

that some important types of nuclear reactor accidents could result in huge releases of radioiodines to the atmosphere (10).

It appears, therefore, that potentially serious nuclear reactor accidents could occur and that thyroid blocking would offer one of the few practicable strategies for mitigating their consequences. The FDA has determined that potassium iodide is safe and effective for this purpose. The task now is to develop recommendations for the states concerning distribution schemes that would make potassium iodide available to the population downwind from a major release of radioactive iodine when needed. Thus far no federal agency has been willing to undertake that task. That is why Representative Edward Markey (D-Mass.) held the congressional hearing which originally sparked this exchange of letters (News and Comment, 19 Mar., p. 1485).

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References and Notes

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ACS Electioneering

With respect to Eliot Marshall's article "Acid electioneering at ACS" (News and Comment, 29 Oct., p. 455), I think it would be well to clarify a bit what was said or implied in the article. The "grass roots group" does not want the American Chemical Society (ACS) to abandon any of its admirable educational and scientific efforts but to add to those a strong professional activity. This stance is sup-

ported not only by industrial chemists (65 percent of the ACS) but also by many academic chemists and for many good reasons. One is that in the last decade the median salary of chemists has decreased 18 percent in terms of constant dollars, with a loss of at least \$2 billion to the membership. On 1 July 1980, the California Section Executive Committee of the ACS passed a resolution calling on the board of directors to take steps to rectify this situation to the greatest extent possible. In spite of this, and subse-

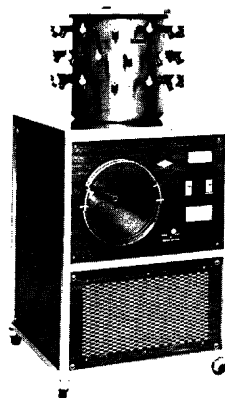
quent urging, the ACS has done little to deal with this problem or to show any real interest.

Finally, petition electioneering can cut both ways. Last year two prominent industrial chemists were regularly nominated, and friends of Fred Basolo of Northwestern University petitioned to get him on the ballot; he won narrowly.

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