

1964 and made several strong recommendations:

1) That meclizine and cyclizine be removed from over-the-counter sale and be made prescription items only.

2) That labeling of meclizine and cyclizine be revised to include the following general statement: "Safety in early pregnancy has not been established. Animal studies indicate (*name of drug*) causes congenital malformations. Clinical studies to date are inconclusive."

3) That further studies on these drugs be made, with reference to efficacy and teratogenicity.

Up to this point, FDA's record is clear. It is what happened subsequently that aroused Fountain's interest. For 9 months, nothing happened at all. On 18 January 1965, medical director Sadusk transmitted the recommendations to Commissioner Larrick, stating that they were endorsed by the Bureau of Medicine. Two or three days later, Sadusk changed his mind and asked that the recommendations be withdrawn. The following month, Sadusk set about to reconvene the advisory committee. When it met again one year later, in April 1965, its recommendations were startlingly different. According to the hearing transcript, three motions (and evidently only three) were placed before it. The first, that the status quo regarding the drugs in question be maintained—that is, that they remain freely available, no mention being made of possible hazards in pregnancy—was voted down. The second, that the committee be reconvened to review "other selected drugs that may have teratogenic effects in lower orders," was passed. The third was a motion to the effect that "the over-the-counter preparations of meclizine, cyclizine and chlorcyclizine may continue to be so distributed providing that their labeling include the warning statement, 'this drug shall not be taken during pregnancy without the advice of a physician.'" That one also passed, and it appears that it will become the basis of FDA policy.

Now, the logic of this decision can be criticized in many ways, and will be. Many medical scientists point out that the time a drug is most likely to harm the fetus is in the first few weeks of pregnancy, frequently before a woman knows she is pregnant. This is the time she is most likely to go to a pharmacist and ask what is available for nausea—and be given one of these familiar

products. One government physician who has followed the arguments closely feels it is "medically indefensible" to assume that a label on an over-the-counter product offers adequate protection. "The only people this decision can possibly benefit are the drug people," he said. Fountain, however, was interested not so much in the medical arguments as in the way the decision was reached to overturn the first committee's recommendation and supplant it with a far weaker recommendation. He questioned Sadusk closely on why he had changed his mind on an issue of such potential public importance. Sadusk's reply was essentially that he had never agreed with the stringent recommendation in the first place, but had passed it up the line because it represented the conclusions of respected scientists. Fountain wanted the tape largely to discover what had transpired in the meeting to induce this body of scientists to alter its recommendations. A draft of an edited version of the tape had previously been received by the committee in manuscript form, but Fountain and his staff evidently felt it left key mysteries unresolved.

Two Sides

Thus, whatever else can be said about the Fountain-FDA dispute, it must be said in fairness that there are two sides to it. Fountain's request for the information with which FDA was so reluctant to part grew out of his need for data concerning two cases that have very clear and imminent consequences for the public interest. In the light of past and present FDA policies, neither request was unique or extraordinary. Why some segments of the scientific community have responded so emphatically is a somewhat puzzling question. One factor seems to have been that Fountain has been a favorite villain of the scientific community since his investigation of NIH a few years ago, and there was probably a pre-existing readiness to believe that if Fountain was involved in it, it couldn't be a very good thing for scientists. Another factor is a natural response to signals of distress from a fellow scientist—in this case Sadusk, who has done more in a year to put FDA on the scientific map than any other official accomplished in a lifetime. It is likely that many scientists also sympathize with Sadusk's view, as reported

in an article in an industry trade publication, that "he and his bureau should be left alone until he can get his staff to the point where it can do a genuinely effective job"—a point he estimated to be around fiscal year 1967 at the earliest. While this notion may fit in with the views of many scientists who believe that Congress should not interfere with the conduct of scientific agencies, it makes little sense from an administrative point of view. By the same logic, one could say that no new government programs should be reviewed at all until they had been operating for several years. In addition, it is an uncomfortable fact that a good many of the decisions with which Fountain was concerned—including the remarketing of Parnate and the reversal on meclizine—took place after Sadusk assumed stewardship. And it is another uncomfortable fact that, in terms of its potential consequences for public health and safety, the subject of government drug policy is of far more importance than the subject of research-grant administration. When a congressional committee has reason to believe that a particular situation may be dangerous, it takes pressures far more powerful than the dismay of civil servants or the complaints of scientists to make it change its course.

Two more points should be noted. The first is the fact that at least some of the scientific and medical groups who have petitioned Fountain did so on the basis of reports of the hearings which appeared in the trade and regular press, and did not study the proceedings themselves. The second is the possibility, reported in the trade press, that, in an effort to blunt the impact of the forthcoming Fountain committee report, FDA Commissioner George Larrick may retire. Larrick, 64, has been head of the FDA since 1954 and, under government policies, is now free to retire. His retirement would make the report something of an anticlimax.—ELINOR LANGER

Announcements

The University of Southern California has announced plans for a **marine science research center** on Catalina Island, about 20 miles off the southern California coast. The center will be built on a 45-acre tract at the eastern part of the island, donated by the Cata-

lina Island Company and P. K. Wrigley. Construction of the biology laboratory is scheduled to begin this fall, under a \$500,000 NSF grant which will be matched by USC. The other schools that will support the center include the University of California at Los Angeles, Riverside, and Irvine; Pomona College; California Institute of Technology; Occidental College; and the California State College System.

A 2-year study of **preservation of food by radiation** will begin this summer under the combined auspices of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Atomic Energy of Canada, Ltd., and the U.S. Army Materiel Command's Natick Laboratories, Massachusetts. The project will cover economic needs, microbiology, product developments, packaging, and consumer acceptance.

Meeting Notes

The call for papers has been issued for a conference of the International Institute of **Optics**, to be held in Paris 2-7 May. The subjects to be discussed include: propagation of light, coherence, interference, diffraction, polarization, nonlinear optics, optical information processing. Deadline for receipt of 250-word abstracts: *30 September*. (Conference Secretariat, Institute for Optics, 3, blvd. Pasteur, Paris 15)

A symposium on the **dynamics of fluids and plasmas** will be held 6-8 October at the University of Maryland, College Park. It will be dedicated to J. M. Burgers, who is retiring as research professor in the Institute for Fluid Dynamics and Applied Mechanics of the university. Technical sessions will be held on the following: kinetic theory and flow with chemical reaction, turbulence and stability of flow, biomechanics and other problems of living organisms, theoretical and experimental plasma, and rheology and stellar dynamics. (S. I. Pai, Institute for Fluid Dynamics and Applied Mathematics, University of Maryland, College Park)

Scientists in the News

Mary I. Bunting, president of Radcliffe College, and **Harvey Picker**, president of Picker X-Ray Corporation, have been appointed to the National Science Board, National Science Foun-

dation. The board recommends national policies for promoting basic research and education in science. Other members are:

Eric A. Walker, Pennsylvania State University; chairman

Philip Handler, Duke University; vice chairman

W. O. Baker, Bell Telephone Laboratories

Harvey Brooks, Harvard

H. E. Carter, University of Illinois

Rufus E. Clement, Atlanta University

Henry Eyring, University of Utah

Julian R. Goldsmith, University of Chicago

William W. Hagerty, Drexel Institute of Technology

Leland J. Haworth, director, NSF

Theodore M. Hesburgh, Notre Dame University

William V. Houston, Rice University

Katharine E. McBride, Bryn Mawr College

Edward J. McShane, University of Virginia

Robert S. Morison, Cornell University

E. R. Piore, International Business Machines Corporation

Mina S. Rees, City University of New York

William W. Rubey, University of California, Los Angeles

Julius A. Stratton, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Edward L. Tatum, Rockefeller University

F. P. Thieme, University of Washington

Ralph W. Tyler, Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences, Stanford

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases has expanded its laboratory of immunology. The sections are headed by:

Maurice Landy, chief of the laboratory; natural immunity.

Edwin M. Lerner, II, formerly head of the experimental pathology laboratory, NIAID; pathology and transplantation immunity.

Arthur J. L. Strauss, formerly senior investigator in the dermatology branch, National Cancer Institute; autoimmunity.

Wilton E. Vannier, of the immunology section is head of the section, and **Sanford H. Stone** retains his position as head of the allergy and hypersensitivity section.

Howard M. Lenhoff, formerly of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, has been named to head the new laboratory for quantitative biology at the University of Miami.

Oscar Bodansky has been chosen as the Van Slyke Medalist for 1965 by the New York-Metropolitan Section of the American Association of Clinical Chemists. He is a biochemistry professor at the Sloan-Kettering Division of Memorial Hospital, New York, and chief of the division of metabolism and enzymes.

The Lewis and Rosa Strauss Memorial Fund has named **John Archibald Wheeler**, a physics professor at Princeton, to receive the 1965 Albert Einstein medal and \$5000 award, for his work on the peaceful applications of atomic energy. The award is announced in March and presented in the fall.

Friedrich Meyer has left the scientific staff of the National Center for Atmospheric Research, Boulder, Colo., to rejoin the Max Planck Institute for Physics and Astrophysics, Munich, Germany. He had been a member of the Institute's theoretical plasma physics group from 1957 to 1962.

Abdul Jabbar Abdullah, president-emeritus of the University of Baghdad, Iraq, has joined the National Center for Atmospheric Research, as a scientific visitor.

The newly elected president of the Water Pollution Control Federation is **Robert S. Shaw**, assistant director of the New Jersey State Department of Health's division of environmental health. He will take office during the federation's next annual conference, 10-14 October, in Atlantic City, N.J.

Bowling Green State University, Ohio, has appointed **John R. Coash** to the newly created position of director of research. He will continue as assistant to the provost.

Florida Atlantic University has announced the appointment of **Robert E. Adamson** as professor of psychology and director of the Institute of Behavioral Research. He had been deputy chief of the behavioral sciences division, Air Force Office of Scientific Research.