

DOE Bolsters Its Science Adviser's Clout...

■ On paper, the director of the Office of Energy Research (OER) at the Department of Energy (DOE) has long doubled as science adviser to the energy secretary. But few of DOE's past secretaries have fully exploited the position. Now, a reorganization orchestrated by Energy Secretary James Watkins is likely to make future DOE science advisers far more influential.

Science has learned that Watkins intends to elevate the role of the science adviser within DOE by beefing up an independent bureaucracy devoted to science policy that will report to Watkins' recent nominee to head OER, William Happer Jr. For instance, Watkins plans to provide Happer with three new



Watkins

deputies—one to oversee basic and applied research, a second to cover the management of the multipurpose national laboratories, and a third to focus on R&D in DOE's defense programs division.

In addition, Happer will take charge of a new Office of Technology Utilization intended to develop and implement technology transfer policies across the agency. Several other OER offices will also be shuffled into the new science policy team.

Most directors of DOE laboratories, who were asked to comment on Watkins' plan, are applauding the changes. But one voiced worries that the action could just mean "another layer of bureaucracy."

...And Arranges a Marriage Between Two Labs

■ Insiders are guessing that the Stanford Linear Accelerator Laboratory (SLAC) and the Stanford Synchrotron Radiation Laboratory (SSRL), good neighbors for 18 years, may soon merge under pressure from the Department of Energy.

DOE's argument goes like this: SLAC and SSRL share some of the same facilities and must address many common environmental, health, and safety concerns, so why shouldn't Stanford University oversee the two labs under a single management contract? Stanford seems willing to concede the point but appears to be leaving the final decision to the labs themselves.

The research leaders in both institutions see some advantages to merging. SLAC director Burton Richter says that "up until now, scientifically, [a merger] did not make any

sense." What's different, explains Arthur Bienenstock, director of SSRL, is that the organizations need each other's talents to plan for new linear accelerators and a low-emittance synchrotron light source to be built after 2000.

Despite this potential symmetry, the merger is far from settled. "Each group fears it will lose its



Richter



Bienenstock

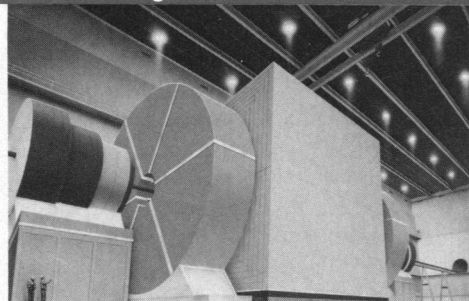
unique identity," says Bienenstock, who may have reason to worry: SSRL's budget is a mere \$15 million compared to SLAC's \$140 million.

A New Round of Backbiting Over the Cancellation of L*

■ Recriminations continue to fly between the Superconducting Super Collider Laboratory (SSCL) and a team led by Nobel laureate Samuel Ting over the lab's rejection of Ting's expensive L* detector (*Science*, 17 May, p. 998). The latest volley consists of a "final report" composed by the embittered core of the L* team and a sharp riposte from laboratory director Roy Schwitters.

The L* report is a reiteration of earlier charges levied against the SSC management—specifically, that it failed to treat non-American physicists with "respect" in asking for greater American participation in L* and that it was wrong to doubt more than \$400 million in promised foreign contributions to the detector.

In an interview with *Science*,



Artist's conception of an SSC detector.

Schwitters rejected these accusations and levied some new ones of his own. On the subject of

foreign contributions, for instance, he claimed that L* members told different stories in public and in private. When he traveled to Geneva last April, Schwitters said, a leading German physicist told him privately that a large German contribution to L* "wasn't going to happen." Schwitters does admit that an SSCL request for greater American participation contained "obviously clumsy wording," but he blames "L* leadership"—i.e., Ting—for interpreting

the request "in the most hostile way possible."

But all this sounds positively high minded compared to a separate fuss over the L* report's dedication page, which seems to blame the SSCL for the recent death of a prominent Soviet physicist. "Professor [Valerian] Shevchenko learnt of the rejection of L* by SSC management, went home quietly and died," it states. SSC officials are bristling. "That just showed incredibly poor taste," says one.

■ The future looks bleak for scientists working at Britain's largest cancer research organization—the Imperial Cancer Research Fund (ICRF). Last week, Sir Walter Bodmer—who is both director-general of ICRF and president of the Human Genome Organization—told researchers at a series of meetings that 250 of 1700 jobs "at all levels" of the institute will be cut over the next two and a half years.

ICRF, which spends around £45 million (\$77 million) a year on cancer research—almost four times the amount spent by the government-funded Medical Research Council—has aggres-

sively expanded into new administrative and research facilities in recent years. That drive, along with rising costs and an optimistic forecast of income, appear to have forced the retrenchment.

Sir Walter told his staff that ICRF would make reductions through attrition. But researchers at the institute are concerned that natural turnover—normally sufficient to allow for a cutback on this scale—will slow now that Britain is in a deep economic recession, forcing the institute to dismiss some researchers. ICRF officials, however, insist in a statement that there are "no proposals" to close any units, groups or laboratories.