Genetic project mystery brews

By MIKE STEEL

A MYSTERIOUS genetic engineering project could be heading for a world breakthrough.

Project manager Patrick Clement of Agrimm Biologicals confirms his company is working on the major high-tech project amid security in an old Christchurch warehouse.

"This committee monitors genetic ... and sets safety ... vent genetically-al- ... from escaping.

ic engineering is going in the agricultural sector," he said.

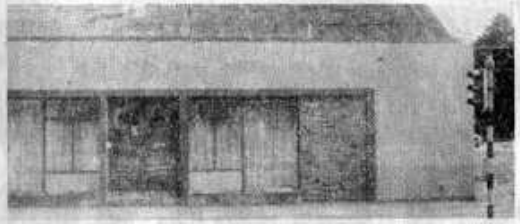
"It's the same problem as in vitro fertilisation — you've got ...

ported this, by God he'll get it from me," he said.

Several staff members told the New Zealand Times they are concerned at the involvement of the three scientists.

"There's a general ... amongst the clinical ... they are working ... situation ..."

"It's in the very best interests of New Zealand what they are doing," he said. "It's not ... -by-night thing."



THIS old Christchurch warehouse now houses a mysterious, controversial scientific project.

PETER JOHNSTON ... one small mushroom, one giant high

Picture: MICHAEL NICHOLAS

Scientist investigates magic mushroom craze

By MIKE STEEL

A RECENT CRAZE on magic mushrooms has led to a Government-backed mushroom-hunting expedition.

The intoxicating fungi grows wild in Taranaki, Otago and the West Coast and revelling in normally quiet Queenstown.

"They've really got local detective ... these things ...

But police know little about the innocent-looking class A drug, and last month called in the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research to investigate.

Auckland botanist Peter Johnston recently visited the West Coast, searching under logins for the notorious mushroom.

Samples are drying in the department's labs. Mr Johnston said. He believes there are at least five species of magic mushrooms growing in New Zealand.

Three hallucinogenic varieties have been discovered in native bush and are apparently unique to New Zealand.

The tiny fungi had not been named yet, Mr Johnston said.

Variety is also native ... species found in Taranaki ropes where it is known ...

But the West ... pulse-like eucalyptus introduced from ... is of the same sp ...

The mushr ... when damage ... on the Otago ...

Meanwhile ... superficially ... psilocybe mushroom ...

"Even to go hunting for them you could be tied in with a conspiracy to possess them," Mr Johnston said.

Fungus abuse had mushrooned this year, he said and referred to the "very ... crime person who comes to Queenstown ...

"They're either very affluent or they haven't got anything at all. They come in ... for a good time and they just can't ...

... problem with the ... some people ate too ... he said.

"... ing ... a ...

Porn trio fined in historic decision

By MIKE STEEL

STAFF at a Christchurch massage parlour have been caught with their pants down in a landmark High Court decision.

The ex-manager of Alam Lounge and two of his staff were first people to be convicted in N Zealand for making a pornograpl movie.

Details of the case remaine supressed because of a High Court ap peal. The appeal has just been turned down.

Police are treating the decision as a significant one. It is the first time the High Court has ruled that videos are covered by the 1963 Indecent Publications Act and provides a basis for police considering other prosecutions.

Mr Ronald Longcroft-Neal was convicted on three charges under the Indecent Publications Act in June 1984.

Meantime, he had applied for renewal of the Alamein Lounge Massage Parlour licence.

In an August decision, Judge Bisphan turned the application down. While he found Mr Longcroft-Neal ran a clean, efficient, good business, he considered the blemishes on his character, all relating to sexual matters, did not make him a proper person to have a licence.

At the time, details were supressed because of a High Court Appeal against the convictions.

That appeal has now been heard and dismissed by Judge Holland in a December 21 decision.

masochism, and he said he wasn't aware the sums of money he was banking for some of his masseuses were obtained by prostitution.

He said his staff signed ... they would not ...

Profs for peace link to Moonies

By MIKE STEEL

THE MOONIES are behind an international Anzus conference planned for Victoria University next year.

The three-day conference is being staged by the Moonie-backed ... Peace Academy.

numbers of Wellington's Unification ... by Walter ...

from, Professor Murphy replied:

"Frankly, I don't know myself very well, but I presume the American branch have made some contribution which would start the thing off."

The Unification Church has strongly anti-communist views and backs President Reagan's nuclear deterrent policy.

According to overseas sources, the church stages conferences which create an atmosphere ideal for sect zealots to make conversion — and ultimately mon- ... to attract prominent ... of its ...

Lsd comeback puzzles police

By MIKE STEEL

A RESURGENCE in popularity of the 1960s psychedelic drug lsd has puzzled police and customs.

While the class A drug has long been out of favour overseas, seizures in New Zealand are at the highest level in five years.

"I just can't figure out why," the acting head of the Auckland drug squad, Detective Senior Sergeant Wally Hayes, says. "There doesn't seem to be any logical reason for it — normally we follow overseas trends."

The drug is mailed or smuggled to New Zealand, often by well-organised groups, from the United States, Britain and European countries, particularly Holland. "A lot has got out into the streets," Hayes says.

The drug is being aimed at youngsters and glue sniffers, according to Auckland drug specialist Dr Fraser McDonald.

"In the 60s it was intellectuals and characters who really felt they were a bit superior to everyone else using it. Now it's more the younger kids, the same group who are glue sniffers, who will take anything they can get their hands on," he says.

They are taking lsd, often with other drugs, simply "to get out of it. We certainly see the young ones on it who have had 'bash-backs.'"

Police and customs are also concerned and have devoted increased resources to lsd detection. The 16,500 tabs seized in the past year represents a 200 per cent increase since 1984.

"We are naturally concerned about a level which is as high as that," Detective Sergeant Dick Macdonald, head of the National Drug Intelligence Bureau, says.

Most of the seizures were from five raids involving police and customs, all of which have led to arrests. "Some of the people who have been arrested have shown a degree of organisation," Macdonald says.

The drug, which has a street price of $10 to $20 a "trip" is hard to manufacture and police believe none is being made in New Zealand. The difficulty for Customs is that lsd is the only major drug which sniffer dogs cannot detect. The pure drug is also easily concealed and one ounce represents 500,000 does.

"We work a lot on intelligence," Garry Smith, and assistant director of Customs, says.

TINY lsd "tickets" seized by police

Recent sam ... the Departmen ... and Industrial ... high purity ... strength, Auckl ... Dr Keith Bedfo ... considerable v ... within the sam ... samples had sw ... the last 12 mo ... what we call ic ... bent paper with ... on them." Four ... man's thumbnail.

"Some of th ... quite high quali ... work of art."

The detailed c ... in one case t ... character Garfield ... got the lsd is bel ... sophisticated man ... says.

'Get off your butt

By MIKE STEEL

"GET off your butt and make a decision."

That's the call from Polic ... sociation presiden ...

grammes" for the tour but he will not elaborate on what these are.

However he says the ... have taken ...

"And I'm fo ... coming ... overnn ...

chair ... associ ... eek. ... going ... nd T ... s n ... tin ... on ... va ... a

SUNDAY

WAIROA Mayor Mick Barrett insisted the town with a violent reputation is now "clean and quiet". Within minutes New Zealand Times reporter Mike Steel was laid out cold by a bunch of hoons and left bashed and bleeding on a town back road. After a night in hospital he continued his investigation. That report, page 3.

Delay worsens sex ring row

By MIKE STEEL and ALASTAIR MORRISON

SEVEN months of inaction by Dunedin's police chief fueled simmering discontent over the porn ring inquiry.

Chief Sperintendent Ross McLennan has been ... over the knuckles. ... the ...

By October 1984 a solicitor and the Police Association were involved in the complaint laid by Detective Sergeant Tom Lewis, who headed the porn ring investigation.

Despite this escalation, Mr McLennan dismissed it as largely a personality clash. National Police Headquarters was not aware of the allegation and trouble till mid-March this year, seven months later.

The New Zealand Times put it to Mr Thompson that this was ... ordinary situation. ... Thompson, ...

And Mr Thompson agrees the issue which prompted the inquiry was "the extent to which this conflict had escalated".

"At the time I ordered this inquiry it was very much in the public spotlight. The whole integrity of the New Zealand police was called into question."

Even when national headquarters first became aware of the issue in mid March it was some time before action was taken.

During the first week in April the New Zealand Times asked Mr Thompson about the issue. He denied police headquarters ... a formal complaint ... inquiry.

By April 7 when the New Zealand Times broke the story Mr Thompson did acknowledge he had received a letter from Mr Lewis's solicitor, Bruce Robertson.

The next week pressure for an independent inquiry mounted when the New Zealand Times published the Police Association's serious concerns over the affair.

Eventually Mr Thompson ordered a top level inquiry subject to an independent examiner. That got underway late April.

The inquiry report criticises Mr McLennan for not taking the issue seriously enough, which ... states "needed urgent resolu ... Command ...