

In accounting for the differing political temperaments of the two houses, it has been suggested that senators, with their majorities often based on urban areas, are more inclined to reflect the liberal leanings of the cities. Thus many Republican senators have far more liberal voting records than many rural Democratic representatives.

An additional possibility that could follow a ruling in behalf of reapportionment could be new revenue programs that would give big cities a larger share of state revenues and lessen the pressure that makes them seek federal aid.

Regardless of how the Supreme Court rules, however, the effects of its decision will be slow to arrive, and reapportionment will probably be fought long and hard in states where the disproportionate representation is greatest.

Conference on Quackery

The American Medical Association, which has had a difficult time recently doing anything without being attacked for putting its members' economic interests ahead of the public interest, devoted 2 days last week to sponsoring a national conference on quackery, an enterprise which brought only favorable publicity. Everyone is against quackery, which, the conferees agreed, is flourishing.

A figure of \$1 billion a year was suggested by the AMA as the annual cost of quackery, broadly defined to include all unnecessary or worthless medication. This includes most of the \$350 million spent on vitamin pills, which few Americans need but many buy in response to advertising that suggests it costs only a few cents a day to be on the safe side; almost all the \$260 million spent on laxatives and patent medicines; and a good deal of the \$68 million spent on aspirin. Another \$250 million a year is spent on cures for arthritis and rheumatism, for which there is no cure.

The grosser class of quacks, peddling magnets, packets of uranium ore, condensed sea water, and such, guaranteed to cure any and all diseases, are, in terms of total business, comparatively small stuff, with the exception of cancer-cure peddlers. Fifty million dollars a year are spent for cancer cures, a good deal of it, apparently, by people who do not have cancer, but think they do, and who thereupon are likely to write thank-

ful testimonials to the quack they believe saved their lives.

The business of quackery is thus divided into the large-scale, but borderline, quackery promoted by nationally known firms selling products of some value, such as vitamin pills and laxatives, and the full-blown quack, offering a cure for anything the customer may think he has. The large firms cannot get too far out of line, since the Federal Trade Commission and the Food and Drug Administration have only to turn on a TV set to find out what they are telling their customers. A continuing game is played between these firms and the government regulatory agencies to see how far they can go in exaggerating the benefits or need for their products without providing the government with clear enough evidence to get a court to support a finding of misleading or fraudulent advertising. (An especially charming gambit was used several years ago by a laxative manufacturer who suggested that "if you have Asian flu, and need a laxative, take ———." Nothing came of this, because the Asian flu epidemic, and hence the advertisement, was gone before the government could act, but presumably a claim that "if you have cancer, and need a laxative, take ———," would stir the Federal Trade Commission to prompt action.)

What borderline quackery does is to encourage people to waste their money, usually in small enough quantities that no single customer is noticeably harmed. The authentic quack, on the other hand, may be doing a good deal of harm by depriving his customers of proper treatment and, since he operates on a less-efficient scale, often completing each sale with a personal call, he must make each customer pay well for his services. But exactly because the operation is normally carried on on a small scale, not using the national advertising media, it is difficult for the federal agencies to control this kind of quackery: it is expensive to track down each practitioner and to get a court conviction. The penalties for getting convicted are not severe, usually a small fine for a first offense. The result is that new quacks spring up as fast as the old ones are put out of business. The constant threat of harassment by federal agencies, though, presumably limits the temptation to go into the business, and consequently keeps down the prevailing level of quackery lower than it would otherwise be.

Two methods of attack on this grosser quackery were suggested at the conference: an AMA official suggested that the state medical associations exert themselves to attempt to see that laws with reasonably strict penalties for the unlicensed practice of medicine were passed and enforced. This has already been done in California and several other states, although the stricter provisions of the laws are often limited to cancer quacks. Another line of attack was suggested by an FDA official who reported that the Administration's version of the Kefauver drug bill would ask for powers to require proof of efficacy for all drugs before they could be put on the market. Kefauver's version of the bill applies only to prescription drugs. Under the FDA version the bill would apply to nonprescription drugs and would greatly simplify the FDA's problem in dealing with quackery. Under current laws FDA must prove that the questionable medicine will not cure what it is presented as curing. If the bill passed, the burden of proof would shift to the medicine man, for it would be illegal to sell a drug until after satisfactory proof that it will be effective has been presented to the government agency.

For dealing with the borderline quackery, Paul Rand Dixon, formerly Kefauver's chief counsel and now chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, said the agency would begin experimenting with a little-used power to ask a court for an injunction to stop misleading advertising in food and drug cases pending the final determination of the case. Indeed Dixon said he would ask Congress for the power to issue the injunction directly, without going to a court. He is unlikely to get this power, but if the FTC can make wide use of the court-issued injunction it will greatly increase the efficiency of the organization. Under present law there is an incentive on the part of an advertiser to fight a case out as long as possible even if he has little hope of winning, since he can, without penalty, continue the misleading advertising as long as the matter is still before the courts. Lacking this incentive, offending advertisers would presumably tend to settle their cases more willingly, and the FTC could use its limited resources to fight more cases. The prize for such delaying action goes to the manufacturers of Carter's Pills, until recently Carter's Little Liver Pills. On 28 May 1943 the FTC issued a complaint charging that

the pills, contrary to the name and advertising, were merely a mild laxative having nothing to do with the liver. The commission finally won its point on 15 December 1959, something over 16 years later, during all of which time the company aggressively promoted the pill on the basis of the wondrous, although vague, benefits that it would produce by stimulating the flow of liver bile.

IAEA: Soviets

Threaten Withdrawal

The Soviet representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency said last week that he probably would advise his government to withdraw its membership. The threat, from Vasily Yemelyanov, was made at IAEA's general conference in Vienna, following rejection of a Soviet effort to have an Asian or African neutralist succeed to the directorship of the agency.

The Soviet position, which was backed by the Communist nations and 11 African and Asian nations, was rejected by the conference, which elected a Swede, Arne Sigvard Eklund. Eklund's election, Yemelyanov charged, reflected an attempt by the U.S. to dominate the agency for political and military purposes.

Although the future of Soviet relations with the IAEA remains unclear, it is apparent that the Soviets have no intention at this point of permitting the agency to develop into the East-West meeting ground for nuclear science that was envisaged at its founding in 1957.

The hardening of the Soviet attitude toward IAEA followed closely upon President Kennedy's suggestion that the agency undertake certain nuclear inspection functions in an East-West disarmament agreement. Although IAEA is capable of functioning without Soviet participation, its role as an East-West bridge for peaceful nuclear efforts is crippled for the foreseeable future.

Student-Teacher Relationship

The American Civil Liberties Union warned this week that the student-teacher relationship may be threatened by prospective employers looking into the background of students. The ACLU said that academic performance is of legitimate interest, but that the relationship is undermined when teachers disclose information on students' social beliefs, loyalty, and religious and moral attitudes.

Announcements

Applications are being accepted for participation in the American Institute of Biological Sciences' 1961-62 **visiting biologist program**, supported by the National Science Foundation and the Atomic Energy Commission. The program allows U.S. biologists to visit a college, small university, or high school for a 3-day period, and foreign biologists to visit at least three colleges, laboratories, or other scientific centers over a 1-month period, for participation in seminars, lectures, consultation with faculty, and scientific or career discussions with students. (Martha J. Acker, AIBS, 2000 P St., NW, Washington 6, D.C.)

A **moisture detector meter** has been developed by the U.S. Army for use at missile installations and other areas where undetected moisture might cause malfunction of instruments and equipment. The device, called an electric hygrometer, consists of platinum wires enclosed in a small tube which has been coated with a thin film of phosphorous pentoxide, a material with a strong affinity for moisture. The 35-pound analyzer absorbs and simultaneously electrolyzes all moisture from a sample gas stream. The instrument is capable of detecting moisture in high-pressure air (up to 6000 lb/in.²) and measuring moisture content down to a free-air dewpoint—100°F.

According to a Rockefeller Foundation study group, **voluntary health and welfare agencies** often compete wastefully among themselves. The agencies, the report states, do much good but often fail to tell the truth about their programs and financing. The group recommends that a national commission be established to coordinate planning and development of a uniform system of accounting and financial reporting among the agencies. (Rockefeller Foundation, New York)

Two additional **standard samples of radionuclides**—iron-55 and promethium-147—are being issued by the National Bureau of Standards. The two standards are part of a group of 51 now available through the bureau's program to establish new and improved radioactivity standards. (Radioactivity Standard Samples, National Bureau of Standards, Washington 25, D.C.)

Soviet research laboratories for study on the use of **isotopes and radiation in agricultural science** increased tenfold between 1952 and 1957, according to a U.S.S.R. publication. The 119-page volume, translated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, reviews Russia's basic achievements in agricultural science during the past 40 years and discusses plant breeding; plant pests and diseases; veterinary science; fodder production; reclamation; and rural electrification. (Office of Technical Services, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington 25, D.C. Order No. 60-51199. Price: \$1.25)

Chemists and chemical engineers able to do **abstracting of research publications on chemistry** are needed, especially those with a knowledge of one or more foreign languages. There is a special need for abstractors of German patents and Russian research publications. The individual's field of chemistry, language or languages, and available time are considered in the assignment of papers for abstracting. (Charles L. Bermier, *Chemical Abstracts*, Ohio State University, Columbus 10)

A new booklet, "How to Donate Your Body for Medical Science," reports the need for **bodies for research**; lists states which have laws assuring a donor that his bequest will not be nullified by the next-of-kin; describes a bequest procedure in which a standard form provided by most medical schools is used; and discusses common funeral and burial procedures. (National Society for Medical Research, 920 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago 5)

Descriptions of 70 new **viral and rickettsial agents** currently available for distribution are contained in a recently published supplement to the 1959 catalog of the American Type Culture Collection. Copies of the 1959 catalog, containing descriptions of 153 strains previously available from the ATCC, may also be obtained on request. (American Type Culture Collection, Viral and Rickettsial Registry & Distribution Center, 2112 M St., NW, Washington 7, D.C.)

Three new **standard samples of titanium**, containing three different levels of hydrogen, are now available from the National Bureau of Standards. The new materials are part of a series