

to the editor

Cannikin A-test

I found your article regarding the planned detonation of a nuclear bomb at Amchitka Island, Alaska, (SN: 5/22/71, p. 350) to be a fair and accurate summary of the situation.

However, I want to clear up a misconception that might have been left with some readers.

The article discussed a U.S. Geological Survey report on the geologic stability of Amchitka Island and quoted one of my aides as saying the publication of the report would not alter my opposition to the test.

My opposition is based on these factors:

1. The test is not essential to our national security.
2. The test carries with it elements of risk that I do not believe we should take unless the national defense needs are overwhelming.

Every competent scientist who has looked into the test has pointed to the risk factor. Even the Atomic Energy Commission's own environmental im-

pact statement concedes that the test could trigger an earthquake, or a tsunami wave, or vent radioactivity into the atmosphere or into the North Pacific.

So, my continued opposition in the face of the USGS survey is not a rejection of scientific findings. Rather, I am being guided by scientists who tell us that the risk factor cannot be dismissed. In light of that, a political decision must be made as to whether the test is important enough to court disaster.

I believe that the clear weight of opinion is on the side of cancellation.

Sen. Mike Gravel
(D-Alaska)

Address communications to Editor,
Science News, 1719 N Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

films OF THE WEEK

SAFETY IN SALT: THE TRANSPORTATION, HANDLING AND DISPOSAL OF RADIOACTIVE WASTES. 16mm, color, sound, 28½ min. As the use of nuclear power grows, ways are being found for the safe, permanent storage of the radioactive wastes which are an inevitable product of nuclear power generation. The National Academy of Sciences has suggested the salt mine as a potential permanent storage site, and the Atomic Energy Commission has conducted a number of research projects to verify the concept, devise safe methods of preparing and packaging radioactive wastes for shipment, and development containers for safe shipment. In 1970, the AEC proposed to establish the first Federal Radioactive Waste Repository in an abandoned salt mine in Kansas. A considerable portion of the film covers the public hearing on the subject, and other sequences detail the transportation systems now in use, and safety techniques developed for shipping. Audience: general. Free loan information from Audiovisual Branch, Dept. SN, Dept. of Public Information, U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Washington, D.C. 20545.

GROOVING. 16mm, color, sound, 31 min. Brings a group of 14- to 18-year olds—drug users, nonusers, and ex-users—together in a series of confrontations over several days. The superficial reasons to smoke marijuana or not to are challenged or brushed aside. Deeper motivations slowly surface: "to be cool and hip," or "to escape personal problems." The subtle dangers are brought into the open—the illusion of self-control while motivation evaporates and school grades drop. Finally, bored with pot, experimentation with more dangerous drugs begins. Some find the better way to groove is on reality, naturally and out of one's own inner self. Audience: high school, college, parents. Purchase \$390 or rental \$40 from Benchmark Films, Dept. SN, 145 Scarborough Rd., Briarcliff Manor, N.Y. 10510.

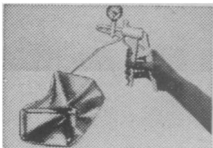
HARBOR RHYTHM. 16mm, color, sound, 13 min. Presents the motion and rhythm of life in the great Hamburg Harbor. Without narration, the film portrays a day of work, beginning at dawn, pausing at noon, and finishing after dark as the workers seek recreation in the city. In documenting the day, however, the film conveys a sense of harmony among the many activities of the harbor. Beneath the action of the harbor, such as lifting, rolling and transporting, are the natural sounds of the harbor, occasional eerie electronic sounds, and a continuous beating rhythm. Audience: general. Purchase \$165 or rental \$15 from International Film Bureau, Dept. SN, 332 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60604.

STRANGER THAN SCIENCE FICTION. 16mm, color, sound, 27 min. Science fiction has consistently been a reliable harbinger of science fact. Born during the industrial revolution, man's fear of technology and later man's fear of man in a technically oriented world intrigued the minds of many and brought some to hypothesize on man's fate. This film, through clips of early science fiction movies ("Flash Gordon," "War of the Worlds," "Destination Moon," and others) shows samples of some of these hypotheses and points out some of man's achievements such as television, the laser beam and manned space flights which were not so long ago considered scientifically fictitious. Audience: general. Purchase \$300 or rental \$16 from McGraw-Hill Films, Dept. SN, 330 W. 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

Listing is for readers' information of new 16mm and 8mm films on science, engineering, medicine and agriculture for professional, student and general audiences. For further information on purchase, rental or free loan, write to distributor.

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