people worst affected are the least equipped to sustain the injury, being primarily poor black children of the inner city.

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, between 1976 and 1980 about 4 percent of all children aged 6 months to 5 years were found to have an elevated level of lead in the blood (at least 30 micrograms per deciliter, the level at which the CDC says therapy is indicated). Among rural white children, only 0.7 percent were found to have high lead levels. Among central city blacks, 18.6 percent had high levels of lead.

Needleman and Houk agree that the 30 microgram standard, until recently considered safe, may be too high. Houk says the first noticeable effects of lead on the metabolism occur at levels of 10 to 11 micrograms. Needleman says, "It's not clear what the highest safe level is. When I was a pediatric student, 60 micrograms was considered normal." If the EPA cancels the rule on leaded gasoline, Needleman says, the result will be predictable: "Blood lead levels will increase." Houk agrees.

In a memo dated 30 November 1981, Joel Schwartz of the EPA's energy economics branch summarized the virtues of decontrolling lead. His data were taken from a study done for the EPA by Sobotka and Company. Schwartz concluded that if the lead restriction were lifted, the large refiners would more than double the quantity of lead in gasoline, raising it from 1 to 2.5 grams per gallon. This would give the major refiners a windfall amounting to $133 million in the next 2 years, Schwartz figured. The small refiners, according to less reliable data, would gain $62 million in 1983. The grand total of this boost to the private sector in 1982 and 1983 would amount to about one-tenth of a cent per gallon for the big refiners and nine-tenths of a cent per gallon for the smaller ones.

Some may consider this worth the price in health risks. But officials in the public health community intend to make the contrary argument at the hearings in April. Houk says that no childhood disease even approaches lead poisoning in the breadth of its impact. Recent evidence suggests that the effects are magnified by poor nutrition. Houk worries that the decision to cut back food supplement programs may increase the lead poisoning problem even if no change is made in the gasoline rule.

"We have demonstrated that we can control lead in gasoline," Houk says, "and it just seems prudent to me that if you can do it, you should."

—ELIOT MARSHALL

Keeping the Door Open to Membership in IIASA

Federal budget austerity may not force an end to U.S. participation in the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) near Vienna after all. The council of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), which acts for the United States at IIASA, voted on 28 February to seek a workable compromise to allow continued U.S. membership.

When the $2.3 million required for U.S. dues for IIASA was eliminated from the National Science Foundation last year, NAS told IIASA that the United States would have to withdraw from the organization (*Science*, 11 December 1981, p. 1222). The IIASA governing body, in effect, declined to accept the resignation immediately and indicated a willingness to make concessions to keep the Americans in.

What is involved is not only a new financial structure requiring reduced U.S. payments, but also guarantees that U.S. national security interests are not being compromised at IIASA. Some critics have expressed concern that East bloc scientists working at IIASA have misused free access to data networks in the West.

Academy Foreign Secretary Thomas F. Malone says that the NAS council in deciding to "pursue continued adherence" to IIASA was convinced that the quality of work done there was high and that the institution was filling a unique role. He said that the council was also satisfied with the prospects of new financial arrangements and with an understanding that the "appropriate controls" would be placed on sensitive operations. Malone added that those recruited to work at IIASA would be rigorously screened to be sure they met the criteria of high scientific talent.

IIASA is in the process of replanning its program to make it possible to reduce its $10 million a year operating budget by about a quarter. Since IIASA was established 10 years ago the United States and the Soviet Union have each provided about 25 percent of the budget and the other 15 members split the rest of the bill. Under the smaller budget the U.S. annual dues and presumably the Soviets' could be scaled down to about $1 million. The next step for NAS is to go out and try to raise the money required.—***John Walsh***

Creationist Bill Fails in Maryland

The Constitutional and Administrative Law Committee of Maryland's House of Delegates held a 5½-hour hearing on a creationist bill 25 February. The impact of the recent decision (*Science*, 19 February, p. 934) on the unconstitutionality of Arkansas' creationist law was evident in the testimony. For this and other reasons, the vote, due imminently, is virtually certain to be negative.

The bill, which would require "reasonably unbiased presentation of creation-science and evolution-science" in public schools, is based in large measure on a draft currently being circulated throughout the country by creationist activist Paul Ellwanger (*Science*, 11 December 1981, p. 1224). Patrick Scannello, the bill's sponsor, notes that some minor changes have been made in the draft "to try to get round the judgment that struck down the Arkansas law."

Scannello, who freely admits his almost complete lack of familiarity with creationist literature, opened the hearing by reading a lengthy statement of detailed creationist arguments. He then hurriedly handed over to John Wisnewski, a salesman for a medical and scientific instrument company, who has been coordinating support for the bill. Eleven witnesses spoke in favor of the measure, stressing the fairness of presenting all scientific evidence relating to origins.

Twice as many witnesses testified against the bill. Scientists said that "so-called creation-science" is not science. Clergy pointed out that the view of origins encompassed in the bill represents just one narrow interpretation of the Bible. Parents expressed concern over the standard of their children's scientific education if the bill were to be passed. The Maryland State Board of Education, the Maryland Association of Science Teachers, and the Maryland State Teachers Association each expressed strong disapproval of the bill.

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