



ILLINOIS POLICE USE SPRAY TO BREAK UP UNRULY CROWD OF STUDENTS.

## INSTANT BANANA PEEL

In the not-too-distant future U.S. policemen may shoot at fleeing suspects with "instant cocoons," "instant banana peels," or cold brine projectors.

Sound more like Buck Rogers than our familiar boys in blue? Well, it's true. Non-lethal weapons comprise the latest area of research and controversy in U.S. law enforcement.

A recent study by the National Science Foundation on the state of the art turned up a variety of non-lethal options. Simple contraptions included nightsticks, rubber batons presently used for crowd control in Northern Ireland, and the broomstick round, ammunition for a weapon that replaces bullets with wooden cylinders.

Among the more sophisticated possibilities is the "taser," a device which shoots a cloud of electrified barbs. These barbs become tangled in a victim's clothing, leaving him paralyzed until the current is cut. Sound-curdlers disperse crowds through the very unpleasantness of the

high pitched noise they emit.

Another weapon discharges sticky, gluey strings, similar to the adhesive now used by surgeons to bind wounds. This "instant cocoon" distracts and slows suspects, sticks them together and generally inhibits escape. Freezing liquid shot from the cold brine projector effectively dampens a suspect's will to run.

The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration is paying the U.S. Army Land Warfare Laboratory \$250,000 to test and evaluate all non-lethal weapons suggested for police use, among them the bean bag, and the stun gun.

Although many experts look to non-lethal weapons to reduce police violence while increasing police efficiency, other groups, such as the American Civil Liberties Union, feel that even non-lethal weapons could be used punitively to abuse groups from whom police feel estranged. Many of the police, however, have consistently opposed non-lethal weapons, feeling that they threaten their continued use of lethal weapons.