

NEWS IN BRIEF

No change for US nuclear export licensing

UNDER heavy pressure from the US Congress, President Carter has backed off proposals to remove responsibility for issuing licenses for the export of nuclear fuels and technology from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (*Nature*, March 20, page 201).

Several members of the administration, including Mr Gerard Smith, Assistant Secretary of State for non-proliferation matters, had lobbied strongly for the change, arguing that the NRC should not be given foreign policy responsibilities. The move was supported by the nuclear industry, which has recently suffered from a poor export performance. However it was firmly resisted by Congress, which argues that in allocating such responsibilities to the NRC under the Nuclear Non-proliferation Act of 1978, it had sought specifically to remove evaluations of the adequacy of safeguards from direct policy considerations. Following President Carter's rejection of the proposed change, an administration official was quoted as saying that the President did not consider it to be "the right time to raise the issue before Congress".

Photocopying company stops multiple copying

THE Gnomon Corporation, a photocopying corporation with branches in eight eastern university towns, including Cambridge (Massachusetts) and New Haven, signed a legal undertaking last week that it would not make multiple copies of portions of any printed material, even if the material does not carry a copyright notice. The company agreed to make the declaration following charges that had been brought against it by eight leading textbook publishers, and backed up by the Association of American Publishers, that material from their publications was being copied without permission, in violation of the revised copyright law of 1978.

The publishers presented evidence against the Gnomon Corporation which they claimed was typical of a huge volume of illegal copying. Each piece of evidence involved the photocopying of at least an entire chapter or complete journal, and in many cases a third to half of a book.

According to the vice-president of the publishers' association, most of the photocopying was of 20-30 copies for university lecturers. The eight publishers filing the suit included Prentice-Hall, John Wiley and Sons, and Princeton University Press.

Gnomon has also accepted responsibility for photocopying done on coin-operated self-service equipment in its stores. The

president of the Corporation, Mr Adam Carley, has said that parts of the agreement are highly objectionable. He considers that his company's copying practices were legal "but we couldn't afford the legal fees to fight the suit".

New committee on recombinant DNA research

AN interdepartmental committee has been established in the US to study the possible health implications of the industrial applications of recombinant DNA research, prompted by the concern of Dr Eula Bingham, Assistant Secretary of Labour responsible for occupational safety and health.

The committee is a subcommittee of the interagency committee on recombinant DNA research, and will be chaired by Dr Gilbert Omenn, associate director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy. The executive secretary will be Dr Bernard Talbot of the National Institutes of Health.

The new committee, which is holding its first meeting next week to decide on a plan of work, has been set three tasks by the interagency committee. First to review the industrial applications of recombinant DNA research. Secondly to assess the need for providing educational information to workers about the techniques they will be coming in contact with. And thirdly to determine criteria for examining the question of potential hazards.

Five-year anti-nuclear campaign launched in UK

FRIENDS of the Earth has launched a £1 million, five-year campaign against the Conservative Government's plan to introduce pressurized water reactors into the UK at the rate of one each year starting in 1982. The campaign aims to turn nuclear power into a major issue of the 1984 general election. It plans to do this through a five-year strategy consisting of increasing public awareness through demonstrations, local elections, and summer schools on nuclear power in the first year; continuing education and initial fund-raising in the second and third years and community organizing and mobilization in the fourth year. The election campaign in the fifth year will support candidates who declare themselves to be against nuclear power.

According to Czech Conroy, FOE campaign director, the programme will emphasize three policy issues — safety, the record of the nuclear industry, and the cost of nuclear power — and three political issues — governmental secrecy on nuclear power issues, the use of taxpayers' funds for pro-nuclear campaigns and the morality of risking nuclear power development without adequate safety and waste disposal facilities.

Research reactor for Bangladesh

THE Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission recently signed a contract with the US company General Atomic for the supply of a 3-MW TRIGA Mark-II pulsed research reactor. The TRIGA (Training Research and Isotope Production Reactor by General Atomic) is a water cooled, graphite reflected reactor suitable for research training and isotope production. It has a steady state power level of 3 MW and a peak power output of 1,200 MW. The reactor will be installed at the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission's research establishment at Savar, about 50 kilometres north of Dacca.

M. Kabir

Givaudan negotiates out-of-court over Séveso

THE Givaudan Company, a subsidiary of Hoffman-La Roche, is negotiating with the Italian government and regional authorities for payment for damages caused by the uncontrolled release of dioxin from its ICMESA chemical plant in Séveso on 10 July 1976. If the Commission of Parliament for Lombardy approves the settlement, Givaudan will pay £24.3 million to the Italian state and the Lombardy regional authority for their expenses incurred in public health, social assistance, damage to the environment, and loss of local industry and trade. Givaudan will also complete at its own expense the decontamination work currently underway.

AUT fights London layoffs

In a letter to Lord Annan, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, the Association of University Teachers criticizes the Flowers report on the reorganization of medical education in London (*Nature*, 6 March, page 5) for its potential to make teaching and research staff "the victims of proposals to cure the alleged defects of a system for whose construction they bear no responsibility".

According to John Akker of the AUT, the Flowers report does not say how its proposal to save £3 million from "rationalization" of staff (out of a university budget of £200 million) should be put into effect. The AUT also criticizes the report for not first estimating whether or not savings could be made from sales of buildings and saved maintenance costs and also for not including the cost of redundancy payments and rehousing of staff in expanded facilities at non-threatened institutions.