

As a State Department spokesman said a few days later, this "does not explain why people have been made sick and have died after chemical attacks only in areas of Afghanistan, Laos, and Kampuchea where combat has taken place." Speaking privately, one official asked, "If Matt was hit with Yellow Rain, how come he's still alive and kicking in Cambridge?" He also



Matthew Meselson

pointed out that Meselson has not shown how mycotoxins got into the blood of soldiers who claimed to have been exposed to chemical weapons.

Meselson collected numerous samples of moldy food and plants, which he will have analyzed at MIT by a specialist in gas chromatography-mass spectrometry. If mycotoxins of the kind found in the government's biological samples from Southeast Asia (trichothecenes) are also found in these food samples, Meselson will have established a persuasive case for viewing trichothecene poisoning as a natural phenomenon in Southeast Asia.—ELIOT MARSHALL

## Pediatrician May Head ADAMHA

Despite opposition from top government health officials and intense concern of mental health and drug abuse experts, the White House appears to be on the verge of nominating a Florida pediatrician to head the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA).

The candidate in question is Donald Ian MacDonald, a physician in private practice in Clearwater, Florida. MacDonald has no administrative or research experience and is best known for campaigning against adolescent drug use. He has also served as research director for Straight, Inc., a controversial treatment program for adolescent substance abusers.

MacDonald has the strong support

of parents' groups, particularly the National Federation of Parents for Drug-Free Youth, and his champion within the White House has been Carlton E. Turner, the President's special assistant for drug abuse policy. Turner, an organic chemist, has been especially concerned with the domestic eradication of cannabis.

MacDonald was on the verge of being nominated several months ago, but the procedure has been delayed in large part because of the opposition of Health and Human Services Secretary Margaret M. Heckler, who in January reportedly sent the White House a scorching letter expressing vehement opposition to the nomination. Other health officials, including assistant secretary Edward N. Brandt, have been more restrained, emphasizing the need for a nationwide search before a decision is reached.

Professional societies have attempted to advance several qualified Republicans, including Herbert Kleber of Yale University School of Medicine and Bernard Grosser of the University of Utah. But MacDonald is the only one who has been checked out by the FBI and brought to Washington to meet people.

Called by *Science*, MacDonald said he's had the impression the nomination was imminent "for months and months and months," and recent contacts with ADAMHA officials have persuaded him that word will come any day now. Among his qualifications for the job, he cites his clinical experience with children and notes that he has traveled in 26 states in the past couple of years talking to parents and other groups, so he "has a feel for what's going on." He has just produced a book, *Drugs, Drinking and Adolescents*.

MacDonald's clear priority is drug abuse prevention. He is concerned about the "disenfranchisement" of parents and the need to deal with drug abuse in the context of the family. He also thinks medical schools and societies should do a better job of educating professionals about alcoholism and drug abuse.

MacDonald would seem to embody this Administration's principal drug policy thrust, which may be summed up as: get teenagers off marijuana. How this may affect the rest of ADAMHA's research agenda remains to be seen.—CONSTANCE HOLDEN

## In the Doghouse at OSHA

In Washington, official reasons for aberrant behavior abound. Former national security adviser Richard Allen said he had simply forgotten about \$10,000 in his safe, which he was supposed to have turned over to the Treasury. Edwin Meese contends his failure to disclose a \$15,000 loan was "inadvertent." But a top official at the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) takes top prize for the Most Woeful Tale in recent memory.

Leonard Vance, director of the agency's health standards programs, has refused for several months to hand over his logbooks to a House subcommittee. Aides to George Miller (D-Calif.), chairman of a labor and energy subcommittee, wanted the books in hopes of showing that Vance had improperly met with industry representatives while the agency was setting regulations on ethylene oxide, a sterilant. Finally Vance relented and told congressional staffers to come fetch them. When they arrived recently, Vance recounted his woeful tale.

According to an aide to Miller, Vance said that over the weekend he went hunting with his dog. The animal became indisposed in the back of his pickup truck and then regurgitated on two of the four logbooks sought by the subcommittee. The books were so disgusting, Vance allegedly said, that he tossed them away at a county dump. The third book was apparently stolen from his office, he claimed. Vance did have the fourth, but it, "did not answer any of our questions," said Miller's press secretary William Blacklow. Vance is not commenting on the matter, an OSHA spokeswoman says.

Miller was said to find the story "incredible," but he's apparently not doing much to follow up on it right now. Blacklow denies the charge that Miller has lost interest in stricter regulation of ethylene oxide and insists that the legislator will doggedly pursue the matter. For now, Miller and another subcommittee chairman, Joseph Gaydos (D-Pa.), are growling at each other over jurisdiction concerning OSHA's actions on ethylene oxide. The issue may, however, become moot because the agency last week reportedly agreed to set a final rule by 15 June.—MARJORIE SUN