Science in the News

"Health for Peace" Bill: It Encourages But Cannot Require the Administration To Take Action

The widely supported "Health for Peace" Act was signed by the President last week, after the Senate accepted the House's watered-down version of the bill just before the congressional recess. The effect of the legislation is going to depend very much on how the present Administration and the new one that will take over in January choose to act on it.

The act does not, either in the version which passed or in the more elaborate version endorsed earlier by the Senate, give the Administration any powers it did not already have. It specifically authorizes the President and the Public Health Service to give grants to foreign scientists and institutions. Although legislation already in force could be interpreted as granting this power, the Health for Peace Act makes it perfectly clear both that the Administration has this power and that it is the intent of Congress that money should be spent for overseas grants. The area in which this specific authority could be most important is in making grants for research in areas which present a health problem primarily to foreign nations. Without this legislation questions could have been raised if a grant were made, for example, to an African institution for research on sleeping sickness. A congressional appropriation committee might conceivably have refused to provide money for such work. The Health for Peace Act makes it clear that Congress would like to see some money spent in this way.

"Science for Peace" Proposal

The original impetus for the proposal came from President Eisenhower's 1958 State of the Union message. Eisenhower talked of the United States taking the lead in an international "science for peace" movement. Senator Hill of Alabama then introduced a generally worded bill to serve as the basis for hearings which he hoped would lead to the passage of legislation embodying some specific proposals. Early in the following session, in February 1959, Hill was joined by 58 other senators in sponsoring the Health for Peace Bill. It provided for setting up an Institute of International Health as a separate division within the National Institutes of Health, stated the intent of Congress that grants be made to promote world health, and authorized an appropriation of $50 million a year to support the program.

Budget Bureau Objects

With more than half the Senate listed as co-sponsors, the bill, of course, passed easily. The major opposition was not to the general intent of the bill but to its terms, to which the Administration objected. The Budget Bureau objected to the provision setting up an Institute of International Health on the grounds that Congress should let the executive branch work out its own administrative methods and not insist on a specific type of organization. It objected to the $50 million authorization on the grounds that this would seem to foreign countries to be a commitment to spend that much money each year—a specific commitment the Administration preferred not to have written into the law, and which, in any case, could not be met unless Congress provided the money in the yearly appropriation bills. The Bureau also objected to provisions granting the powers directly to the Public Health Service rather than to the President. The Bureau felt that the authority for promoting the health of foreign nations should be considered part of the foreign assistance programs and that this made it a subject of direct interest to the State Department, to ICA, and to the President.

The bill, after passing the Senate, early in 1959, went to the House Commerce Committee, which through historical accident happens to have jurisdiction over matters relating to the Public Health Service. There was considerably less sympathy for the plan here than there had been in the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee. Three weeks ago the House committee completed its leisurely deliberations and reported a substitute bill which met the Administration's objections. The Senate accepted the House bill, since it was apparent that no important concessions could be expected from the House if the Senate insisted on its own bill and asked for a conference to resolve the differences. In any case it was fairly clear that the Administration had a good case in asking for the changes it did. Sources close to Senator Hill concede that the President could properly insist on having direct jurisdiction over the part of the program that is aimed at helping foreign countries solve their special health problems, and they concede that the provision requiring a new organization to administer the program and the specific authorization of $50 million were not necessary for carrying out the program but only provisions designed to help push a possibly reluctant Administration into taking some action.

Role of NIH

Under the bill as passed, the grants will be made by the National Institutes of Health, under the procedures used to give grants to American applicants. To some extent this has already been done. Last year a little less than $4 million out of the $200 million in grants awarded by the National Institutes of Health went to foreign scientists, although only for work of direct importance to major American health problems. The NIH also supported 130-odd Americans working on fellowships overseas and some 80 foreign students on fellowships in this country. It also is supporting about 130 visiting scientists working in this country. The total for such NIH international health activities last year came to about $8 million.

There are also a few projects under way of the type contemplated under the foreign assistance provisions of the Health for Peace Act. Some work is being done in Panama and the Canal Zone on tropical diseases, and a $300,000 research project on cholera is being carried on in Pakistan with foreign aid

funds provided by the International Cooperation Administration and administered, at ICA's request, by the NIH.

All of this demonstrates that the Administration was able to do exactly the sort of work the Health for Peace Act authorizes even before the act was passed. How much such projects will be expanded now that Congress has expressed its formal intent that they be pushed is a matter that is in the hands of the Administration. So far there is not much indication that the Administration intends to respond to the new Act with a rapid expansion of its international health activities. This does not mean that Senator Hill and other Congressmen and private individuals and organizations that have worked for this legislation have been wasting their time. It does mean that the many people who have supported Health for Peace are misleading themselves if they think the fact that the proposal has been formally passed into law means that results are going to be automatically forthcoming.

Color Additives Act Passed

Congress has passed and the President has signed the final version of the color additives amendment to the Pure Food Act. It specifies the conditions of safety an additive must meet before it can be used in or on a product that comes into contact with the mouth. The Senate accepted the "Delaney clause" (*Science*, 10 June) inserted by the House. This flatly outlaws the use of any material that has been shown to cause cancer in animals or man, no matter how wide the difference between the amount that could cause cancer and the amount which might be ingested through the use of the substance in a color additive.

Federal Funds for Science

The final budget for medical research will not be set until the extra session of Congress convenes in August, but other major appropriations for scientific research and development have been cleared, and they show federal support for science climbing to a new peak, as it has every year since 1950. The exact totals will be compiled by the National Science Foundation for a report it plans to issue in November, but the rough total of money to be spent or committed in the fiscal year is known. It will be in the neighborhood of $9 billion, which is a good deal more than the total for R & D financed by industry and the universities and foundations.

A breakdown is expected to show that about $2 billion of the roughly $9 billion for R & D will be spent on research proper, as opposed to development. Between $600 and $700 million of this will be spent on basic as opposed to applied research—that is, for research not directed towards a specific practical application. About two-thirds of the research money will be spent on the physical sciences, one-third on the life sciences, a small fraction (roughly 3 percent) on the social sciences. About half of the basic research and one-sixth of the applied research is financed through grants to universities.—H.M.

News Notes

AAAS-Westinghouse Science Writing Competition Announced

The nation's newspaper and magazine writers are invited to enter the 1960 AAAS-Westinghouse Science Writing Awards competition, which annually offers two $1000 prizes, one for magazine writing and one for newspaper writing. The AAAS administers the program, and the presentations will be made at the annual dinner of the National Association of Science Writers on 27 December 1960, during the winter meeting of the AAAS in New York City.

A board of six judges prominent in the fields of journalism, science, and public affairs will select the winners. Articles on the natural sciences and their engineering and technological applications (medicine is excluded) will be considered.

The AAAS-Westinghouse Awards were established to recognize and encourage outstanding popular science writing, to stimulate public interest in science, and to foster a deeper understanding of the significance of science on the part of the general public. The program is supported by the Westinghouse Electric Corporation through a grant from the Westinghouse Educational Foundation.

Last year's newspaper award was won by Victor Cohn of the Minneapolis *Tribune* for his series "Year of the Sputnik," which dealt with the state of Russian science. Francis Bello won the magazine award for his article "An Astonishing New Theory of Color," which appeared in the May 1959 issue of *Fortune*.

Conditions

To be considered for the 1960 awards, a magazine article or a newspaper or press association report must have appeared in the United States between 1 October 1959 and 30 September 1960. Either a single article or a series of articles may be submitted. However, work published in trade journals or professional scientific magazines is not eligible.

The entries will be judged on the basis of initiative, originality, scientific accuracy, clarity of interpretation, and value in promoting a better understanding of science by the lay public. All those engaged in popular science writing, irrespective of their professional employment, are invited to participate in this year's competition.

Each entrant may submit for consideration as many as three separate articles published during the contest year. Persons other than the author may nominate entries in accordance with the rules; the deadline for all entries is *10 October 1960*.

In addition to cash awards for the authors, citations will be presented to the newspaper and magazine in which the winning articles appeared. Also, at the discretion of the judges, honorable mention citations or other special recognition for distinguished service to science journalism may be made.

Entry blanks, rules, and information concerning the competition can be obtained by writing: Dr. Graham DuShane, AAAS, 1515 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington 5, D.C.

Grant for Astrograph in Southern Hemisphere

The Ford Foundation has allocated $750,000 to construct an astrograph—a telescope for measuring precisely the motion of stars in our galaxy—in the Southern Hemisphere. The new star camera will measure the position and speed of stars in the third of the sky not covered by the only such astrograph now in existence, located at Lick Observatory, Mt. Hamilton, Calif.

The grant was made to Yale University, which will operate the new astrograph jointly with Columbia University. Dirk Brouwer of Yale and Jan Schilt