last April 22, designated Earth Day, and the League of Conservation Voters, the political arm of Friends of the Earth, has been in action for slightly over a year. The league, which contributed a total of \$45,000 to its candidates, was founded by Marion Edey, a former legislative assistant to Representative Wolff of New York. Its interests are no narrower than "preservation of the ecosystem" but the particular issues it is now pursuing are the curtailment of the supersonic transport and the "development of alternative power sources" (alternative, in particular, to nuclear power). Environmental Action has chosen as its three main issues for the immediate future clean air legislation, with particular respect to automobile exhaust standards, the SST, and occupational health and safety. A member of the group said this week it was hopeful the new Congress would be "more environmentally conscious" than the last.

The new Congress is less decidedly favourable to advocates of arms control although Thomas A. Halsted, director of the Council for a Livable World, describes the net effects of the changes in the Senate as fairly neutral. The council, founded in 1962 to halt the arms race and eliminate war, operates by arranging seminars for Senators on matters such as the anti-ballistic missile system and by supporting candidates of its choice in Senatorial elections. In last week's elections five of the council's nine favoured candidates were defeated and one of them, Senator Vance Hartke of Indiana, scraped in only after a recount. But the council, which raised some \$300,000 in support of its candidates, is sanguine about the losses. "In the past our batting average has been better, but we took a few long shots", Halsted said this week. Several candidates were prime targets of the White House campaign, including in particular Senator Gore, whose defeat is the most serious loss. A member of Senator Fulbright's Foreign Relations Committee and chairman of its Disarmament Subcommittee, Gore has been one of the chief opponents of the ABM system in the Senate debates this year and last. His successor as chairman of the Disarmament Subcommittee has yet to be announced.

POLLUTION

Lawyer for Environment

by our Washington Correspondent

AN assistant attorney-general of the Justice Department, Mr William D. Ruckelshaus, is to be the first head of the Environmental Protection Agency, President Nixon announced last week. The agency, which will become operative on December 2, will have the care of 5,700 employees and an estimated budget of \$1,400 million. The agency will be entrusted with the task of enforcing present and future legislation against all forms of pollution. It draws together some fifteen programmes and bureaux at present scattered round various departments, of which the most important are the Federal Water Quality Administration, now in the Department of the Interior, and the National Air Pollution Control Administration and the Bureau of Solid Wastes, now part of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The agency will also inherit the pesticide control programmes operated by the Department of Agriculture and some part of the AEC's responsibility for control of radiation.

Like Mr Russell Train, the chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality, Mr Ruckelshaus's background is that of a government lawyer. Whereas Mr Train specialized in tax law, Mr Ruckelshaus's interests have lain appropriately in the control of pollution. After a law degree at Harvard, he became assistant attorney-general with the Indiana State Health Department where he prosecuted violators of water pollution and other health laws. In 1963 he drafted Indiana's air pollution control law and from 1966 to 1969 he was majority leader in the Indiana State legislature. Two years ago he was the Republican candidate for Senator but was defeated by Senator Birch Bayh. Mr Ruckelshaus becomes head of the Environmental Protection Agency at the age of 38.

Ecology Rampant

"WE are frequently told that Lake Erie is dead—when the total fish catch is rising, not falling. Lake Washington was on its way to becoming as dead as Erie, so it was said, and its reversal is viewed as a great triumph. And it surely was a triumph of political organization. But the polluted lake was great for salmon fishing, and now the water is so pure it has difficulty supporting the salmon. Air pollution is always unpleasant and a lengthy inversion can undoubtedly be dangerous—but automotive emissions are controllable and I cannot help but wonder whether this problem is trivial compared to the carnage we suffer on the highways to which we seem to have become inured, with intoxicated youth the most frequent offenders. Bumper stickers decry DDT across the land demanding its total ban rather than regulated usage—but the next generation of pesticides has killed or blinded dozens of people this year—and no American is known to have been injured by DDT. . . . I have no wish to minimize the seriousness of our environmental problems. They are huge and in need of large-scale, urgent attention. But is it not time to stop frightening the American people and instead demand the very large systematic programme necessary to acquire the data which would permit quantitative evaluation of the risks versus the benefits in all those areas where man's intervention has already or yet may degrade the environment? We need to know far more about pesticide usage, food additives, drugs, industrial practices, radiation hazards, atmospheric phenomena and the alleged fragility of ecosystems than we do today if we are to make sound judgments and establish public policy. What puzzles me is the apathy of college students toward our vast arsenal of nuclear weapons—the infrequency of demands for a massive systematic approach to the attainment of a stable, enduring, just peace. Or why our students do not become angry about the desperate state of our rural poor." From a speech given by Dr Philip Handler, president of the National Academy of Sciences, at the Sesquicentennial of the University of Indiana, October 13.