

## Ray Nominated to AEC

When she moved out to Fox Island in Puget Sound not long ago, Dixy Lee Ray traded in her red Jaguar convertible and bought something more suitable for the terrain—a Toyota land cruiser with four-wheel drive and a big winch on the front bumper. Now she's very much at home bouncing over the island's rough roads with her two constant companions—Jacques, a miniature French poodle, and Ghillie, a Scottish deerhound whom she describes as “a big bag of affection.”

Last week, President Nixon nominated Dixy Lee Ray, one of the few women prominent in marine biology, to serve on the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). She admits that few things could wrench her away from the woods and orchards of her 65-acre retreat, but she's nevertheless eager to take up the job. And if friends and colleagues from Woods Hole to Scripps are right, it won't be long until her imprint on the commission becomes evident.



“Temperamentally, she's well suited to this sort of job,” says a colleague who served with her on the President's Task Force on Oceanography, a policy advisory group that met in 1969. “She works well with committees and she's not afraid to say what she thinks,” he said. Another friend, one of 17 years' standing, described her as a “very fluent speaker and not one to say Yes when she means No.”

At 58, Ray is well respected as a marine biologist (her special interest has been crustacea that attack wood). She has taught off and on for 24 years at the University of Washington, where she holds an associate professorship, and she

spent 3 years in Washington, D.C., in the early 1960's as a consultant to the National Science Foundation. For the past 9 years, though, she has devoted nearly all her time to administering the Pacific Science Center in Seattle, a cluster of six buildings that originally housed the science exhibition of the Seattle World's Fair in 1962. With financial help first from the NSF and later from the state of Washington and some 75 school districts in the area, she and a small staff transformed the exhibition into a popular teaching museum for the general public and for use by the state's elementary and secondary schools.

Ray has not followed the affairs of atomic energy closely in the past, and she concedes that she has “a lot of homework to do” before expressing herself on the subject. Still, she does have three missions in mind as an AEC commissioner, if, as expected, the Senate confirms her nomination. (She would replace Wilfrid Johnson, whose term has expired.)

For one, she wants to encourage the growth of nuclear medicine, a field she finds exciting. Second, advancing the public understanding of science has long been a major interest of hers, and, she says, few fields are more sorely in need of it than atomic energy. “I feel some progress can be made in easing the fears and apprehensions that attach to nuclear energy,” she said in a telephone conversation. “And this will have to be done, after all, since the technology isn't going to go away.”

Finally, Ray is eager to involve herself in the AEC's tangled web of environmental affairs. In this area, she describes herself as firmly a moderate, “in the sense that I don't lead marches and predict doom.” She is nevertheless convinced that nuclear energy can have its untoward effects. “There is no question that such problems as thermal pollution are real. We have to have the wisdom to recognize that our technology can have adverse effects and, at the same time, that we need nuclear energy.”—ROBERT GILLETTE

task is to discuss the *issues*, as I see them, which I shall continue to do, as I have in the past,” said he.

Furthermore, several recent incidents have done nothing to warm up their relationship. Last February, for example, Ehrlich suggested in a press release that the scientific community develop “courtroom-style forums” to judge and render advice on controversial proposals from scientists such as Commoner and William Shockley, the Stanford physicist who has urged genetic studies of the relationship between race and intelligence. “Shockley's racial crusade and Commoner's one-sided treatment of the complexities of the environmental crisis are typical of a dangerous trend of politically active scientists who appeal to the public for support when they receive little or none within their professions,” Ehrlich is quoted as saying.

Ehrlich acknowledges that mentioning Commoner in the same breath with a man of Shockley's unpopular views is “perhaps open to misinterpretation.” Commoner, who professes only vague recollection that such a parallel was drawn, says, “Anybody who associates me with Shockley must be, to put it mildly, poorly informed. The entire notion is ludicrous.”

Then Commoner did something last spring that really antagonized the Ehrlich crew. Ehrlich and Holdren prepared a sharp critique of *The Closing Circle*, which Ehrlich calls a “dreadful book,” and Holdren calls “an extraordinarily counterproductive and damaging book” (it has been generally well reviewed elsewhere). They circulated their critique, and the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* agreed to publish it. They asked Commoner for a rebuttal to publish at a later date; Commoner wanted a simultaneous rebuttal, so the *Bulletin* postponed publication of the two pieces from April to May in order to give Commoner more time. Imagine the reaction when the April issue of *Environment* appeared carrying both the critique and Commoner's rebuttal. The *Bulletin's* editor acknowledged that he was “disagreeably surprised”; Ehrlich's associates were astounded and particularly annoyed at what they saw as *Environment's* attempt to play the articles as a “scoop” or as a public service they were rendering in getting the dispute out into the open.

The two articles are edged with sarcasm, with each of the two authors sighing that the other had apparently failed to grasp even the rudiments of his argument. Commoner's rebuttal is in temperate, if condescending, lan-