

GENERAL SCIENCE

Smears Endanger Nation

House Committee on Un-American Activities is called threat to atomic energy research; scientists say national security is jeopardized by irresponsible attacks.

► AN IMMINENT THREAT to our national security and our entire governmental atomic energy research program has been called to the attention of President Truman and Governor Thomas E. Dewey by eight distinguished physical scientists, all of whom had participated in the government's atomic energy development.

Tactics of the House Committee on Un-American Activities have made employment on atomic energy research so undesirable that "the combined full-time personnel of highly capable scientists and engineers in the various government laboratories is on the verge of reaching a dangerously low level." Scientists shun government employment because of the possibility of being subjected "to irresponsible smears that may ruin them professionally for life". The hope was expressed that "the situation can be remedied before irreparable harm is done."

Scientists Protest

Signing telegrams to the Democratic and Republican Presidential candidates were: Prof. Harrison Brown of the Institute for Nuclear Studies of the University of Chicago; Dr. Karl T. Compton, President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a member of the President's Loyalty Board; Prof. T. R. Hogness, Director of the Institute of Radiobiology and Biophysics, University of Chicago; Prof. Charles C. Lauritsen of the California Institute of Technology; Prof. Philip M. Morse, until recently Director of the Brookhaven National Laboratories; Dr. George B. Pegram, Dean of the Graduate Faculties of Columbia University; Prof. Harold C. Urey, Institute for Nuclear Studies, University of Chicago; and Dean John C. Warner of the Graduate School, Carnegie Institute of Technology.

All united in appraising "the atmosphere which is being created by actions and smearing methods of the House Committee on Un-American Activities" as creating "a situation within which it is becoming increasingly difficult for scientists and engineers to function."

"The Atomic Energy Commission is in no way to blame for the unfortunate situation that now exists," the scientists said. Since its formation, the Commission has worked vigorously to establish adequate centers for our atomic research. But the Atomic Energy Commission has been needlessly hampered because atomic energy has unfortunately become a 'political football'. As a result the commission has had

to adjust its own workings to the atmosphere created by the Un-American Activities Committee."

It was pointed out that of the 150 senior American scientists mentioned in the famous Smyth Report, an account of the government's wartime atomic energy program, "fewer than 10% are now devoting their full energies to the various government atomic energy programs." It can be expected, the scientists asserted, "that the tactics of the Un-American Activities Committee, if they continue as in the past, will make the situation even more acute."

The messages asserted:

"With the greatest respect to those relatively few excellent men who are now attempting to carry out adequate programs at Brookhaven, Berkeley, Argonne, Los Alamos, Hanford and Oak Ridge, we are forced to the conclusion that the combined full-time personnel of highly capable scientists and engineers in the various laboratories is on the verge of reaching a dangerously low level."

Many former workers on the atomic

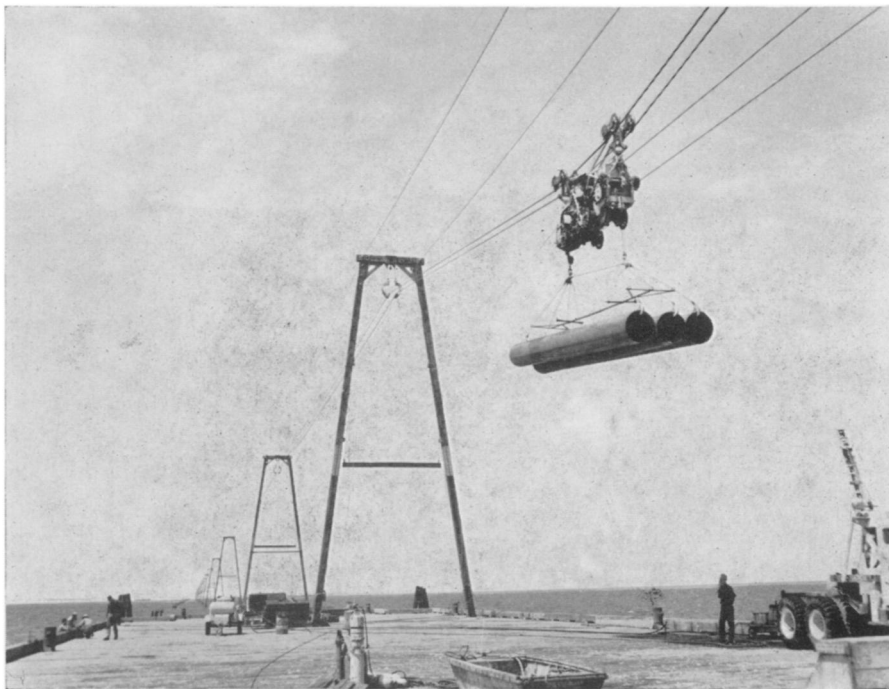
energy project have not remained "because they have found it increasingly difficult to reconcile themselves to government employment on secret projects where they are looked upon by groups such as the Un-American Activities Committee as men not to be trusted, where they must subject themselves to the possibility of irresponsible smears that may ruin them professionally for life. In many cases the men prefer to work elsewhere for considerably lower salaries on research programs completely unconnected with our atomic endeavors."

The climax of the Committee attacks on the scientists was reached this spring, the statement said, when the Committee issued its attack against Dr. Edward U. Condon.

"That attack was so repugnant to scientists that it will be years before the damage can be undone," it was stated. "And in the face of rumors of attacks yet to come, it will become increasingly difficult to retain top scientists in government service."

Conditions for Research

The scientists called upon President Truman and Governor Dewey to consider that "No nation without adequate scientific resources can hope for any degree of security in the event of another war. In the face of this fact, it is important that the leaders of our nation attempt to understand the conditions under which scientific research can be and cannot be done. In particular, if our nation is to have a vigorous government research program, the



TRIP OVER PERSIAN GULF—This skyhook carries tons of steel pipe from vessel to supply base, at Ras el Mishaab, Saudi Arabia. Man-operated, it is equipped with a two-way radio for communication with shore office. The three-mile course along overhead cables is covered in only five minutes.