing $5 million in construction funds for the troubled accelerator. The bill has not passed the House, and whether the Senate will go along with the initiative has yet to be seen. In any event, the $5 million would be mostly symbolic. This spring a Department of Energy estimate put the accelerator's minimum total cost at $640 million. So far the dollars paid out for construction and research have run to about one quarter of the total expected expenditure.—**William J. Broad**



Goddard

Long Island and the accelerator ring as seen from space by Landsat 4