

courses at first degree and 39 at postgraduate level, after energetic lobbying by the Conference des Présidents d'Université during the summer.

According to the vice-president of the Conference, Professor Jacques Latrille (president of the Université de Bordeaux II), these concessions are "nothing like enough". Last year some 2,000 Docteur-Ingénieurs qualified and 25 universities cannot cope with the demand, which comes largely from qualified students of the Grandes Ecoles wishing to do research. Although the Grandes Ecoles, sometimes described as the crack training grounds of the French establishment, have a highly selective entry, they offer relatively few opportunities for research.

The scrapping of a net 178 first degree courses will — by government design — chiefly affect the new universities, the score of institutions, such as the universities of Chambéry and Pau, which have been established in the French provinces since the reorganization of 1968 and which tend to have 3,000–5,000 students. The social sciences, educational science, psychology, philosophy, history, geography, foreign languages and the performing arts have all been hit hard, with the result that teaching in these disciplines will be concentrated in the major cities and Paris. There may be further cuts next year, when the other half of the 1,917 undergraduate diplomas will be up for renewal.

The postgraduate cuts, on the other hand, affect mainly the bigger, older universities (15,000 to 20,000 students each), where most research is done; but again the cuts fall mostly in the humanities.

M. Barre, in his recent speech, gave his support to the broad emphasis of Mme Saunier-Seïté's policy — the restoration of "the vigour and quality" of the universities after the "rude shock" of 1968. It was clear, said M. Barre, that an increasing number of postgraduate (troisième cycle) proposals were ill thought-out and sustained by too few professors, libraries and laboratories.

A survey of deuxième and troisième cycle courses by Mme Saunier-Seïté had revealed a single management professor requesting the establishment of three postgraduate courses; six professors of belles lettres proposing ten senior undergraduate courses; and five biology professors proposing three postgraduate courses in life sciences.

M. Barre mentioned the notion of autonomy, but it is unlikely that the state will easily relinquish its vast power to approve all courses as well as appointment of professors and lecturers. On this point, the Prime Minister contrived to sound more like a benevolent dictator, offering democracy to his people "when they were ready", than a man committed to granting independence.

Neither does Mme Saunier-Seïté offer many crumbs of consolation. Although she is president of the Conference des

Présidents d'Université, she has attended none of its meetings for more than a year. Academics are not asking for revolution. The government, says Professor Latrille, is entitled to make its own policy for the universities: but the universities should at least be consulted, through existing mechanisms, to give advice on how it is applied.

Robert Walgate

Non-proliferation

India gets fuel

Washington

Last week was a good one for the US nuclear industry, and a disappointment for its critics. On Tuesday, voters in the state of Maine rejected a proposed law which would have banned nuclear power from the state. The next day the US Senate failed to prevent the export of nuclear fuel to the Tarapur nuclear power station in India despite India's continued refusal to submit its nuclear facilities to international inspection.

Both votes had been closely watched as pointers to nuclear policy in the 1980s and both had, in consequence, been the focus of intense lobbying. In the lobbying in Maine, for example, supporters of a bill which would have closed the state's single nuclear power station and forbidden the construction of further nuclear plants were outspent by five to one by pro-nuclear forces, who raised financial support from utility companies around the country.

Although the vote in Maine supports the development of nuclear power, anti-nuclear voters did turn out in strength, and 40 per cent of those voting supported the proposed ban. After the vote, a spokesman for the local utility company admitted that the result demonstrated the substantial public concern that exists about the safety of nuclear power.

In the Tarapur case, the Administration's victory was even closer, and the lobbying even more intense. Shaken by a defeat by three to one in the House of Representatives of its attempts to permit the export of the nuclear fuel and a subsequent defeat in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Carter Administration pulled out all the stops to prevent what was seen as a major challenge to its foreign policy.

Many key senators received telephone calls from the President, and Secretary of State Edmund Muskie even pleaded at length with the Senate Republican Conference. The result was that a resolution to disapprove the export of the fuel was defeated by just two votes, 46 to 48, with a majority of Democrats voting against the resolution and the majority of Republicans — with a significant number of liberal Democrats — voting for it.

India's request for the export of 38 tons of fuel for its Tarapur reactor was the first major test of the Nuclear Non-

Proliferation Act of 1978, which forbids the export of nuclear fuel to countries which have not accepted international safeguards on their nuclear facilities.

Earlier this year, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) decided unanimously that, since India had not met these requirements, the sale of the fuel could not go ahead. President Carter, however, invoked broader foreign policy considerations to overrule the NRC's decision, and the President's move could only have been overturned by Congress if both houses had voted against it.

The dispute over the export licence resulted from a conflict of strategy about whether non-proliferation objectives should be pursued single-mindedly, as implied by the Non-Proliferation Act, or whether they are as likely to be achieved through more conventional economic and diplomatic channels.

Senator John Glenn, the leading supporter of the resolution opposing the export, said that India, which had conducted a nuclear test in 1974 using components from Canada which had led to the current legislation, had "the worst history of any of our trading partners".

He warned that to back down at this stage would damage the credibility of the whole US non-proliferation policy, and after the result of the vote was known he commented that it would now be "practically impossible" for the United States to try to convince other countries that they should accept nuclear safeguards.

This view, however, was directly challenged by Senator Frank Church, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Reflecting the Administration's own position, Mr Church said that not permitting the export of the nuclear fuel would abrogate an agreement reached in 1963 to supply the fuel. This would permit India to disregard other safeguards built into the agreement and could postpone indefinitely further negotiations with India on nuclear issues.

After the vote, a spokesman for the Carter Administration said that the result would help discussions with India about bringing all India's nuclear facilities under international safeguards, but there was some scepticism in New Delhi. A spokesman for the Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, said that her government had not changed its position on comprehensive safeguards, which it still regarded as discriminatory since the major nuclear states — including the United States — were not required to open all civilian and nuclear facilities to international inspection.

This debate is not likely to go away. The Indian Foreign Ministry announced two weeks ago that it had applied earlier in September for a new export licence for 19.8 tons of enriched uranium for the Tarapur plant — a move which could stir up the whole stormy debate again.

David Dickson