



Commerce

Patent session: Unanimous approval.

An important feature of the treaty is that it extends the time period in which an applicant has to act after his initial filing. Previously, the period was 12 months, after which he could lose overseas rights. Now it would be 20 months. This means an inventor can take better aim at his markets; money has been lost because deadline pressure resulted in patents being applied for in the wrong country or not applied for in the right country.

By the treaty's terms, an inventor through one central filing in his home country can in effect file his initial application in any of the treaty countries he desires. The treaty provides for standardized forms to simplify the filing even more. Five centers in the United States, West Germany, the Soviet Union, Japan and The Hague—and possibly a sixth in Austria—will process the application and conduct an international search on it.

A second part of the treaty will enable an inventor to get an advisory opinion on whether his invention is really an invention after all: whether it is novel, nonobvious and has industrial applicability. This part is optional and is expected to be of great value to underdeveloped nations.

The treaty has been greeted favorably in the United States. "We would approve of the treaty," says Frank L. Neuhauser, president of the American Patent Law Association, speaking for that organization. "It is my understanding that the final draft of the treaty as negotiated is consistent with resolutions previously adopted by the American Patent Law Association."

He is seconded by Merel E. Scales, chairman of the patent trademark and copying law section of the American Bar Association: "As far as our organization is concerned the results that were obtained were very favorable."

Now the treaty goes back to the respective nations for hearings and ratification, a two-year process at least. □

BIOMEDICAL TESTS

Soyuz returns

The landing of the crew of Soyuz 9 last week in Kazakhstan, U.S.S.R., not only marked a first for space flight endurance—18 days—but probably contributed significantly to space medicine and physiology (SN: 6/20, p. 599). Commander Andrian G. Nikolayev and flight engineer Vitali Sevastyanov were reported a little thinner.

Some five days after their return, Tass, the Soviet news agency, reported that physicians were finding that the cosmonauts were having difficulty readjusting to earth's gravity.

The two men are reportedly now in a 10-day quarantine, during which time debriefing and analyses of medical tests will be performed. During the flight, measurements of the men's blood pressures, pulse and respiratory rates were taken before and after simulated exercises such as running and jumping. The only earlier problem was a report that they suffered eye muscle coordination problems after their first day in earth orbit.

In addition to tests of biological sensors, the crew did earth resources and weather experiments and checked out a radio navigation system which allowed ground stations to trace the orbit of Soyuz 9 to within a meter's accuracy. □

SCIENCE NEWSBRIEFS

Breaking the CERNjam

The council of CERN, the European international physics laboratory, has unanimously decided to go ahead with construction of a 300-billion-electron-volt (GeV) proton accelerator on a site adjacent to the present laboratory in Geneva (SN: 5/16, p. 478). The existing 30-GeV accelerator would be used as a part-time injector for the new machine. Any decision would be reserved for a few years on whether to use superconducting magnets to reach even higher energies, as was envisioned in a previously published proposal.

The council hopes that its present decision will not only end the squabble over where the new laboratory should be built, but will make it cheap enough so that all the present members of CERN will want to participate. □

AMA behind closed doors

The 119th annual convention of the American Medical Association convened in Chicago this week with members of the policy-making House of Delegates meeting behind guarded doors. Fearing disruption by young doctors and students, the delegates stationed police at the doors of the hall and, in an unusual action, excluded

the press from first-day proceedings. Among subjects that were hotly disputed during the week in sessions that preceded voting was the question of the AMA's stand on open abortion laws passed by state legislatures in New York, Alaska and Hawaii. Members will also debate a substantial increase in AMA dues—possibly from \$70 to \$150 per year—at a time when membership is declining. More complete coverage of the AMA meeting will be carried in SCIENCE NEWS next week. □

Hill-Burton vetoed

Legislation to extend for three years the Hill-Burton Act granting Federal funds for construction of medical facilities (SN: 4/19/69, p. 377) was vetoed this week by President Nixon. The President's central objection to the bill was that it called for spending \$350 million more in fiscal 1971 than the amount the Administration requested in its budget. Mr. Nixon said he would approve another bill if it were "financially responsible." He called on Congress to remove a provision providing for construction of new hospitals, saying the priority should be the one he originally established: the modernization of existing facilities. The present Hill-Burton Act expires June 30. □

Fermi award

Dr. Norris E. Bradbury, head of the Atomic Energy Commission's Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory since 1945, was named last week as the 1970 winner of the AEC's Enrico Fermi Award. A \$25,000 honorarium and gold medal will be presented to the 14th recipient on Aug. 29, when he retires from his post.

Dr. Bradbury was cited "for his inspiring leadership and direction of the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory throughout a quarter of a century and for his great contributions to the national security and the peacetime applications of atomic energy." □

Lead tax

President Nixon's proposed bill to tax lead in gasoline (SN: 5/23, p. 504)—which he asked Congress to pass so as to go into effect July 1—will not pass by then, if ever.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) and House Majority Leader Carl Albert (D-Okla.) have both announced their opposition.

Says a Mansfield aide: "We must find a substitute for tetraethyl lead first, and the President apparently doesn't want to spend any money on this."

The \$4.25 a pound tax, which would add about 2.3 cents per gallon cost to gasoline, was aimed at reducing levels of lead in the environment. It would have brought in \$1.6 billion annually, the President predicted. □