

## Representative Fogarty: Medical Research Is No Place for Economy

This is the time of year when the top officials of federal agencies are summoned to Capitol Hill to talk about money with the appropriations committees. With few exceptions, the committees cast the discussions in terms of "Why do you want so much money?" A notable departure from this theme regularly takes place before a five-man group known as the House Subcommittee on Departments of Labor and Health, Education, and Welfare, and Related Agencies Appropriations, the chairman of which is Representative John E. Fogarty, Democrat of Rhode Island.

The subcommittee holds the purse strings on the bulk of federal funds for medical research, and its chairman is dedicated to the proposition that the purse must be wide open. Witnesses who come before Fogarty need not devote their time to preparing to defend their budget requests; Fogarty's principal concern is why they are not asking for more. The answer is known to all parties: the Bureau of the Budget, which is responsible for overall budget planning, has to shave here and slash there to limit the total. Fogarty holds to the belief that medical research is no place for economy, and after his witnesses pay lip service to the need for centralized fiscal planning, they graciously concede that they could use some more money, and Fogarty piles it on.

The main object of Fogarty's affection is the National Institutes of Health, which received \$52.1 million in 1950 and \$738 million last year. In the latter case, the Administration asked for \$583 million; Fogarty upped this to \$641 million; in the Senate, where Lister Hill, of Alabama, is Fogarty's counterpart in behalf of medical research, the amount was raised to \$835 million. Fogarty and Hill then met in conference and settled on \$738 million. The boosts engineered by Hill make Fogarty look like something of a piker, but Fogarty, situated in the more conservative of the two houses, and serving on a committee noted for its meat-ax approach to the executive budget, has a far more difficult time getting \$5 million than Hill has getting \$50 million. Fogarty almost always succeeds, with the result that if any one man can be credited with the vast expan-

sion of federal aid to medical research since World War II, it is Fogarty. Fogarty, of course, has had the tide in his favor—a considerable expansion was inevitable simply because of wartime medical developments that led the nation to demand more; but at the same time he has been furiously pulling on the oars, and it is in the field of medical research alone that federal support has reached a point where serious and responsible critics suggest that some areas suffer from fiscal indigestion. Needless to say, Fogarty regards this view as unworthy of serious attention.

### Background

There is nothing readily visible in Fogarty's background to account for his dedication to the role of legislative benefactor of medical research; nor has he milked his role for its publicity value or social standing in Washington. The effusion of publicity releases from congressional offices helps make scrap paper Washington's leading commercial export, but Fogarty rarely issues a release, rarely grants interviews, does not routinely distribute his speeches to the press, and is a stranger to the city's social circuit.

Fogarty, who is 48 years old, first came to Congress in 1941, after working as a bricklayer in his native Rhode Island for 10 years. That decade of employment is a matter of deep pride with him, and in the eight-line biography which he furnished for *Who's Who*, he makes no mention of his congressional committee assignment, but notes that he "began as a bricklayer" and is a member and past president of the Bricklayers Union. His formal education ended with high school, something that he is likely to point out if a conversation becomes abstruse.

In 1947, Fogarty was appointed to the Appropriations Committee, a much-coveted assignment, and asked to be placed on the subcommittee which dealt with the Navy budget, a subject of considerable interest to Rhode Island, which has a number of major naval installations. (This committee preference reflects Fogarty's constant state of nervousness about the next election. Although he has been re-elected time after time by huge majorities—151,000 to 63,000 in 1960—he never feels easy about his political safety and devotes considerable energy to cultivating his constituents. He lives



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in a club in Washington and goes home every weekend to Rhode Island, where his wife and 13-year-old daughter live.)

Fogarty was disappointed to find himself appointed to what was then the equivalent of the Labor-HEW subcommittee. He said he later learned that it was the committee chairman's policy never to give a member his request and he speculates that if he had known this, he would not have stated a preference and might have gotten his choice. His interest in the finances of medical research developed quickly, however, and when he succeeded to the subcommittee chairmanship 2 years later, he was religiously dedicated to a huge expansion of federal support.

"It's nothing personal," he explained in an interview. "Nothing happened to me when I was a kid that made me decide that medicine has to be improved. It's just that I feel that as long as people are sick, something has to be done to make them better. The government has to give most of the help because there's no one else to give it. If kids are handicapped or sick and no one is going to try everything possible to help them, well, it just can't be that way."

Fogarty has no illusions about his ability to decide on fruitful lines of medical research, but he has great confidence in his ability to pick the brains of others and, as he puts it, to "stimulate thinking."

In the opinion of a well-known

medical research administrator who has known him over the past decade, "Fogarty has an incredible ability to draw people out, to remember in great detail what was said about a particular subject half a dozen years ago, and to get things moving."

Fogarty recalls that in 1949 he met a young man who was walking with the aid of two canes.

"I asked him, 'What's wrong with you?' He told me that he had multiple sclerosis. Well, I had never heard of it. I called up the surgeon general and asked him what it was all about, how many people had it, what were we doing about it. He told me that almost nothing was known about it, and that we weren't doing anything about it. So, I got them \$500,000 as a starter to get to work on it."

#### Procedure at Hearings

Fogarty's exercises in largesse at his annual hearings have taken on a fairly routine form. Unlike the other appropriations subcommittees, Fogarty's requires its agency witnesses to furnish a table detailing how much the agency requested and what happened to the request as it moved toward and through the Bureau of the Budget. Almost always the agency sought more than was finally allowed, leaving a figure which, out of loyalty to the Administration, is supposed to receive the support of the agency head. Fogarty will have none of this, as demonstrated by the following exchange last year with R. H. Felix, director of the National Institute of Mental Health:

Fogarty: Doctor, in your professional judgment, how much do you think ought to be appropriated for 1962?

Felix: Well, Mr. Chairman, the budget before you allows for increases. There are increases in the area of research. . . .

Fogarty: You only have an increase of \$4 million for all your activities. Tell us now what in your professional judgment you think ought to be appropriated for 1962.

Felix: We could perhaps use some increases in some areas. I haven't given a great deal of thought to this.

Fogarty: Didn't you think I was going to ask you?

Felix: Well, I am up here to support the budget I have before me. It is a forward-looking budget.

Fogarty: That is what you are supposed to do until I ask this kind of a question. Then you are supposed to give us your best professional judgment as the answer.

Felix: In view of the growth the program has made to date, I believe we could use additional funds in a number of the items.

Fogarty: About how much?

Felix: I haven't figured it up, but I would say in total we could use somewhere between \$117 and \$120 million as a total figure.

Fogarty: You figure it out a little more carefully and put the figure and the details of the program that would be covered in the record.

The final request was \$117.5 million; Fogarty allowed \$108.8 million, somewhat below the figure he wrung out of the witness, but still \$21 million above the Administration-approved budget request.

While other House appropriations subcommittees put witnesses through an ordeal justifying their budget requests, Fogarty's witnesses can never be certain of where he is going to lash out at them for not seeking more money.

At last year's budget hearings, Fogarty suddenly inquired of Justin M. Andrews, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases: "Are you doing any research on shingles?"

Andrews replied that none was underway.

"Why not?" Fogarty demanded. "They are pretty painful." He added, "Every once in a while I talk to someone who has had them, and all the doctor can do is just say, 'Let's see how it is in six weeks.'"

James Shannon, director of NIH, interceded to point out that related studies were being conducted: "But when it comes to shingles, I would say there is very little activity in that particular area."

Fogarty replied: "Some people who have it will be very disappointed to read that. They say you do not know what it is unless you have it yourself."

Shannon pointed out: "They have one consolation: they will not have it again."

To this, Fogarty replied: "You would not want it just for the satisfaction of knowing you wouldn't have it again."

The outcome, incidentally, has not been the initiation of any NIH research into shingles, but Fogarty will probably raise the issue again and it should be no surprise if shingles come under NIH scrutiny.

#### Overhead Allowances

The one area in which Fogarty holds the purse strings tightly is on overhead allowances for HEW research grants. At his insistence, a 15-percent ceiling

has been set on the allowance, which is intended to cover indirect costs incurred in carrying out research. While other agencies provide allowances above 15 percent, and university administrators contend that the HEW allowance is inadequate, Fogarty adamantly insists that he will agree to an increase only when the universities convince him that the present limitation is a burden.

"I've talked to lots of university administrators," he said, "and a lot of them don't know what I'm talking about when I ask them if the 15-percent allowance is a hardship. Most of the complaints come from the few big universities that get most of the HEW contracts, and I don't notice that 15 percent is so bad that they're turning down HEW grants."

Fogarty insists that his mind is open on the subject. "I've ordered a study made of it—an independent study; and when I've got the results, I'll make an increase if there's a need for it."

He concedes that the need may be real, "but sometimes it's hard to get useful information from doctors and scientists. Some of the most brilliant and successful people in medicine and scientists can give you the worst sort of testimony. They just don't know how to get themselves across."

#### Passing the Bill

The battle has just started for Fogarty after he has cajoled witnesses in acknowledging that they could use some more money. From there on, Fogarty has to carry his budgetary increases through the full Appropriations Committee, which views with skepticism any budget request and instinctively reaches for the knife. Fogarty's mastery of his subject, his ability to rattle off lists of lifesaving developments that have resulted from federally financed research, and his glowing predictions of great breakthroughs around the corner, tend to ward off his budget-paring colleagues. When the appropriation bill gets to the floor, Fogarty stands ready to inundate with facts any economy-minded member who questions the need, and to demand a roll-call vote whenever his budgets are threatened.

The issue, as Fogarty puts it, is: are you for or against medical research. With the issue stated in those terms, few congressmen choose to oppose John E. Fogarty.—D.S.G.