edited by RICHARD STONE

Canada's Kaon Factory KOed?

ILLUSTRATION: D. DEFRANCESCO

For the past 3 years, Canadian scientists have been counting on the United States to kick in $100 million for the "Kaon Factory," a $700 million particle accelerator that Canada plans to have on line in 1997. But *Science* has learned that the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has decided to opt out, casting doubt on Kaon's future.

The Canadian facility would generate kaons—particles that are thought to decay in a way that violates standard physics. Last year, Tri-University Meson Facility in Vancouver secured two-thirds of the startup money from the governments of Canada and British Columbia. But earlier this week William Happer, research director at DOE, told *Science* that the United States can't afford its share.

Happer says that DOE is placing a higher priority on two projects planned for U.S. labs: the Continuous Electron Beam Accelerator Facility and the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider. But Eric Vogt, lab director of the Meson Facility, says he's still expecting the U.S. money. "We are convinced that (the pledge to Canada) will be honored," he says. Happer, however, denies that the U.S. promised the money and asserts that the Canadians misconstrued a letter from a DOE official that said the department was "interested in the project."

Other U.S. scientists aren't ready to give up on Kaon. One National Science Foundation official says that Allan Bromley, director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, has been "leaning on Happer" to ante up the U.S. share. Meanwhile, Happer insists that he has no idea where the money could come from.

MSU Misconduct Inquiry: Fair but Pricey

An inquiry at Michigan State University (MSU) that was supposed to set a standard for "due process" in scientific misconduct reviews—allowing participants to rebut accusations—is running late and over budget. For this reason, the inquiry's supervisor, Barbara Mishkin, a Washington, D.C. attorney who has defended researchers against misconduct charges, now advocates "clearer guidelines" to streamline future investigations.

The MSU experiment began in November 1991 when the university was presented with a dispute in which a professor claimed that his graduate student had taken and published his research data (*Science*, 4 January 1991, p. 23). The student countered that the professor had unfairly dismissed her from a course and taken credit for her work. To keep the university at arm's length in settling misconduct disputes, MSU hired Mishkin, who set up a panel of experts, organized two 4-day hearings, and promised to deliver a ruling last summer.

Now MSU officials are watching the clock. The special inquiry, which was meant to run for just a few months, is creeping up on the 1-year mark. And everyone agrees that "it's been very expensive"—about $170,000 so far, says Charles Downs, an MSU public affairs specialist. Mishkin concedes that the bills have run higher than she predicted but says a final report should be ready by November.

Texas Instruments Tackles Japanese

Although U.S. firms are zeroing in on high-tech products that recognize spoken English, efforts to tackle non-Indo-European languages have a long way to go. But at least Texas Instruments (TI) has a plan: Before the year is out, it intends to collect a phonetic database of spoken Japanese from some 5000 speakers—a database about 10 times larger than any currently in place.

Collecting samples from a large variety of individuals is an essential step toward building speech-recognition products, whose sensors must be able to distinguish the subtle differences in the way a language is spoken. Such differences—which encompass everything from age of speaker to regional dialects—are challenging even in the United States, with its seven distinct regional dialects, says Don Shaver, who manages TI's speech recognition program in Tsukuba. But mastering Japanese will be much tougher, since the country has 22 such regions.

TI plans to use what researchers jokingly call a "captive" population—the employees of TI Japan and their families. Shaver hopes the effort will produce a database that allows TI to develop its first Japanese-language product: a voice-operated telephone dialer.

Human Rights for Guatemalan Scientists

For many years, Guatemala's government has been criticized for its inability to stem a tide of human-rights abuses by its military. Now the government may feel pressure from a new source, as the human rights committees of the National Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) prepare to release a report on what scientists can do to stop the terror.

This report, due out next month, began to take shape last February when a team of four scientists spent a week in Guatemala City talking to Guatemalan officials and human rights workers about the fate of 32 scientists and students who have disappeared or been murdered. This is a fraction of the total lives lost: Human rights organizations estimate that the Guatemalan military has either killed or "disappeared" about 100,000 Guatemalans in the past 30 years.

A principal focus of the new report is Myrna Mack Chang, an anthropologist who was murdered outside her office in Guatemala City on 11 September 1990. Chang, based at the Association for the Advancement of Social Sciences in Guatemala City, had been studying the causes of internal displacement in rural Guatemala, and several organizations allege that her murder was politically motivated.

The academy report will appear at a crucial stage in the court proceedings against Chang's suspected murderer, a former intelligence operative in the Guatemalan army. The case is in a trial phase that's expected to end early next month.

However, the academy mission was intended to do more than just weigh in on the Chang case and other atrocities. "We hope to add a measure of protection to her surviving colleagues," says Robert Lawrence, director of health sciences at the Rockefeller Foundation and chair of the IOM's health and human rights committee.

WIDE WORLD

Finding a "disappeared." Guatemalan authorities exhume a body in Tululche.