

or not, just as the Republicans had begun to assail the administration for limiting the Air Force's space role, the administration announced that Air Force astronauts will be given a chance to ride along with their civilian counterparts in the two-man Gemini capsule.

The aerospace trade press, which frequently thinks like the Air Force but does not have to contend with McNamara's blue pencil, has raised the question of whether the Gemini role is nothing more than hush money. Whatever the answer may be, the fact is that any assault on the administration's views of the military potential in space is now considerably undermined because a few Air Force men are scheduled to go into orbit.—D. S. GREENBERG

Population: National Academy

Group Nearing Completion of Study

A 9-member group appointed by the National Academy of Sciences as a Committee to Consider Population Problems is nearing the completion of its studies and expects to report to the Academy sometime this month.

The committee, which was appointed without announcement last fall, is headed by William D. McElroy, chairman of the Department of Biology and director of the McCollum-Pratt Institute, Johns Hopkins University. The committee has surveyed the state of knowledge on population problems and the existing means for disseminating this knowledge. Its report will include recommendations for research and other activities affecting population problems. The study was undertaken at the initiative of the Academy.

Postscript to Portland's Penguins

The machinations employed by the Portland (Oregon) Zoological Gardens to obtain a flock of penguins from Antarctica were described in this space last 26 October. The penguins, it can now be reported, were delivered to Portland on 1 December. At last count, according to zoo director Jack Marks, 16 of 42 had died, apparently of respiratory ailments. The National Science Foundation, which sanctioned the penguin lift against its own judgment and under pressure, has no comment.—D.S.G.

Education: President's Program Provides More Room at Top

Hearings began Monday before the House Education and Labor Committee on an administration bill which combines more than a score of proposals for education legislation. Congress over the past 2 years has failed to give final approval to any of several aid-to-education measures which the administration has given high priorities, and the decision this year to resort to an omnibus bill has not been received as a tactical masterstroke by either foes or friends of federal aid on Capitol Hill.

Tied together in the bulky National Improvement of Education Act of 1963 are major programs to benefit higher education, elementary and secondary schools, and vocational education, along with help, on a smaller scale, for such allied causes as adult education and community libraries.

The administration's all-purpose bill mingles proposals which would probably command majorities if they could be steered successfully to the floor with others afflicted by the controversies over federal control, race, or religion which have made federal aid to education the most hagridden of national issues.

Many of the proposals in the 24 principal sections of the bill have led previous lives as separate legislation, but the bill cannot be fairly described as a mixture of old wines in a big new bottle. New programs have been added, old ones have been modified, and the package has been carefully assembled to meet both the wants and the objections of the special-interest groups which have demonstrated their power to block education legislation.

The strategy of the big bill appears to have two main objectives: (i) to provide something for nearly everybody so that most will acquiesce in the total program; (ii) to confront Congress, and particularly the House and Senate education committees, with the whole range of education problems, together with proposals to attack these problems.

Hearings on the omnibus bill opened this week before the full House Education and Labor Committee—a rather unusual course of action, since a combination bill would ordinarily be broken up and parceled out to appropriate subcommittees for hearings.

The new Commissioner of Education, Francis Keppel (*Science*, 7 December), is reported to have sought full committee hearings because he felt they afforded a forum which would enable Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Celebrezze, himself, and other administration advocates to tell the whole story to the group which would have to report out education legislation. Customarily, a full committee is inclined to accept legislation more or less in the form in which it is approved by one of its subcommittees. Often, only four or five subcommittee members have attended hearings with any faithfulness.

It is expected that when the more prestigious witnesses have had their say, the bill will be cut up into its component parts and these will be turned over to the responsible subcommittees for action.

Objections to the omnibus approach have been voiced by Republicans on the Education and Labor Committee, who charge that the President has made it more difficult to pass any education legislation this year by failing to set priorities. The Republicans offered some priorities of their own by proposing action in three areas: a program of grants and loans for construction of academic facilities for colleges and universities; extension and expansion of the National Defense Education Act, which includes a variety of programs for both higher education and elementary and secondary schools; and continuation of assistance to federally "impacted" areas where relatively large numbers of children of federal employees attend schools. Both NDEA and impacted-areas legislation will expire this year, but legislation in these