

# Letters

## Conservation and the AEC

The conflict between "local" and "national" interests over conservation (*Science*, 28 Feb., p. 941) is developing a new twist in California that may be a portent of things to come elsewhere. With its rapidly expanding population, a major if not predominant exploitation of its natural resources is for living space. The individual homeowner wants this space to be as attractive as possible, California still has many areas of great natural beauty, and increasingly the "local interests" are making a determined effort to preserve what is left of this prized resource. By community action, planning commissions, and zoning ordinances, many are remarkably successful in these efforts.

Modern living, however, also requires facilities for transportation, power, education, and research. Public agencies, state and national, have been set up to regulate, supervise, or even construct these facilities. These agencies have funds comparable to those of the private exploiters of natural resources, and even greater power, including that of eminent domain. But their responsibilities are necessarily restricted, and their viewpoint may be similarly limited to immediate costs and benefits. The "national interest" as expressed by them thus can be narrow and short-range.

A case in point is the town of Woodside, California, which includes part of the scenic and heavily wooded coastal range west of the great San Andreas fault. Farther north, several sag lakes along the fault—the Crystal Springs Reservoirs—are parts of the San Francisco water-supply system, and their drainage basins are reserved against occupancy. At Woodside the steep slopes west of the fault are not unoccupied—you can see several narrow lanes winding up from the main roads, and at night lights twinkle in many unsuspected places of human habitation. But from the densely populated plains around San Francisco

Bay, the people in tract homes, mansions, and automobiles see this ridge as natural and undespoiled. Thus there remains the appearance of a continuous greenbelt adjacent to and contrasting with the urbanized area that joins San Francisco with San Jose. Woodside, chiefly a rural area, was incorporated several years ago to preserve this appearance of natural beauty.

The Stanford Linear Accelerator, 2 miles long, is now under construction in the northwest part of Stanford University's 9000 acres under a contract of the Atomic Energy Commission at a cost of \$114 million. An immense amount of power (300 megawatts) will ultimately be needed for this accelerator, and the cheapest way of providing it is by an overhead line and towers, over the skyline and over the town of Woodside and onto the adjacent Stanford lands. The Pacific Gas and Electric Company, which is to provide this power, has applied for permits for this overhead line, but these have been denied by the Woodside Town Council and by the San Mateo County Commission, on the ground that the overhead line would be detrimental to the public interest. An underground power line over the ridge and down the slope would cost probably \$3.5 million additional—about the cost of the two Minuteman rockets that created an unusual glow in the evening skies of California last month. AEC feels that it cannot justify expenditure of public funds in anything like this amount, just to satisfy the esthetic whims of a few landowners. It has issued an ultimatum that, unless local jurisdictions can agree on a plan to share the additional costs by 16 March 1964, the Army Corps of Engineers will be ordered to proceed with constructing the overhead power line. In response, the Woodside Council voted to quadruple the town tax to \$1 per \$100 assessed valuation, but this will raise only \$150,000. AEC says it can offer perhaps \$220,000, and PG&E

about \$1 million. Stanford trustees, however, have stated they cannot use university funds for such noneducational purposes. It is unlikely that the ransom can be raised by the deadline date set by AEC.

The haste required by AEC reduces the chances of success in Woodside's endeavor to preserve the scenic greenbelt along the San Francisco Peninsula. But even if it ends up with a horrible example of the fruits of limited vision, it may provide ammunition for conservationists throughout the country in their battles to preserve something of value for future generations.

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## Narcotic Addiction:

### The Neglect of Research

The interesting review by John Walsh of the President's Advisory Commission on Narcotic and Drug Abuse (14 Feb., p. 662) did not mention an important reason why so little has been done in research on the treatment of narcotic addicts. It stems from the fact that the Bureau of Medical Services, not the Addiction Research Center of the National Institute of Mental Health, has the responsibility for treatment of narcotic addicts at the hospitals at Lexington and Fort Worth. The physicians who treat the patients are commissioned officers of the U.S. Public Health Service (many thus serving out their Selective Service obligation), with little interest in addiction per se, and usually carrying a case load of over 100 patients. The result is that no long-range research on the results of varying the inpatient psychiatric treatment has ever been done. The many talented officers who have rotated through these hospitals have taken three paths: (i) They have resigned in disgust because of the refusal of the Bureau of Medical Services to develop an experimental approach to treatment. (ii) They have obtained transfer to positions where they no longer deal with addicts. (iii) They have stayed at the hospitals and, in contemplating the dangers of rocking the boat, have found their time more rewardingly spent in reading the seniority list.

The many efforts to develop research designs are uniformly met with encouragement at the hospital level and re-