Science in the News

The Democratic Convention: Kennedy's Brain Trust and His Plans for a "New" New Deal

From Los Angeles—The Democrats have held a convention and adopted a platform in which more attention has been paid to science than in any previous convention. For the first time the platform includes a plank devoted specifically to science, calling for the government to recognize its "special role in support of basic and applied research." The Republican platform is certain to echo this view. The Democratic plank is not so much a statement of policy as a reflection of the fact that the government will spend $9 billion on science and technology this year and that even heavier expenditures are inevitable, no matter who wins the election.

The more important news, though, is not in the promises in the platform nor in the routine references to the importance of science that appeared in many of the speeches. It is in the attitudes of John F. Kennedy and the people who surround him. Kennedy and his advisers, the latter including some well known figures in the academic world, are thinking very much in terms of a revolution in American life which they believe will be as important as that which followed the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt. They believe that the United States cannot compete with the Soviet Union as it is now oriented. They believe, in particular, that there must be a substantial revision in the present balance between public and private spending and that the federal government must assume a far more important role in dozens of areas, from civil rights to conservation; science and education rank high in the list of areas where they believe a very great increase in the level of federal financial support to be necessary. These things are what Kennedy was talking about in his acceptance speech when he said that America must choose between "public interest and private comfort, between national greatness and national decline."

Kennedy's Program

Kennedy's closest adviser on economic matters is J. Kenneth Galbraith of Harvard University. The policies to which Kennedy and his supporters are committed are to a large extent reflections of the position crystallized in Galbraith's book, *The Affluent Society*. Galbraith argued that as society (as individuals) has grown more and more prosperous, there has not been a satisfactory increase in spending on the things that society (as a group) must, or at least in the view of liberals, ought, to buy. Galbraith argued that there is, relatively at least, public squalor in the midst of private prosperity. Kennedy wholeheartedly accepts this view, and his policies, if he is elected, will to a large measure be aimed at correcting the imbalance.

In the field of education, for example, he is committed to a federal aid to education program of not less than $1 billion a year, covering increases in teacher salaries as well as classroom construction. He will ask for a great expansion of the student loan and federal scholarship programs-expansion aimed, presumably, at putting a college and even a postgraduate education within the reach of every qualified student. He is expected to offer programs, unspecified as yet, to relieve the financial strain on the privately endowed colleges. On scientific questions he appears committed to an atoms-for-peace program, to an expansion of international research programs along the lines of the "Health for Peace" plan, and to a very substantial increase in support for scientific research generally. He is expected to do a lot of talking about science during his campaign, emphasizing the need for scientific research to support practical programs, including disarmament. He is expected to talk about the need for increased basic research, although this is hardly the sort of thing that would make a popular campaign issue.

All of this—and it is only a small sample of what the Kennedy people have in mind—is going to cost a great deal of money. The party platform argues that the Democrats will be able to put through such big new programs without raising taxes. During the campaign Kennedy may well echo this view, arguing as the platform does that closing tax loopholes, and more important, use of the power of the federal government, in as yet unspecified ways, to assure a greater rate of growth of the economy will provide more income for everyone, including the federal government. This may be true, but such increases in federal income as may come painlessly through growth, or moderately painlessly through closing tax loopholes, are hardly likely to pay for the full cost of the new programs. The Democrats have not been talking seriously about tax cutting except as a temporary thing in the event of a recession, and Kennedy, who can be refreshingly candid as politicians go, has on several occasions conceded that tax increases may well be necessary.

In truth, Kennedy does not regard the present tax burden as too heavy by any means. He is likely to raise taxes as fast as is politically possible, for the extent to which he can carry out his program, including the scientific and educational sides of it, will be limited largely by the extent to which he can persuade the public to accept the taxes necessary to pay for it. The belief that Kennedy will be able to persuade the public to follow this road, or at least to lead the public in this direction even if it is not quite persuaded, is one of the principal things that has brought Kennedy the support of Galbraith and others who are convinced that such big and expensive new programs are urgently needed.

Wooing the Intellectuals

Kennedy has succeeded in drawing around him a still fairly small but very influential group of people from the academic world. Besides Galbraith they include historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., of Harvard University, (both Galbraith and Schlesinger were at the convention actively working for Kennedy); labor-law expert Archibald Cox, of Harvard Law School, who was in Washington helping to organize the Kennedy campaign even before the senator had

won the nomination; economists Walter W. Rostow and Max Millikin, both of M.I.T. and both specializing in the study of underdeveloped nations; Paul A. Freund and Mark deWolfe Howe, both of Harvard Law School and experts in civil rights law; and a half dozen or so others with national reputations. Kennedy has established close relations, among scientists, with Jerome B. Wiesner, of M.I.T., expert on communications engineering and disarmament, and Bruno Rossi, of M.I.T., an authority on space research, and several others.

Nearly all of these people were actively working for Adlai Stevenson in 1952 and 1956. Kennedy's success in winning them over—his ability to command the support of such people—has been useful to him in his campaign for the nomination and will continue to be useful in his campaign for the presidency. For a good many members of the academic and intellectual worlds and many influential journalists felt that Adlai Stevenson should have received the Democratic nomination, that Stevenson was elbowed aside by a "pleasant man who, without any important qualifications for the office, would very much like to be president," to use the terms in which Walter Lippmann described Roosevelt in 1932.

Role as Vote Getters

Galbraith, Schlesinger, and the rest are conscious of their usefulness to Kennedy beyond their more obvious functions as policy advisers or speech writers. They are quite willing to be used to help win Kennedy support among people who are in a position to influence the votes of other people. At least among those of them who were at the convention there seemed to be no reluctance in their support of Kennedy. They talk of Adlai Stevenson's "great heart," and they describe Hubert Humphrey, another favorite of liberal intellectuals, as "a great fighting liberal." But their support of Kennedy for the presidency seems to be wholehearted. They see in him the drive, the intellectual capacity, and above all the indefinable quality of political leadership that will get him elected and enable him, once elected, to push through the programs they believe necessary. They are conscious of the impossibility of predicting the caliber of performance of a president before he is in office, but they seem convinced that Kennedy is the best bet.

The Kennedy brain trust at this point is drawn primarily from Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as a result of the senator's close connections with Boston and Harvard. Galbraith, for instance, has known him for years and has been a close policy adviser for 3 or 4 years. He called Kennedy the day after the senator's massive re-election victory in 1958 and formally offered to support him for the presidency. Archibald Cox had worked with Kennedy on labor legislation for several years before he offered his support in the presidential campaign. Others, working closely with Kennedy, have not been so thoroughly committed to helping him in his campaign. "We don't ask for an oath of allegiance," says a Kennedy staff man involved in gathering academic support.

The method has been for a Kennedy staffer, usually Ted Sorensen, the senator's closest policy adviser, to approach academic people to ask for advice on problems which call for their special knowledge. If the exchanges of views that result are favorable, a personal relationship tends to develop first with the staff people and eventually with Kennedy himself; still later this tends to lead to a commitment, explicit or implicit, to support the Kennedy-for-president movement. The method is not unique with Kennedy. It is a matter of importance these days for any candidate—and even more, of course, for any President—to have such a pool of expert talent available to him. The president can have it by simply asking for it. The candidate must, to a large extent, win such support, and as the roster of intellectuals for Kennedy demonstrates, he has been very successful. It is known that Senator Johnson has made similar overtures to intellectuals without much success. These men apparently simply did not feel at home with him, nor he with them. It is Kennedy's strength that once he has gotten to know a man he is likely to win that man's support for his political ambitions. This is certainly not true in all cases, but it has been true often enough so that Kennedy came to the convention with a more impressive roster of intellectuals actively working with him than any other candidate, including Stevenson.

Kennedy is not likely to win the sort of fervid commitment that Stevenson appeared to command among the intellectual community at large. But he would like to at least assuage the resentment that is now apparent among Stevenson supporters. Judging by his past performances he is quite likely to be more successful than might now appear probable. How important such support would be may seem doubtful after what happened to Stevenson in 1952 and 1956, but this past experience does not prove much, since no one knows how much worse Stevenson's defeat might have been had he not had strong support among intellectuals. Kennedy obviously believes it will be useful to have strong support among the intellectuals, and he is likely to win it.

The Kennedy Organization

Although the Kennedy organization is often described as a marvel of efficiency, some see it not so much as more efficient than its rivals but as younger, more energetic, and, above all, bigger. It is big and energetic not only only because there is money to hire a large staff. There have been many volunteer workers, mostly young lawyers and businessmen and their wives and sisters. (Kennedy was the only candidate popular enough to be able to sell rather than give away his campaign material: recordings of Frank Sinatra singing Kennedy's theme song, a quarter; a booklet on the candidate, 50 cents; Kennedy hats, $1.00.) The heart of the convention operation was "the box," a card file containing the names, preferences, and inclinations of all of the 3000-odd delegates and alternates. If the box indicated that a wavering delegate could be swayed by a talk with Schlesinger or Galbraith or James M. Burns (a biographer of Kennedy and Roosevelt), then the delegate was quite likely to hear from one of these gentlemen.

Similar attention to detail can be expected during the campaign. Members of Kennedy's staff, even before the nomination was formally his, had been looking into such things as the best ways to make use of the Democratic Advisory Committees, including the science advisory committee headed by Ernest C. Pollard, of the Yale biophysics department. The pamphlets these advisory committees have prepared have been widely circulated in the academic world, and Kennedy may well ask the committees to prepare other pamphlets on issues that develop during the campaign. The pamphlets already available—on disarmament, space, nuclear testing, and so on—will

be given even wider circulation than in the past.

All the advisory committees are made up of prominent people (the science advisory committee includes three Nobel prize-winners among its 16 members), and the managers of the operation have been delighted to find some teachers using the material in their courses.

How much influence the pamphlets will actually have on a Kennedy administration is uncertain. But it seems obvious that the academic world would have a stronger voice in a Kennedy administration than it has had under Eisenhower. The same may well be true of a Nixon administration, but this is less clear, since the recommendations of such academic committees tend to add up to a program which would require a very substantial expansion of the role of the federal government and of governmental spending. And this is a course which to some extent Nixon, and to a much larger extent the Republican party, finds unacceptable.

A report from Chicago on the Republican convention will appear here in two weeks.—H.M.

News Notes

Medicinal Chemistry Study Group

A new study section within the National Institutes of Health has been set up to evaluate research grant applications in medicinal chemistry. The NIH announcement said that creation of the Medicinal Chemistry Study Section will serve to strengthen and emphasize research grant support related to the health sciences of chemotherapy, biochemistry, enzymology, endocrinology, pharmaceutical chemistry, and pharmacology. Applications for support of medicinal chemistry research often originate in departments of chemistry, pharmaceutical chemistry, and pharmacology and are submitted by investigators who also have an interest in natural products, in the relationship of chemical structure to biological activity, or in reaction mechanisms underlying biological processes.

Chairman of the Medicinal Chemistry Study Section is Norman H. Cromwell, department of chemistry, University of Nebraska. The study section is composed of nongovernmental scientists in the fields of chemistry, pharmaceutical chemistry, and pharmacology.

Nutrition Study in Colombia

At the request of the Government of the Republic of Colombia, a team of United States nutrition experts a month ago began a survey of the nutritional status of the Colombian people, the U.S. Public Health Service recently announced. The study was arranged by the Interdepartmental Committee on Nutrition for National Defense.

Walter G. Unglaub of the Tulane University School of Medicine, New Orleans, is head of the team of clinicians, biochemists, nutritionists, dentists, food technologists, and others who, together with Colombian personnel, are examining large sections of the civilian and military population to obtain information on current nutritional conditions. The team will formulate recommendations for nutritional improvement consistent with Colombia's resources and will provide assistance in the development of standard ration requirements and in the establishment of local nutrition services.

Laboratory equipment has been shipped to Bogotá. At the conclusion of the study, the equipment will be given to the Colombian Government, under provisions of the Mutual Assistance Program, for use in operating permanent nutrition services.

The interdepartmental committee, operating administratively through the National Institute of Arthritis and Metabolic Diseases, is headed by Frank B. Berry, assistant secretary of defense, with Arnold E. Schaefer as executive director. Cooperating U.S. agencies include the International Cooperation Administration and the Departments of State; Health, Education, and Welfare; Defense; and Agriculture.

Dartmouth Plans Convocation

A public convocation on "The Great Issues of Conscience in Modern Medicine" will be held in Hanover, N.H., 8–10 September. Rene Dubos will serve as chairman of the convocation, and other participants will include Mahomedali Currim Chagla (Indian ambassador to the United States and Mexico), Aldous Huxley, Sir Charles Snow, Sir George Pickering, Warren Weaver, George Kistiakowsky, Walsh McDermott, Brock Chisholm, Ralph Gerard, Wilder Penfield, and Sandor Rado.

The convocation, which will be of interest to the layman, will consist of three panel discussions and four major addresses. Ward Darley, executive director of the Association of American Medical Colleges, will speak at the cornerstone ceremony for Dartmouth's new $3.5 million medical sciences building.

The public is cordially invited. Arrangements for lodging and meals may be made through the Convocation Office, Dartmouth Medical School, Hanover, N.H.

Science Museum Proposed

Shortly before the Congress recessed a bill to provide for the construction of a permanent museum of science and industry at the New York World's Fair in 1964 was introduced by Representative Seymour Halpern (R.-N.Y.). The bill (H.R. 12729) would authorize the federal government to erect a world center for the exhibition of scientific achievements, with the help of contributions from the state of New York, the city of New York, and private sources.

The museum would be a part of the federal government's participation in the fair, but it would remain a permanent center of international science and invention, operated by an nonprofit organization. Its collection would be modern, not historic, except insofar as historical background is essential to explain an exhibit. A chief purpose of the museum would be to make available traveling exhibits for international circulation.

A 26-member advisory panel of scientists, engineers, and museum planners and administrators would be created to assist in the design and construction of the museum.

Founders' Committe Active

Representatives of the following organizations have been active on the Founders' Committee for the museum: New York Board of Education, Business-Industry Committee of the National Science Teachers Association, American Institute of the City of New York, Engineers Joint Council, American Rocket Society, New York City Council of the National Education Association, United Engineering Center Project, National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, New York University, City College of New York, Queens College, Brooklyn College, Hunter College, Teachers College at Columbia