

the staff conclusions, a not unintended result.

Some advisory board members, for example, demur on the emphasis the report puts on energy conservation. Indeed, the report makes a strong point in this regard, setting out four main policy recommendations for achieving slower energy growth:

- Adopt minimum fuel economy performance standards for new cars—aiming for at least 20 miles per gallon by 1985.
- Encourage more efficient space heating and cooling.
- Shape government programs to encourage technological innovation for saving energy.
- Set prices to reflect full cost of producing energy.

Cancer link closes PVC plant in Norway

Norsk Hydro, Norway's big petrochemicals producer, has temporarily shut down its 60,000 metric-ton-per-year polyvinyl chloride plant at Heroya. The decision was taken on the basis of a regulation issued recently by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration to lower the level of U.S. worker exposure to vinyl chloride to 1 p.p.m. (C&EN, Oct. 7, page 5).

The Norwegian plant will be shut for several weeks while an independent team of doctors and other experts evaluates the situation there. What will likely happen is that the plant will restart with a limit of vinyl chloride exposure lower than the 20 to 30 p.p.m. now in effect. However, the consensus is that the Norwegian authorities won't follow OSHA's regulation. And the workers themselves have expressed the desire to resume production.

Management at Norsk Hydro is particularly sensitive about the safety aspects of its PVC operation because of the death in 1972 from angiosarcoma of one employee. The 600 workers at the PVC plant currently are undergoing intensive medical tests.

Should Norsk Hydro decide to pull out of PVC production, however, it will affect a plan, arrived at earlier this month, to make 300,000 metric tons per year of vinyl chloride at nearby Rafnes. Continental Oil will provide technical assistance toward setting up that unit and will take some of the product when it comes on stream in 1977.

Other PVC makers throughout Europe are keeping a close watch on developments in Norway. In the

U.K., for instance, a tripartite group established earlier this year by the Chemical Industries Association, the Trades Union Congress, and the Department of Employment is preparing a code of practice to control public health risks of the chemical. But members of the association's vinyl chloride committee take the position that technology isn't available to enable a plant to operate at an exposure level of 1 p.p.m., although attempts are being made to reduce concentration in the working environment well below the 25-p.p.m. limit now in practice.

Likewise, in West Germany the recommended 50 p.p.m. vinyl chloride maximum that appeared in the "maximum working place concentrations list" issued by a commission of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft—a government group concerned with safety among chemical workers—was withdrawn three weeks ago. A revised limit will be issued shortly which, one observer believes, "will be much lower."

Senate passes science policy bill

The Senate hastily has approved, without a dissenting vote, an omnibus federal science policy bill that among other things calls for establishing a White House Council of Advisers on Science and Technology.

However, there's virtually no chance that the House will act on the measure in the lame-duck session after the elections. One reason is that Rep. Olin E. Teague (D.-Tex.), chairman of the House Science and Astronautics Committee, has indicated to the committee staff that he intends to continue with earlier plans to hold a third round of hearings on the federal science apparatus next spring.

The Senate bill, S. 32, the "National Policy and Priorities for Science and Technology Act of 1974," contains remnants of an earlier version of S. 32, the "National Science Policy and Priorities Act" introduced by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D.-Mass.) as well as of S. 2495 and S. 1686.

Among other things, S. 32 sets as national policy that there must be a continuing federal investment in science and technology adequate to the needs of the nation and that the national capabilities for technological planning and policy formulation must be strengthened.

Major provisions of the bill to accomplish these objectives include:

- Establishing a three-member White House Council to advise the President on federal policies, plans, and programs in science and technology. The chairman of the council would serve as the Science and Technology Adviser to the President and as chairman of a new interagency Federal Coordinating Committee for Science and Technology (FCCST).

- Replacing the existing Federal Council for Science and Technology with a new entity (FCCST) that would have statutory authority to coordinate federal science and technology.

- Establishing in the National Science Foundation an Intergovern-



Kennedy: needs of the nation

- Establishing a Science and Technology Advisory Committee to foster state use of science and technology. NSF would make grants of up to \$100,000 to each state to set up an Office of Science and Technology.

- Funding an 18-month, \$1.5 million NAS study of the federal organization for civilian science and technology. The report is to include recommendations for improving federal science and technology organization.

- Requiring the President to submit an annual science and technology report to Congress.

Finally, the Senate bill would make several changes in NSF programs and policies. For instance, within 90 days of enactment of the bill, NSF is to initiate a program of continuing education in science and engineering to enable scientists and engineers who have been working for at least five years to acquire new knowledge, techniques, and skills in their special fields or in other fields. The bill also provides for the development of special curricula and educational techniques and the award of fellowships to scientists and engineers.