

Swiss Voters Reject Ban on Vivisection

Paris. Swiss research scientists and pharmaceutical companies are breathing slightly easier following the result of a referendum in which voters rejected by a two-to-one majority a demand for a complete ban on vivisection.

The referendum was held after animal rights' activist Franz Weber and the organization Helevetia Nostra had managed to gather the necessary 150,000 signatures proposing that a clause be added to the constitution stating that "vivisection of vertebrate animals, as well as all cruel experiments on animals, are forbidden in the whole of Switzerland."

The proposed amendment managed to win the support of almost 30 percent of the 37.4 percent of the electorate taking part in the vote, indicating considerable backing for Weber's view that "animal experiments cannot conquer human diseases, since animals are different from men." The proposed ban was supported by a wide range of animal rights' and environmentalist groups.

However, the amendment had been fiercely opposed by Switzerland's multinational pharmaceutical companies as well as a large number of university research workers. Both had pointed out that Switzerland already has some of the strictest animal-protection legislation in the world.

The pharmaceutical companies' warning that the ban would not achieve the critics' aim of significantly reducing the number of animals used in experiments, since many companies would merely move their research activities to other countries, was reinforced by a report from the Battelle Institute in Geneva that 6000 jobs would be lost immediately if the ban were passed. More would disappear if whole research facilities were moved out of the country, the institute predicted.

After the vote had been counted, the president of the national League Against Vivisection said that the organization had "lost the battle, but not the war." He pointed out that the necessary 150,000 signatures have also been collected for a new, less Draconian measure proposed by an-

other animal rights group in Basel proposing merely "a strict and progressive reduction in experiments on animals."—**DAVID DICKSON**

Few Long-Term Gains in Youth Employment Project

Youth unemployment programs carried out under the Carter Administration have shown little in the way of long-term benefits, according to a survey conducted by the National Research Council. The report says the evaluations of these programs has been so poor as to offer little new knowledge, and warns that not much will be learned from current programs either unless the government puts more into studying them.

The report was produced in response to a request from the Labor Department for an assessment of the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act, enacted in 1977. The act expanded the 20-year-old Job Corps and created a variety of job placement and skill training programs, resulting in a doubling of federal expenditures to \$2 billion a year through 1981. The total outlay of \$8 billion "is one of the largest short-term investments in social research and demonstration ever undertaken by the federal government," says the report.

Unfortunately, however, "it appears that at the beginning of 1985 the employment problems of youths were of about the same magnitude and configuration as they were in 1978, including racial differentials." High school dropouts, particularly black males, are the most intractable unemployment problem, but "the question of how to reach and serve dropout youths effectively was largely unanswered by YEDPA."

After reviewing more than 400 studies, most of which were deemed inadequate, the committee concluded that the Job Corps—a 30-week residential program that includes vocational training, basic education and health counseling—was the only one in which the effects persisted for several years. Various other programs showed no lasting effects on unemployment or related factors such as teen-aged pregnancy, drug abuse, and criminality.

The report says YEDPA failed in one of its major objectives, which was to get schools and other institutions more involved in setting youths on productive paths. The YEDPA experience also "demonstrates that completely decentralized research efforts . . . are likely to yield very little hard evidence on program effectiveness." Among the recommendations are more research on and services for dropouts, research on the effects of "in-school" employment, more basic education in vocational skills training programs, and child care services in programs directed to young women.—**CONSTANCE HOLDEN**

Violence Seen as Public Health Issue

Surgeon General C. Everett Koop is putting high priority on interpersonal violence as a public health problem, as evidenced by a recent 2-day conference which brought together an unusual combination of law enforcement and health professionals.

Violence continues to be a central phenomenon of American culture according to speakers, and, despite the temporary ebb caused by the aging of the population, promises to get worse. At present, one in every 21 black males can expect to be murdered before the age of 24 (the white ratio is 1:131); spouse abuse is believed to occur in 12 to 20 percent of all couples, and about 1.5 million children are abused a year.

The remedies proposed sounded familiar—such as expanded services, public education, training of professionals, more research on the roots of violence, gun control, sex education in the schools, and full employment. Although most of the recommendations ran counter to directions being pursued by this Administration, Koop promised he would forward them all to relevant agencies.

The federal government has taken a step toward recognition of violence as a health problem by establishing a new Violence Epidemiology Branch at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta. The office is collecting detailed statistics to look for patterns in assaultive behavior, homicide, and suicide.—**CONSTANCE HOLDEN**