

weeks, a revised bill is surfacing. The compromise gives the drug-classifying power neither to Justice nor HEW, and gives both a handle on research.

The revised bill would establish a Commission on Drug Classification to mediate between the contending agencies. One member each would be appointed by HEW and the Attorney General. The President would name three additional members. In making its decisions on drug classification the commission would request the advice of both the Secretary of HEW and the Attorney General, remaining independent of both.

Under the proposed legislation the Secretary of HEW would license qualified researchers, distributors and manufacturers of the controlled substances. For purposes of regulation the Attorney General would register an applicant to distribute, manufacture or dispense controlled substances.

The future of the legislation is in doubt. The Justice Department has submitted a rival bill more like the Senate version, on which the House Ways and Means Committee will begin hearings in July. □

CONTRACEPTIVE PILL

FDA writes another warning

In March, Food and Drug Commissioner Charles C. Edwards announced the agency's intention to require all oral contraceptive manufacturers to enclose a 600-word warning of hazards and possible hazards in packages going directly to the patient (SN: 3/14, p. 266). Physicians and drug houses went along with the Commissioner's idea but not with the substance of his insert.

Last week, the FDA proposed a compromise. A brief statement to women will say, "Do not take this drug without your doctor's continued supervision." It will go on to declare oral contraceptives powerful drugs that can cause side effects in some persons and should not be used at all by others. "The most serious known side effect is abnormal blood clotting, which can be fatal," it will state. In addition, it will inform women that their physicians have a more detailed statement (regarding pill hazards, including metabolic effects on blood sugar and cholesterol and the fact that estrogen is known to cause cancer in animals though it has never been shown to do so in human beings). "Your doctor will give you this booklet," the proposed statement to women says.

By sending the more detailed outline of hazards to physicians instead of directly to patients, the FDA hopes to avoid charges that it is violating the doctor-patient relationship.

Affected persons have 30 days to submit comments on the new wording. □

SCIENCE NEWSBRIEFS

Space Record

The Soviet Union's Soyuz-9, launched into earth orbit June 1 with two cosmonauts aboard (SN: 6/6, p. 552), passed the 15-day mark this week, thus breaking the United States' record for the longest time in space, set by Gemini Astronauts Frank Borman and James Lovell in 1965. The purpose of the flight is to obtain biological and medical data on man's ability to work in space for long periods of time. □

Seeding near Tahoe

The surface of Pyramid Lake, a 170-square-mile body of water within the Paiute Indian reservation in western Nevada, has been dropping for many years at an average rate of about one foot a year.

To try to preserve the lake and provide adequate water for other users in the Truckee-Carson River Basin, the Department of the Interior will conduct a pilot five-year cloud-seeding program over the headwaters of the Pyramid Lake-Lake Tahoe region of California and Nevada.

Interior Secretary Walter J. Hickel and the governors of both states have approved the plans. The University of Nevada's Desert Research Institute will carry out the \$900,000 program for Interior's Bureau of Reclamation. □

Solid waste future

Long neglected, the solid waste problem (SN: 9/27, p. 278) is gaining recognition. Two bills presently working their way through the House and Senate could make the Government's solid waste program worth between \$250 million and \$800 million over the next three years. In comparison, the Departments of Health, Education and Welfare and the Interior have spent a total of about \$14 million on the problem since 1965. □

Health Insurance

The President last week presented general details for a Family Health-Insurance Program for the poor. Families with incomes below \$1,600 would have their insurance paid by the Federal Government. Families earning between \$1,600 and \$5,620 would be expected to pay a percentage of their income as their contribution to the insurance. The Federal Government would pay the rest of the premium. Legislation embodying the proposal will be forthcoming in January, the President said. □

Freedom of research

Scientific study of the oceans is increasingly being restricted by extensive claims of national jurisdictions over coastal waters. The Council of the

National Academy of Sciences therefore has urged the United States Government to allow scientific research, without a permit but with safeguards, in ocean areas subject to its jurisdiction. The hope is that such unilateral action would produce similar actions by other countries. □

Methadone regulations

The Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs and the Food and Drug Administration last week jointly issued regulations for methadone programs for heroin addicts (SN: 4/11, p. 366). The regulations limit the maximum daily dosage of the drug to 160 milligrams per person. The drug must be dispensed in a form that cannot be injected by needle. This is a protection against theft. The guidelines call for concurrent rehabilitative measures such as vocational guidance and psychotherapy. Maintenance of records on the addict's history and follow-up are required. Sponsors of the program must report any hazards or side effects that become associated with the drug. □

Drug suit filed

The American Public Health Association and the National Council of Senior Citizens are taking the Government to court, charging the Food and Drug Administration with failure to enforce the 1962 Kefauver-Harris drug amendments. The 1962 legislation demands safety and efficacy of prescription medicines. At issue is the FDA's failure to release the results of a two-year drug evaluation study by the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council (SN: 2/14, p. 181). The suit charges that about 150 products that do not meet legal standards continue to be sold. □

Marine sanctuary

Last week, President Nixon asked Congress to cancel all but three of the oil leases offshore from Santa Barbara and to create a marine sanctuary seaward from the existing sanctuary which stretches 16 miles along the coast near Santa Barbara. Oil leaks in the area in 1969 caused widespread damage. □

Building failures

Inadequate building construction contributed to the destruction caused by the tornado that hit Lubbock, Tex., on May 11, killing 25 and injuring 500. The storm either destroyed or seriously damaged 10,000 houses. That is the preliminary finding of a National Bureau of Standards building research team released this week. The team found many failures at points where lightweight buildings had been anchored to the ground. □