Officials at USDA, which requested the Academy study, have been fairly receptive to the report. Program administrator Donald L. Houston said that "we intend to work closely with Congress . . . in our efforts to streamline and modernize the program." John Spaulding, director of the residue evaluation and planning division, said that although the committee had "a lot of good ideas," some of the recommendations seem impractical. Meat changes so many hands and moves so quickly from the farm to the consumer that it makes testing very difficult. "There are plants that kill 1000 hogs an hour and 200 cattle an hour. I don't know if the government could afford that kind of testing."

—MARJORIE SUN

OECD Warns of Technological Nationalism

Paris. Greater international consensus is needed on the extent to which governments should be actively engaged in the promotion of new technologies, according to the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Without such a consensus, it warns, there is likely to be an increase not only in disputes caused by clashes of views (for example, over whether some governments give unfair advantages to their industries in international competition) but also in the retaliatory actions that these clashes can trigger.

In a report entitled "Science and Technology Policy Outlook: 1985," the organization suggests that the development of new technologies is "probably the most active area of science and technology policy in the OECD." However, it says there is a danger that growing "technological nationalism," prompted by a desire to promote these technologies, threatens to substitute competition between countries for competition between companies.

The OECD's comments were made shortly before the French government announced last week, during a meeting in Paris with representatives from 17 other European nations, that it was prepared to contribute 1 billion francs ($110 million) toward efforts to set up a series of collaborative projects in high-technology areas under the umbrella of the Eureka initiative approved by European heads of state during their summit meeting in Milan at the end of last month (*Science*, 12 July, p. 141). West Germany's minister of Research and Technology, Heinz Riesenhuber, also has announced that Germany will contribute a similar sum.

France argues that comparable support from other European governments is essential if they are to remain industrially competitive with Japan and the United States. The OECD report endorses, in principle, efforts to encourage greater collaboration in long-term research and development, particularly during a period when government funding is being cut back in many Western countries.

It argues, however, that the French commitment to strong government intervention and the American efforts to let private industry play the dominant role represent "the policy poles" of the OECD. And it argues that "the extension of government support well beyond R&D can be seen as a substitution of public expenditures for private investment which could lead to counter-measures from other countries and growing trade frictions."

—DAVID DICKSON

Committee Hits DOE on Project Write-offs

The House Appropriations Committee, in its report on the 1986 fiscal year funding bill for energy and water programs, has taken aim at the Department of Energy's (DOE) track record on big facilities.

In particular, the committee cites seven major projects costing a total of $6 billion that have either been canceled or stand uncompleted. "Whatever the reasons, the magnitude of the apparent waste is too great for the committee to overlook," notes the committee in its report on the bill, which the House passed on 16 June. As a result, the committee has directed its staff to examine DOE's major facilities program to identify why projects have not reached completion. DOE also must submit detailed reports on costs and timetables for projects costing $100 million or more.

The committee is apparently concerned about the following defunct or delayed projects: the Gas Centrifuge Enrichment Plant, the Clinch River Breeder Reactor, the Mirror Fusion Test Facility-B, the Isabelle particle accelerator, the Fusion Materials Irradiation Test Facility, the Fuels Materials Examination Facility, and Building 371 at Rocky Flats nuclear weapons center in Colorado. " . . . The case can be made that management decisions have occurred which have resulted in expenditure of nearly $6 billion in the last five years in the construction of just these major facilities . . . ," the committee notes. It has instructed DOE to set up a monitoring process to keep senior DOE management appraised of major projects.

The causes of these projects' problems vary, some being within the control of the department and others tied to congressional decisions. Ironically, the committee report does not recognize that its budgetary actions have delayed completion of projects such as the Mirror Fusion Test Facility and the Fusion Materials Irradiation Test Facility. These funding cuts were backed by the House appropriations subcommittee on energy and water development, which is chaired by Representative Tom Bevill (D–Ala.).

DOE is not alone in being concerned about the committee's report. The American Nuclear Energy Council (ANEC) is upset with language that directs DOE to establish a system for selecting a single advanced reactor concept for civilian power generation.

The committee report suggests that the department use a peer-review system, like that employed to select laser isotope separation technology over centrifuges for uranium enrichment, to make a final recommendation in time for a project to be funded in fiscal year 1987. The committee instructs DOE to submit a report to Congress detailing the required financing to construct the pilot plant by 1992 and to operate it on a commercial utility grid through 1995.

"The industry needs more time to decide what power plant it wants to buid for the future," says ANEC vice president Tom J. Price. A choice between gas-cooled reactors, integral fast reactors, pool-type reactors, and other advanced concepts within the next 12 months is "premature," says Price.—MARK CRAWFORD