

NEWS IN BRIEF

● **HARVARD FILES:** Harvard University announced that it and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) have agreed upon a procedure "which will protect the privacy of the individual and enable the HEW investigators to resume their survey" of allegedly discriminatory employment practices against women. Personnel Director John Butler, who had closed the files (*Science*, 1 May), declined to elaborate on the details of the procedure, but said Harvard will release some information from specific files when HEW suspects discrimination against an individual.

● **BUREAU OF STANDARDS CUTS BACK:** A number of professionals at the Bureau of Standards have lost their jobs as an indirect effect of budget cuts at other agencies, including the space agency and the Defense Department. The Bureau, which receives about one-third of its funding through these other agencies, has had to reduce its work force since last December. About 60 people have received or will receive letters of dismissal; about half that number will actually leave government employment—others will retire, take a cut in pay or grade, or take jobs in another agency. Hardest hit by the cuts, according to the Bureau's personnel chief, have been chemists, physicists, and physical science technicians. The cuts have been evenly split between the Bureau's facilities at Gaithersburg, Md., and Boulder, Colo.

● **BRITISH MUSEUM:** With the intent of deterring the vacation migration of scholars to its famous reading room, the British Museum has sent notices to 162 leading universities in Europe, North America, and Australia asking scholars to avoid using the museum's facilities this summer. Museum officials cited a shortage of space and a growing crowd of scholars as the reason for their request. Officials warned that anyone wishing to get a seat would have to arrive within an hour of the opening of the reading rooms.

● **FACULTY COMPENSATION:** The compensation for American professors rose less than 2 percent last year in terms of real purchasing power, according to the American Association of University Professors. The AAUP Re-

port on the Economic Status of the Profession (1969-70) further showed that only 43.1 percent of the institutions participating in the survey could claim an increase in real faculty salaries of 1 percent or more. The dollar level of average compensation had increased by 7.1 percent, but the rise in the consumer price index of 5.4 percent diminished the increase in real purchasing power to only 1.7 percent.

● **KUDOS:** Bryce Nelson, formerly of the *Science* news staff, and Richard D. Lyons, of the *New York Times*, have received the Albert Deutsch Award for distinguished journalism for their reporting last year of security clearance procedures in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The recipients were selected at the suggestion of the American Orthopsychiatric Association.

● **ESTROGEN AND THE PILL:** The Food and Drug Administration has announced that it will advise physicians prescribing birth-control pills to recommend brands low in estrogen, one of the two hormones contained in the pill. The announcement was prompted by research findings here and in Britain and by a report published late last month in the *British Medical Journal*, data from which will be mailed by the FDA to American physicians and pharmacies immediately. The British data showed, according to the FDA statement, a "sufficiently clear relationship" between estrogen and the incidence of blood clotting to impel the FDA to make their recommendation.

● **FEDERAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CATALOG:** The Federal Council for Science and Technology has published a reference catalog for use by laboratories and universities interested in exploring the possibility of establishing joint laboratory-university programs. The "Catalog of Federal Laboratory-University Programs and Relationships" provides a description of the many types of training programs and cooperative relationships that exist among federal laboratories and contract centers and universities. The catalog may be obtained for 75¢ from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

scientists have examined the question of whether fallout or residual radiation might have contaminated the control groups and have concluded that any such contamination is negligible—a finding with which some reputable Japanese scientists told me they agree.

The majority of experts, both in the United States and in Japan, seems to put considerable faith in the validity of the ABCC's studies. Susumu Watanabe, head of the pathology division at Japan's National Cancer Research Institute in Tokyo, told *Science* that while some Japanese scientists occasionally differ with the ABCC's interpretations, the major Japanese studies "don't disagree much with the ABCC." Similarly, scientists at the Research Institute for Nuclear Medicine and Biology at Hiroshima University told me that while they had some quibbles with the ABCC's published results, they felt that the study had been well designed and that its findings are valid. The major bodies which set permissible standards for radiation exposure in the United States—namely, the Federal Radiation Council and the National Commission for Radiological Protection—consider the ABCC studies a major source of pertinent data. And even such a well-known critic of the existing radiation standards as John W. Gofman calls the ABCC studies "crucial and invaluable." But Gofman does have at least one complaint. He says that all cancers are not *automatically* searched out in the ABCC studies, and he suggests that the failure to detect an increase in any particular kind of cancer thus far may primarily reflect a failure to look for it diligently. But Gofman says his complaint is "not terribly serious" and that ultimately the ABCC should provide data on every major form of human cancer induction by ionizing radiation.

In addition to the scientific criticisms, the ABCC has been attacked on a variety of political and emotional grounds. The ABCC contactors who swoop down on grieving relatives in an effort to obtain permission to conduct an autopsy have been likened to "vultures." The ABCC's professionals have been accused of using the Japanese victims as "guinea pigs" to determine the effect of their horrible weapon in order to make ready for another war. And the ABCC has been pictured as heartless and uncaring because it merely examines people and seldom offers any treatment (a circum-