

on land and offshore by man. In the interval it has become one of the fastest growing areas of the US. Its tourist industry has become worth \$5,500 million a year. The gold rush apart, there has been nowhere that the application of private enterprise has reaped such a rich reward. Real estate developers have made fortunes by turning intertidal mangrove shore into rich men's beach retreats. One foot of frontage of Miami Beach now changes hands at \$10,000. Drainage of the ecologically rich inland semi-tropical marsh, lake and river systems by the Army Corps of Engineers and by transportation enterprises has produced quick returns in the form of short-term nursery gardening to supply luxury produce for the proliferating resort towns and short-cut routes across the peninsula for goods from the Gulf of Mexico to the seaboard US. The effects are now coming home to roost.

It has been found that 65 per cent of the offshore water nutrients that support the highly prized Florida fisheries (producing local delights such as the red snapper, tarpon, Spanish mackerel and other specialties) derive from the leaf-fall of the displaced red mangrove. The exaggerated demand for power which "peaks" at the same time as the highest water temperatures—and for the same reason, because everyone switches full on their air-conditioners to keep cool—has already caused fish-kills from thermal pollution in Biscayne Bay, three years ahead of the earliest predicted threat to local fish population by the local power monopoly. The unique Everglades National Park is threatened by at least five developments. Introduced water hyacinth has blocked upstate rivers that were previously navigable and the introduction of manatees from Central America to act as natural river lawn mowers has failed. (They ate their own weight in weeds daily but died from pneumonia in the winter.)

To counter some of the best organized "development" bodies in the US, one of the endowed foundations of Miami University, the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, last month set up a new department specifically concerned to influence public and especially decision-makers' opinion. Head of the new laboratory, as it is called, is Professor Arthur Marshall, a native Floridan and for 15 years an ecologist with the State wildlife programme. "Many academic scientists would not come through my door there for any money," he comments. His role is to provide a communications link between the incomprehensible academic and the down-to-earth local authority.

He has already had a measure of success. Largely through his representation, a Federal Bill passed last May has included a clause requiring that a certain volume of water is supplied to Everglades annually. In effect this halts the upstream developments of both the international jet-port and the upstate land drainage. Professor Marshall is now publicizing the effect of deleterious offshore in-fill programmes by developers.

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION

Mobilization against Pollution

It now looks as if the Administration has accepted the recommendation of the commission under Mr Roy Ash on government organization that there should be set up an agency specifically concerned with the

environment. The proposal is believed to suggest that the agency should take over responsibility for water pollution from the Department of the Interior, responsibility for oil pollution and solid waste from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and responsibility for the regulation of pesticides from the Department of Agriculture. Elsewhere in the present organization of the Federal Government are programmes for the regulation of sewer systems which are also candidates for transfer to the new agency. These proposals will probably find a warm welcome in Congress, where several Senators and Congressmen, Senator Edmund S. Muskie chief among them, have been pressing for the creation of an independent agency along these lines. The chances are that the Food and Drug Administration would also be transferred to the new department.

The proposals put to the Administration and apparently accepted are thought also to include the setting up of an agency which will be largely concerned with research and development in the environmental field and which, for example, would take over the functions of the Weather Bureau and also as a means of coordinating oceanographic research—one of the pleas put forward a year ago by the Stratton Commission on oceanography and long since a favourite with Congress.

According to a spokesman at the White House, the Administration is already in a "consultative situation" with Congress, no doubt seeking to discover whether proposals along these lines would satisfy the committees chiefly concerned with them. In due course, perhaps a month or so from now, the President may be ready to send a public message on the subject to Congress—evidently such a step would be a useful piece of information in the period leading up to the elections in November. The difficulties in carrying through a reform of this kind are formidable. Not the least of them is that the separation of environmental matters from existing agencies will seem an affront to many departments and even to many Congressional committees. There is also the continuing difficulty that if an environment agency is established along the lines foreseen by the Ash commission, this will find itself at loggerheads with other interests, the Federal Aviation Agency, for example, and may well find itself cast in the role of interfering busybody.

LOBBYING

Industrial Scientists in Washington

AMONG the many parties of lobbyists against the war in South-east Asia to have arrived in Washington recently, the party of eighty industrial scientists who turned up last week may be one of the most remarkable. By all accounts, it seems to have begun with discussions in the IBM Watson Laboratory at Yorktown Heights, New York, and Dr Seymour Koenig, the director of the laboratory, was one of the chief spokesmen for the group on its day in Washington, which included a visit to the Department of Defense for an interview with Mr David Packard and to the Executive Offices for a talk with Dr L. DuBridge, the President's Science Adviser. The members of the group were plainly exhilarated that they had been able to assemble eighty distinguished people in industrial laboratories on the east coast, including the