

tion's biggest reward. NYBG loans scientists worldwide up to 50,000 plant specimens and 5000 works every year. And thousands more researchers come to visit, joining about 170 NYBG staff scientists and graduate students. Paleobotanist Judith Skog of George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, predicts the herbarium will become an even greater draw as researchers unravel the genomes of plant specimens. Says Skog, "One can always return to the exact specimen which yielded that set of genes, the place it was collected, the time of year, and in what conditions it was growing." Indeed, more scientists may find themselves lingering at the garden—purely for pleasure.

—KATHRYN BROWN

SPACE STATION

NASA's O'Keefe Tangles With Texans

When he was deputy of the White House budget office, Sean O'Keefe took a dim view of both the space station and congressional earmarks. But those outspoken opinions are harder to hold when you are a NASA chief dependent on lawmakers for funding your programs. Last week, O'Keefe's views underwent their first close scrutiny when an influential congressman declared his plans for the orbiting facility "timid and anemic."

O'Keefe responded to the unusual public attack by Representative Tom DeLay (R-TX) with a mixture of defiance and obsequiousness. Appearing before a House appropriations panel, O'Keefe repeated his intention to hold the space station crew to three until the current program is further along, has clearer cost estimates, and is guided by better scientific goals. He also refused to back down on plans to halt work on a rescue vehicle and to cut funds for a Houston research institute. But to smooth things over, he apologized for any "miscommunications" in his first months on the job.

O'Keefe's position on the station is also likely to grate on members of other NASA oversight panels. Many members of Congress, researchers, and the U.S. international partners in the space station effort are keen to complete the orbiting lab so it accommodates a crew of six or seven. Texans figure prominently in that coalition: Houston's Johnson Space Center—an important economic mainstay in that area—manages the program.

DeLay is particularly incensed with

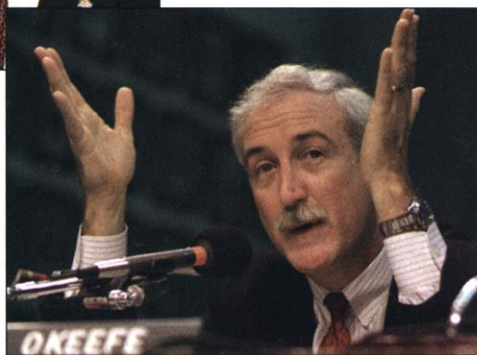
the administrator's move to halt \$40 million in Johnson work on the X-38, which would allow the larger crew to evacuate the station in the event of an emergency. The current Russian Soyuz capsule can hold only three. O'Keefe says that project isn't terminated; he just wants to consider other options as well, like providing a safe haven aboard the station or buying more Soyuz capsules. But station supporters worry that more studies mean further delay—and a three-person crew for the indefinite future. DeLay chastised O'Keefe for what he called a "blatant disregard for congressional intent"—a serious charge coming from an influential appropriator.

Lawmakers also are skeptical of O'Keefe's commitment to research. In a 12 April speech at Syracuse University, where O'Keefe taught business, he insisted that NASA must be driven by science. But the agency has proposed a \$7 million cut in the \$17-million-a-year budget for Houston's National Space Biomedical Research Institute. DeLay said, "in spite of your commitment to science ... it just doesn't make sense to me."

At a meeting the next day with reporters, O'Keefe noted that he recently assembled a blue-ribbon panel to set a clearer research agenda for the station and told them not to be constrained by the availability of crew or facilities. In the meantime, he says three astronauts can do far more research than NASA studies indicate. "Not a single astronaut I know carries a union card," he said, predicting that crew members will put in more than 40-hour workweeks.

O'Keefe insists that NASA's priority must be to complete the core space station by early 2004. "Anything beyond that, for now, is a fantasy," he told *Science*. That may change by late summer, after the budget review and further construction. O'Keefe also has one budgetary ace in the hole. Preparing for a larger crew may cost more than lawmakers—even Texans—are willing to spend.

—ANDREW LAWLER



Texas two-step. Rep. Tom DeLay (top) had harsh words for NASA's Sean O'Keefe at last week's budget hearing.

SCIENTIFIC MISCONDUCT

Hall Probe Continues; No 'Willful' Fraud

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—A preliminary investigation has cleared a prominent medical researcher and clinician at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) of "willfully" perpetrating scientific fraud and mismanaging government funds. But UNSW vice chancellor John Niland, who announced the findings last week based on two internal inquiries, said that an "unsatisfactory" working environment and "poor working relationships" within the laboratory of renal transplant physician Bruce Hall led to "intermittent lapses" in accurate reporting of data as well as instances of errors in attribution of authorship. Niland also announced an independent inquiry to "address any issues of scientific misconduct and scientific fraud it considers unresolved" by the first investigation.

Hall, who had been accused of misconduct by three members of his laboratory (*Science*, 19 April, p. 449), was ordered by the university to apologize for errors and transgressions of acceptable workplace behavior, correct inaccuracies in abstracts and other published material, clarify authorship procedures in his laboratory, and undergo management training. In a statement, Hall said he is "absolutely confident an independent [review] will accept that there is no misconduct."

The complaints against Hall were submitted last fall to the university and the country's leading biomedical research funding agency, the National Health and Medical Research Council. They were made public earlier this month in a report aired by an Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio show. The research council, which has supported Hall's work on the role of CD4+ and CD25+ cells in organ acceptance and rejection as well as experiments involving monoclonal antibodies, froze one of Hall's grants in January while the allegations were investigated. A council spokesperson says the freeze remains in effect, noting that "we can't, on the basis of what we've seen in the Niland report, be assured that the matter has been satisfactorily resolved." One of the complainants, Clara He, said that she is "shocked" that the new inquiry will be limited to allegations of scientific misconduct.

Next week the university's governing council is expected to consider the administration's ability to handle allegations of various sorts of wrongdoing, including a pending case of possible nepotism within its Education Testing Centre. "We should regard the whole matter as a work in progress," says one councilor who requested anonymity.

—LEIGH DAYTON

Leigh Dayton writes from Sydney.