# NEWS IN BRIEF

● **ACCELERATOR PULLED FROM BRINK**: The Princeton-Pennsylvania Accelerator, scheduled to close July 1 when funds from the Atomic Energy Commission run out, has received an additional 2 months' lease on life in the form of $230,000 from the Fannie E. Rippel Foundation of Newark, New Jersey. The 3-Gev machine is being converted from a proton accelerator to an accelerator of high energy, heavy ions for use in cancer therapy. The accelerator, which is managed jointly by Princeton University and the University of Pennsylvania, began operation in 1963. Its staff is being reduced to 26, from a high of 360 in 1967.

● **NO TUITION REFUND**: The New York Appellate Court has ruled that New York University does not have to refund tuition money for 19 days of classes a student missed when the university closed during campus disorders last May. A Queens fireman whose son is a student at NYU had won a settlement of $277.40 in Small Claims Court, but the Appellate Court reversed the ruling. The higher court said the closing of the school was not significant enough to constitute a breach of contract, and maintained that private institutions are "free to a large degree from judicial restraints."

● **M.I.T. CORPORATION GETS YOUNGER LOOK**: Membership in the M.I.T. Corporation, the governing body of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, will be expanded to include five recent alumni, who will hold staggered 5-year terms. Students in their final year of study and members of the past 2 years' graduating classes will be eligible for nomination to the new positions and will participate in the selection process.

● **AIRBORNE LABORATORY**: The National Aeronautics and Space Administration is buying a large Lockheed C141J jet cargo transport for use as an astronomical observatory. NASA is buying the plane for $3.4 million and will spend about $600,000 to modify it and furnish it with scientific instruments, including a 36-inch infrared telescope. The flying laboratory will be operated by NASA's Ames Research Center in Mountain View, California.

● **STEAM AUTO UNDER DEVELOPMENT**: The air pollution control section of the Environmental Protection Agency has awarded a $570,000 contract to a Massachusetts firm for a design and feasibility study of a steam-powered automobile. Steam Engine Systems Corporation, a new company that describes itself as "closely allied with the M.I.T. community," has been studying the steam engine system field for 3 years, and recently announced the first operation of its prototype 100-horsepower steam engine.

● **CANADIAN - AMERICAN OBSERVATORY**: Scientists of Canada and the United States are planning to build a $12- to $15-million upper atmosphere observatory to study relations of space energy to weather, radio communications, and other phenomena on earth. A transmitter and four receivers will be built in the vicinity of the Great Lakes, where the earth's magnetic field causes ionized layers of the upper atmosphere to form a low-density "trough." Preliminary engineering studies for the observatory, which is scheduled for completion in 1974, are being conducted under a $99,950 National Science Foundation grant.

● **TOBACCO FINANCES CANCER STUDY**: Washington University in St. Louis has been awarded a $2-million grant from seven tobacco firms and a tobacco growers association for a basic research program on the immunologic properties of cancer. The studies, to be conducted by Lauren V. Ackerman and Paul E. Lacy, will concentrate on antigens and antibody production in cancers of the colon and lung. The grant is the largest research grant the tobacco industry has made to a single institution.

● **NEW PUBLICATION**: The Education Commission of the States has come out with Report 4 of its National Assessment of Educational Progress. The report assesses the scientific knowledge of teen-agers according to sex, region, and size of community. It is one of a series of reports surveying the knowledge and skills of young Americans in ten categories. The document is available from the Education Commission of the States, 822 Lincoln Tower, 1860 Lincoln Street, Denver, Colorado 80203.

structure of the NRC altered very little. NRC was originally organized on the basis of divisions related directly to the disciplinary sections to which NAS members are elected. There are divisions of behavioral sciences, biology and agriculture, chemistry and chemical technology, earth sciences, engineering, mathematical sciences, medical sciences, and physical sciences. There are also two specialized "offices"—the Office of the Foreign Secretary (headed by the Academy's elected Foreign Secretary, Harrison Brown of Caltech), which handles the Academy's relations with foreign academies and international cooperative programs, and also an Office of Scientific Personnel, which deals with manpower problems and administers fellowship and grant programs.

As a matter of principle, NRC avoids entanglements with operating programs, but exceptions seem to keep exerting heavy pressure on rules in the NRC, and two big budget items at least bend the principle. The Highway Research Board (HRB), created after World War I, has been a favorite target of Academy critics. It is argued that most of the work done through the board, which controls a budget of some $5 million a year, is routine and "applied" rather than of a type which only the NRC is competent to perform. It is also suggested that the board has developed strong ties with the highway lobby and that the existence of the board, operating under the prestigious wing of the Academy, has actually retarded serious work on alternative forms of transportation. Defenders of the board say it has facilitated cooperation between state highway authorities, which would otherwise have been impossible, and not only has raised the level of highway technology but has done much to educate state and industry officials to the deleterious side effects of unbridled highway building.

A reappraisal of the NRC role in this sector is, in fact, under way, since plans are afoot for the creation of a new Division of Transportation which would incorporate the $3 million National Cooperative Highway Research Program and other HRB functions into a division designed to take a balanced approach to transportation problems. The new division would be the first to be organized on "functional" rather than disciplinary lines, and NRC officials say that other functional divisions will follow.

Another big budget item imposed on