

field tests. These reports, according to NIH officials, basically require the same information NIH has already collected, but in a different format.

Previous decisions by the three appeals judges may provide some clues as to how they may eventually rule. Two members of the court, J. Skelly Wright and Abner J. Mikva, have in the past broadly interpreted the National Environmental Protection Act and are considered likely to rule against NIH. The third judge, George E. MacKinnon, is regarded as the conservative who favors limits on the application of the act.—**MARJORIE SUN**

## Britain Drops Plan on Research Funding

The British government, faced with one of the biggest revolts from rank and file members of the Conservative party since Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979, has softened its controversial proposal to provide extra funding for basic research out of savings made by reducing government support for university students. As a result, the research community will be receiving considerably less than it had been promised 2 weeks ago when Secretary of State for Education and Science, Sir Keith Joseph, announced plans to increase the government's support for science in 1985 by \$30 million. The leaders of several research agencies had warned that unless funds were increased, Britain may be forced to abandon some fields of science (*Science*, 23 November, p. 946).

The new money was to be made available for science, Joseph said, primarily by increasing the amount that parents of university students from wealthier families would be expected to pay towards the student's maintenance costs and university tuition fees.

The plan provoked a howl of protest from middle-class parents, many of whom have been traditional Conservative supporters but were faced with the prospect of paying up to \$1000 a year more for each child at university.

Local Conservative groups throughout the country took up the parents' claim that they were already required to pay for universities through the tax

system. Respecting this pressure, a significant number of Conservative members of Parliament warned the government that unless it withdrew the proposal, they might vote against a broader bill in which it was contained. And on 5 December Joseph told the House of Commons that the government had decided that although it will still require wealthier parents to increase their direct support for children at university, they will not after all be required to contribute to university tuition fees.

This decision, he added, meant that the government had to find another \$26 million to support university students. As a result, he announced that the extra money being made available to the research councils for the support of basic research would be reduced from the previously promised figure of \$17.5 million to \$13.7 million.

There would be an even greater reduction—from \$12.5 million to \$5 million—in the new money that the government would be providing universities to replace outdated research equipment.—**DAVID DICKSON**

## Chilean Academics Seized

Three Chilean mathematics professors have disappeared in the course of a crackdown by the military-run government following a series of nationwide protests in September.

On 6 November, General Augusto Pinochet declared a state of siege. Thousands of persons have been detained, and hundreds sent to internal exile or imprisoned.

Most of those detained have been workers living in shanty towns. Although one politically active psychiatrist was exiled in November, no moves have been reported against academics. On 29 November, however, two professors at the University of Antofagasta, Ada Cam and Manuel Alarcon, disappeared. Three days later Professor Douglas Fuente disappeared. It is not known whether the three were engaged in political activities. The Chilean Mathematical Society, the American Mathematical Society and the AAAS subcommittee on science and human rights have sent enquiries to the Chilean government, but so far there has been no response.—**CONSTANCE HOLDEN**

## Biowarfare Lab Approved Without Restrictions

A Senate subcommittee has cleared the path for construction of a controversial new Defense Department laboratory, designed to conduct tests involving highly infectious and lethal biological agents. In a 4 to 1 vote concluded on 6 December, the appropriations subcommittee on military construction agreed to reallocate \$1.4 million in the present Pentagon budget so that the laboratory can be built next year at Dugway Proving Ground in Utah. Similar approval had been obtained earlier from the corresponding subcommittee in the House of Representatives.

The vote was conducted by telephone after a brief but intense Army lobbying effort, intended to counter objections first raised by Senator James Sasser (D-Tenn.), the subcommittee's ranking minority member, and subsequently shared by some prominent micro- and molecular biologists (*Science*, 7 December, p. 1176). The primary concern is that the laboratory could potentially be used to develop offensive biological weapons, which are banned by an international treaty. But additional concerns were raised because the Army sought approval for the laboratory through an obscure legislative provision that sharply limited congressional scrutiny.

In the course of the lobbying effort, Army and Dugway officials aggressively courted both Senator Mack Mattingly (R-Ga.), the Appropriations subcommittee chairman, and Senator Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.), the Appropriations Committee chairman. In the end, Senators Paul Laxalt (R-Nev.), Jake Garn (R-Utah), Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii), and Mattingly voted to approve the laboratory, and Sasser cast the lone dissenting vote. Hatfield expressed some reservations, but decided not to intervene.

According to a staff aide, Sasser will try to enact a legislative provision limiting the laboratory to defensive research early next year. But it remains uncertain whether Congress will also create a special panel to scrutinize the laboratory's work on a continuing basis, an idea that many scientists favor.—**R. JEFFREY SMITH**