

the annual charade, in which the administration requests a given sum, and then the House and Senate appropriation subcommittees which pass on these funds up the amount by a hundred million dollars or so, has raised serious doubt about who is putting out reliable information on what the nation should spend on medical research. Many members who share these doubts will readily acknowledge that there can be no precise answer to the question of when a given amount is too much, but having gone along for some time with the annual practice of giving all that is asked for and then some, they are beginning to wonder whether they are not indulging in attractive, but needless, generosity. (Since 1955, appropriations for NIH have been more than \$600 million in excess of administration requests.) And their concern is further intensified by NIH's insistence that conventional accounting practices are not usefully applicable to research activities. This was a point that James A. Shannon, NIH's director, tried to get across last March when he testified before a House Government Operations Subcommittee, but though Shannon's case may make a lot of sense to NIH's administrators and grantees, it might just as well be recognized that it is utterly incomprehensible to a legislative body whose principal source of power is the control of money.

Research Is Different

Stating that NIH believes its funds can be spent most fruitfully by carefully selecting grantees and then leaving them alone to pursue their research, he pointed out that "Research is an activity fundamentally different from government procurement. The rules properly applicable to government procurement activities to reduce costs and protect the taxpayer are not well fitted to research activities and should not be uncritically applied to them. . . . If one takes the position that strict expenditure controls should be placed on grantees and their institutions through rules set in Washington, this is not a procedural suggestion dealing solely with the administration of funds. This position is a direct attack on the fundamental philosophy and operating method which is at the core of the grant operation and which accounts for its high productivity." And he added that "A grant is a trust which makes the effective expenditure of funds the responsibility of the recipient."

The committee, while not unsympathetic to what it acknowledged were

problems peculiar to the administration of medical research, left no doubt that it intended to force "reforms" on Shannon whether he liked it or not. "It appears," the committee said in concluding its report, "that Congress has been overzealous in appropriating money for health research. The conclusion is inescapable, from a study of NIH's loose administrative practices, that the pressure for spending increasingly large appropriations has kept NIH from giving adequate attention to basic management problems. The committee expects NIH to give high priority at this time to the task of correcting its management deficiencies and strengthening its capacity for the effective and efficient operation of these vital health programs."

Doubts Remain

The command for "high priority" has resulted in the fairly swift publication of the grants manual along with what one NIH official has called "a whole change in tone," but, however distressing it may be to NIH and the medical research community, it appears that some important elements in Congress have just begun to whet their appetites for what some call a "crackdown" on NIH.

In commenting on the manual, one person close to the committee indicated he did not feel at all reassured by NIH's approach on the "reforms" to be instituted. "There's a lot of phoniness in this manual," he said, "and we don't feel that NIH is leveling with us." NIH, he said, is engaging in "boondoggling, favoritism, and loose handling of money," and the new procedures set forth in the manual do not, in his view, offer very much assurance that such practices will be eliminated.

"We intend to give NIH an opportunity to give the new procedures adequate time to be tested, but we don't feel very confident that the changes it has made are really enough." The committee, he added, would hold further hearings in the coming session, but no date has been set.

This is the sort of tough talk that has caused NIH officials to become jumpy to the point where they suspect a congressman may be hiding behind any lab bench. An unagitated appraisal of NIH-Congressional relations suggests, however, that medical research and its chief governmental instrument, NIH, still occupy an enviably warm position in the collective heart of Congress. What has happened to NIH is simply that the days when it could

write its own ticket in Congress are drawing to a close, and from now on, it is going to have to cope with the skeptical attitudes that virtually all federal agencies encounter in their dealings with Congress.

This change has caused some NIH officials to conclude that bleak days lie ahead, but there is no conceivable possibility that Congress will reverse the pattern of annually enlarging NIH's appropriation; nor is there likely to be any decisive pressure for NIH to impose on its grantees a massive bookkeeping operation that would satisfy Congress's instinct for fiscal tidiness, although it is possible that some tighter procedures may have to be adopted. What is likely to happen is that more and more Congressmen will swing to the view that NIH's yearly growth should conform to the administration's recommendations, rather than to the established practice of generously exceeding the administration request. In the last session, Senator William E. Proxmire, Democrat of Wisconsin, led a hastily assembled campaign to accomplish just that object. He failed, 32-48, but he can be expected to make a more carefully prepared attempt in the next session.

Pressure to bring NIH's appropriation down to the administration's figure is also expected to increase within the appropriations committees. One of the most remarkable facets of NIH's Cinderella existence is that these committees, though of a conservative stripe, have consistently gone along with subcommittee recommendations for generosity. This is largely because of skillful performances by the subcommittee chairmen, Representatives John Fogarty, Democrat of Rhode Island, and Senator Lister Hill, Democrat of Alabama, but, neither in fact, has had as easy a time of it as is often assumed, and there is evidence now that opposition within their committees is hardening.

—D. S. GREENBERG

Geological Survey: Effort Starts To Let Public Know That It Exists

The U.S. Geological Survey, a small and old research agency that has been relatively inconspicuous amid the goliaths of government science, has undertaken a campaign to acquaint the public—and, hopefully, Congress—with its existence and functions.

The campaign has its origins in the drubbing that the Survey received last

year in Congress when it sought \$1.5 million to establish a water research institute. Water is coming to be a promising field for an expanded federal effort, and the Survey, which has tended to mind its business and not mix in politics or public relations, found itself altogether outclassed when it presented its claim for a key role in a federal water resources program. Its competitors in this field include the Public Health Service, the Department of Agriculture, and the Army Engineers, none of which has been shy about pressing its claims before the public and Congress.

The first product of the Survey's campaign is a handsomely printed, 68-page booklet published last week, "Water Problems in the Springfield-Holyoke (Mass.) Area," available for 40 cents from the Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C. Written in laymen's terms and generously filled with photographs, maps, and easily understood graphs, the booklet discusses the water resources of the area, pointing out along the way that the Geological Survey plays a valuable role in assuring adequate supplies. Currently in the works for the lay public are individual reports on the water resources of five states, as well as publications on the hydrology of several national parks.

In the past the Survey has not been altogether oblivious of the general public. Its "Primer on Water" is something of a best seller among government publications, but such efforts have been quite infrequent. The bulk of its publications have been aimed at a professional audience. Their quality has established the Survey as one of the most competent research agencies in government, but it has become plain to Survey members that the approbation of a handful of specialists does very little to sway congressional sentiment.

The present intention, according to Survey officials, is to let the taxpayers know that the agency is doing an important job for them. Toward this goal, the Survey recently hired a full-time public information officer, Frank Forrester, a meteorologist who regularly broadcasts weather over Washington area TV. This is a post which it had previously never considered very important, but Survey officials have now concluded that, in the quest for appropriations, obscurity is not a useful characteristic. This conclusion may be offensive to some people, but it reflects reality.—D.S.G.

Loyalty Affidavit: Compromise on Repeal Quiets One Controversy

One quick result of the repeal in October of the non-Communist affidavit requirement for loans and fellowships under the National Defense Education Act has been the inclusion in the loan program of 17 colleges and universities which have been abstaining because of the affidavit. The repeal, accomplished unobtrusively during the busy closing days of the 87th Congress, has quieted one controversy in which issues of academic freedom and civil rights were raised, but the form of the provision substituted for the affidavit appears to create new problems or, at any rate, new precedents.

Congress eliminated the affidavit not only from NDEA but also from the National Science Foundation law. Public discussion had centered on the NDEA affidavit, probably because 32 colleges and universities stayed out of the loan program in protest against the affidavit and many others had objected to it publicly. The NSF affidavit never attracted much attention although it was in the NSF regulations for fellowships for more than 10 years and, in fact, provided a model for the NDEA loyalty formula.

An oath of allegiance, "to support and defend the constitution and laws of the United States . . .," about which there seems to have been little dispute, stays in both laws.

The abstaining institutions which filed "provisional applications" for the undergraduate loan program contingent on repeal of the affidavit and will participate in the NDEA programs this year are as follows: Amherst, Antioch, Brandeis, Brown, Colby, Harvard, Mills, Mt. Holyoke, Oberlin, Princeton, Sarah Lawrence, Smith, University of Chicago, Vassar, Wesleyan (Conn.), Wilmington (Ohio), and Yale.

Four institutions which filed provisional applications but probably will not participate this year are Reed, Swarthmore, Bennington, and Pacific Oaks College in California.

Still on the list of institutions which

declined to participate or which withdrew because of the affidavit and did not file provisional applications are Beloit, Bryn Mawr, Colby Junior College, Goucher, Grinnell, Haverford, International Theological Seminary in Georgia, New School for Social Research, Newton College of the Sacred Heart (Mass.), Radcliffe, and St. John's College (Md.)

For the institutions that stayed out of the NDEA programs and for many that went in because they decided they couldn't afford to forgo the loan funds for their students, the chief objection to the affidavit lay in the claim that it posed a threat to the freedom of the university to conduct its own affairs.

The institution was required to administer the oath of allegiance and to obtain from the borrower an affidavit to the effect that he did not believe in and was not a member of "any organization that believes in or teaches the overthrow of the United States Government by force or violence or by unconstitutional means."

Critics of the affidavit protested that it was unfair to single out college students for loyalty tests among the many groups—farmers, small business operators, the unemployed, for example—who get federal help.

The most serious criticism, however, was directed at the fact that the affidavit made a belief rather than an act a legal criterion of loyalty.

Efforts to repeal the affidavit were first made shortly after the passage of the NDEA in 1958. President Eisenhower indicated that he favored repeal, and the first serious attempt to remove the affidavit requirement was made in 1959 when a repealer introduced by Senators Kennedy and Clark reached the floor of the Senate but was returned to committee.

In the 1960 session it became obvious that if the affidavit were to be removed, a compromise would be necessary. A group of influential Senators had made it clear that they would