

have no funds for their efforts on behalf of public safety while the legal preparation of the pro-nuclear case is supported by utility ratepayers. Some of the players in the nuclear industry oppose intervenor financing because they think it should be applied equally to all federal regulatory processes. Others argue bluntly that intervenor activities do not attempt to make nuclear power safer but are obstructionist and should therefore not be publicly supported.

The Carter Administration has made some strong pledges to its environmental constituency and the inclusion of intervenor funding is apparently a prerequisite before the White House will sign off on any bill. The Department of Energy (DOE) is scuffling with the more

environmentally oriented agencies now over the bill. "The DOE bill would have the effect of cutting back on citizen participation," says Gus Speth, a member of the Council on Environmental Quality, which has recently taken the unusually strong position that nuclear licensing should cease at some agreed-upon future date if progress is not demonstrated in waste disposal. One of the council's concerns is that in the so-called Track 3 case (a blend of a preapproved site and previously referenced design) "there should be a hearing to determine whether you still need the power and whether anything has happened to suggest that a reactor on that site is unwise."

Other groups oppose the DOE bill on the grounds that it will shift the crucial

questions to the states, where there will be no guarantee of intervenor financing or of adjudicatory hearings, which allow full rights of cross examination. "Nuclear plant debates begin and end on the issue of need," says Anthony Roisman, at the Natural Resources Defense Council. "We're not well disposed toward a bill that provides intervenor funding for the first time and then transfers the crucial questions to the states where [funding] may or may not be available." Roisman, along with five other environmental leaders, thinks that the bill has many other problems, including a strong role for the DOE in the licensing process, which they suggest raises anew the issue of the suitability of a single agency's promoting and regulating nuclear power. The six,

Briefing

If They Held a Meeting There'd Be No One to Come

Last month, the National Library of Medicine canceled the quarterly meeting of its board of regents because there are no regents to meet. When University of Alabama chancellor Joseph F. Volker rotated off the board at the end of September, having completed a 4-year term, no one was left. Why? Because the Nixon and Ford administrations, which should have been naming replacements as individuals rotated off since 1973, made no appointments; and because the Carter Administration has not gotten around to doing anything about it either.

At the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the situation with respect to appointments to advisory boards and councils is not quite so dire. Nevertheless, the NIH director's advisory council is 9 members short. As of 1 November, when terms for new members begin, there were 44 vacancies—among some 200 positions—despite the fact that the names of individuals to fill most of those spots have been forwarded by NIH to Health, Education, and Welfare Secretary Joseph A. Califano, Jr., some of them as long ago as April.

The holdup on the Library's board of regents, who must be nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate, is in the White House. On 3 March, Califano's office submitted a list of candidates but so far no one on the White

House staff has acted on it. The delay in getting individuals named to the NIH councils lies with Califano himself, who apparently just has not waded through the paperwork in which the nominees' papers are included. NIH staffers say that inquiries to Califano's office occasionally elicit assurances that the names of proposed advisory council members are "on the Secretary's desk," but as one of them put it, "The Secretary must have a desk the size of a football field."

During the Nixon Administration, NIH had a particularly rough time getting persons named to the councils and boards that advise the NIH director and the directors of each of the individual institutes on broad policy issues. The reasons were political. For 3 consecutive years, for instance, political appointees in the Secretary's office rejected every candidate—scientist or lay—whose name was submitted by NIH (*Science*, 31 October 1975). Needless to say, there were high hopes that things would go better when the Carter people took over. So far, they haven't.

"Just when you think it can't get worse, it does," one NIH official told *Science*. "The reasons appear to be different. The Republicans let partisan politics get in the way a lot. The Carter people don't seem to be playing partisan politics on this at all, though we do get asked to nominate more minorities and women. The new Administration seems not to be well organized on this yet. Even if the explanation for the delay is benign, the result is the same now as it was then—no new people on the advisory councils."

Will Russell Peterson Be OTA's New Direction?

"Dr. Russell W. Peterson, former Governor of Delaware and Chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), has been offered the Directorship of the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment (OTA)." So said a 27 October press release from OTA, issued before Peterson, who was traveling in Asia, even got official word himself. The offer "is being transmitted to Governor Peterson in New Delhi," the press release revealed. "It is expected that [he] will announce his decision on the post in mid-November after he has returned to the United States." Peterson met with the OTA board on 21 October.

In Washington, the OTA announcement took many of Peterson's colleagues at New Directions by surprise, as did the OTA gambit of announcing the job offer by press release. Although Peterson is said to have given OTA permission to issue the release, OTA's doing so is regarded as a move to pressure him into taking the job. Peterson is the third person to have been offered the \$52,000-a-year post since Emilio Q. Daddario announced his resignation (*Science*, 3 June).

Former Nixon energy czar John Sawhill offered the job as, it is rumored, was Russell Train, former head of the Environmental Protection Agency.)

Peterson, who made a very favorable

representing groups from Ralph Nader's Congress Watch to the Sierra Club, wrote to President Carter urging that he terminate the Energy Department's leadership in the licensing reform effort.

The amount of citizen participation may be slightly reduced, but it will nevertheless be ample according to Hendrie at the NRC, which prepared much of the draft language in the present bill. Even under Track 3, according to Hendrie, there will not be less opportunity for the public to comment on the safety of a preapproved design, but only for "Joe Smith who might live within 50 miles of the reactor" and might not have seen the notices of hearings that determined pre-approval. "Society cannot stand still and relitigate at the option of every citizen on

every matter," Hendrie says, but for the more vocal, national groups access will not actually be limited. For site approval, full local hearings would be held.

The new bill, which channels money for state licensing activities through the Energy Department, will give the DOE "a certain amount of leverage over the states," the regulatory commission chairman thinks, "but the states have the mood of the Congress behind them."

The 5-month dispute within the Administration over procedural matters may only presage a much broader debate when the bill is sent to Congress, where two other licensing reform bills have already been introduced and four committees are claiming jurisdiction over the matter.

In addition to the environmentalists' calls for strengthening safety enforcement, other nuclear issues not included in the bill itself may become linked to the debate. The fuel storage policy, export control bill, and breeder development issue will all probably be before the Congress next year. In addition to the possibility that these issues may become linked and the licensing bill held hostage to other measures, Democrats running for reelection may not find it very comfortable to be put in the position of supporting more nuclear plants faster with less public participation.

For many reasons, it may be difficult for the Administration to deliver on its promise to give the nuclear industry improved licensing.—WILLIAM D. METZ

Briefing

impression on environmentalists during his tenure at CEQ, has not only considerable experience in science policy but also a useful political credential. He is a Republican, something that is regarded as a plus because OTA—meant to be a



bipartisan congressional unit—has been accused of being dominated by Democrats, particularly OTA board chairman Edward M. Kennedy.

If Peterson decides to accept the OTA offer, it will mean leaving New Directions, a brand new organization, after barely more than a year. New Directions, billed as a "citizens lobby on world problems," was founded in 1976 with four lofty goals: "to help the poorest of the poor to help themselves; to protect and enhance the environment; to reduce the risk of war and violence; and to safeguard basic human rights." It is modeled after Common

Cause, with an international bent. So far, Peterson is reported to have spent more time fund-raising than directing.

When Peterson left the White House to head New Directions, he told *Science*, "I'm quitting because of a great opportunity," and added, "If I sat down to write what I wanted to do for the rest of my career, I couldn't have done better" (*Science*, 24 September 1976). Peterson is reported to be genuinely undecided about whether OTA is "better."

U.S. Refuses to Back Soviets on Dissidents and Psychiatry

In the course of discussions on the renewal of U.S.-U.S.S.R. agreements on health research, Soviet doctors late last month pressed American negotiators to sign a joint statement denying that the Soviets subvert psychiatry by incarcerating dissidents in mental hospitals. But the Americans refused to go along.

The Soviet document was written in response to a resolution of the general assembly of the World Psychiatric Association, which voted in September to condemn the Soviet Union for "systematic abuse of psychiatry for political purposes."

The Soviets wanted U.S. health officials to affirm the Soviet declaration calling the Psychiatric Association's charges "irresponsible" and "unfounded." Furthermore, the United States was asked to

agree that, if former mental patients (read dissidents) emigrate, they should receive psychiatric care, and that American and Soviet doctors should exchange information about them with "preservation of medical secrecy guided exclusively by protecting" the patient's health.

The issue came up during a review of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. cooperative study of the organic basis of schizophrenia, according to psychiatrist Julius Richmond who, as assistant secretary for health, headed the U.S. delegation. Annual meetings to review the health agreements have been held since 1972, when they were first negotiated as part of détente. Richmond told *Science* that, as far as he knows, the issue of abuse of psychiatry has not been raised in previous meetings. Richmond reports that the "whole thing was discussed very quietly," and says he told the Soviets that their request was "irrelevant" to the negotiation of cooperative programs on substantive research issues.

The new agreement as signed—minus U.S. affirmation of the Soviet document—is an extension for 5 years of a previous pact that provides for cooperation between the countries in research on cancer, heart and infectious diseases, including the flu, and environmental protection. In the mental health field, the agreement calls for continued cooperation in basic research on schizophrenia, and lets it go at that. Generally speaking, American researchers report that the U.S.-U.S.S.R. exchanges are of greater value scientifically to the Soviets than to us.

Barbara J. Culliton