from Washington. And along with the new management has come a new emphasis on applied research and engineering tasks that seem inappropriate, if not distasteful, to many. Researchers and administrators in the laboratories do seem to recognize that, to some extent, these changes are an inevitable result of advances in nuclear technology. But they are nonetheless unhappy with what they consider to be a practice of "overmanagement" by Washington that allows little opportunity to appeal and debate decisions as to which research is important and which is not. The end result of all these feelings has been a deep, and for some, a rather bitter estrangement from AEC headquarters that has done nothing to speed the laggard pace of safety research.

To put things in an organizational context, it should be noted that all of the $53 million the AEC plans to spend on safety research this year will flow through the agency's main "promotional" branch, the Division of Reactor Development and Technology (RDT). This division holds jurisdiction over all civilian reactor R & D—including safety research and the commission's most prominent undertaking, the multibillion dollar breeder program. (Whereas this arrangement may make good sense from an administrative point of view, many of the AEC's critics—both inside and out—regard it as a built-in conflict of interest, in the sense that a single unit of the agency is responsible both for encouraging the growth of an industry and for supporting research with a high potential for raising embarrassing questions about the industry's safety. Thus, one of the key questions to be answered is whether the RDT has been able to discharge both duties with equal enthusiasm. Its critics contend that it has not.)

This year, roughly half the $53 million earmarked for safety will go into water reactor studies—the focus of concern—and half into breeder safety. Of the water-reactor money, about $6 million is destined for Oak Ridge National Laboratory to pay for a miscellaneous assortment of eight to ten projects involving 75 scientists and engineers. Some of this also goes for research contracted by Oak Ridge to a small number of universities and private firms.

The remaining $20 million for water reactor safety is destined for the National Reactor Testing Station (NRTS), where the AEC's "operating contractor," the Aerojet Nuclear Corporation, does most of the nation's water reactor safety research. About 120 scientists and engineers at Idaho draw their salaries from this money. Technically, all are employees not of the government but of ANC, a subsidiary of the Aerojet-General Corporation that exists solely for the purpose of running the Idaho installation.

Thus, in criticizing AEC policies, the dissident scientists and engineers at Oak Ridge and Aerojet place themselves in the difficult position of biting the only hand that feeds them—namely, the RDT, and more precisely, the division's controversial director, Milton Shaw.

A former aide to Vice Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, Shaw supervised the design and development of the nuclear propulsion plants aboard the aircraft carrier *Enterprise* and the cruiser *Long Beach* before taking up his present job in December 1964. Over the years—and in spite of criticism from the laboratories—he has acquired a reputation in Washington as a strong and competent administrator. A man of engaging bluntness, Shaw readily concedes that dissension exists in his safety program, though he says the reasons are not entirely clear to him.

"Unquestionably, people are unhappy, and morale at Idaho is poor," he said in a recent interview, "but sometimes it's hard to know why." Shaw suggested that some of the enmity may be a natural backlash to several traumatic but necessary management shakeups at Idaho over the past few years. He also spoke of an "unwillingness" in the laboratories to adapt to changes imposed by an advancing technology. Beyond this, he said, the closeness of researchers to their work may make the possibility of nuclear accidents "seem more real than it is" and thus may inflate the urgency of safety research in their eyes. There are, moreover, strong feelings among Shaw's staff that the laboratories simply are "hungry for contracts" and are willing to exaggerate safety problems to get them—an accusation the researchers angrily deny.

What, specifically, are the laboratories' grievances? During interviews, research administrators at Oak Ridge and Idaho expressed a variety of allegations, which will be examined in

Briefing

Review Stalls Cancer Plan

The National Cancer Plan, which will detail the strategy of the national effort that is supposed to speed us efficiently on our way to new triumphs in the fight against cancer, has run amok of the Washington bureaucracy. So the National Cancer Institute (NCI), which invested close to $1 million and the labor of more than 250 U.S. scientists in drawing up the plan, originally, if tentatively, scheduled for release by the end of last June, must now hold back until its work has been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Office of Science and Technology (OST), and the Institute of Medicine, part of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS). So much for efficiently cutting through red tape.

As things stand now, the cancer plan, which has yet to be completed in its final form, will be kept under wraps until the reviews have been completed—after the presidential election. Then, it is expected that in November or December the White House will unveil the plan as an executive document. Like the National Cancer Act which became law last year, it might be another "Christmas present to the nation."

In the original scheme, the cancer plan required the approval of the Cancer Advisory Board and the elite, three-man Cancer Advisory Panel, headed by banker Benno C. Schmidt. Then the OMB got into the act because the plan makes 5-year dollar projections that it felt it had to approve. The OST then decided it would be a good idea to have a look, too. The only premier scientific body left out, by this time, was the NAS which, like the OST, is going to review the science in the plan. (The idea of asking for an academy review apparently came from within the Nixon Administration, not from the NAS or NCI.) NAS president Philip Handler discussed the academy's participation last month at Woods Hole during dinner with NCI director Frank J. Rauscher, Jr., and Robert Q. Marston, director of the National Institutes of Health. Handler asked the Institute of Medicine to take on the review.—B.J.C.