

## **Congress: Decision To Break Up Comprehensive Education Bill, Act on Parts, Taken in House**

While the "omnibus" approach to education legislation was being coddled on the Senate slope of Capitol Hill last week, it was being cudgeled, probably fatally, on the House of Representatives' side.

The object of congressional attention was the National Education Improvement Act, which combines two dozen proposals affecting various types of education in what amounts to an inventory of what the administration considers the most urgent needs for education legislation.

This eclectic education bill departs from the usual Hill practice of writing separate legislation dealing with the separate sectors of education—higher education, for example, or elementary and secondary schools, or vocational education, or education for the handicapped. The customary piecemeal approach, however, has not been working, for all of the administration's education proposals in the first 2 years have fallen victim to the controversies over federal control, race, and, particularly, religion.

Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare Anthony J. Celebrezze and Education Commissioner Francis Keppel have both urged that the new omnibus bill be kept intact, in part to confront the Congress and the public with the full range of educational needs. In terms of tactics, the omnibus bill is regarded as the administration's formula for giving the influential education interest groups a common stake in a combination bill to prevent the kind of falling out among the friends of federal aid for education which made enemies unnecessary in the last session of Congress.

A successful precedent for the omnibus bill, though a unique one, was the National Defense Education Act which was enacted in 1958. The N.D.E.A., too, combined a varied assortment of education proposals and claimed the support of an alliance of education interest groups, which hung together until the bill was passed. With its concentration on science, mathematics, and foreign language education, however, the N.D.E.A. had a potent national security justification and was passed in the shadow of the first Sputnik.

Until last week, at least, the new truce

was still being observed, if somewhat uneasily, within the education lobby, notably by three major elements: the American Council on Education, which more than any other organization speaks for higher education; the National Education Association, the biggest national organization of public school teachers and administrators; and the National Catholic Welfare Conference, which represents the views of the Catholic schools and the church hierarchy in Washington.

The new Commissioner of Education, Francis Keppel, is credited with effective work as an informal, one-man armistice commission this year. Tension between the NEA and the ACE, for example, ran rather high last year when the NEA came out in full-dress opposition on constitutional grounds to a bill providing assistance to both public and private colleges and universities. The NEA action helped to immobilize the bill, which the ACE strongly supported. The two influential groups so far this year have avoided policy clashes, and Keppel appears to have helped keep the peace.

### **Pressure Exerted**

Pressure to break up the omnibus bill has been exerted all along by proponents of sections of the bill that are regarded as having good prospects for independent passage. These sections include vocational education programs, aid to handicapped children, funds for library services, parts of the N.D.E.A., and the so-called affected areas legislation, which provides for payments to school districts where substantial numbers of the children of government employees are enrolled.

This "impacted areas" legislation is popular among many Congressmen who are unenthusiastic about other forms of federal aid to education, and the advocates of the omnibus bill regard it as an important sweetener in the big bill.

Because the impacted areas legislation now in effect expires this year, there is particularly heavy insistence that the law be extended promptly, whatever happens to the omnibus bill, so that superintendents and principals can make their plans.

It was in an atmosphere of mild suspense, therefore, that hearings opened this week before the Senate subcommittee on education. The subcommittee chairman, Wayne Morse (D.-Ore.), immediately answered spec-

ulation by saying that he intended to keep the omnibus bill in one piece at least through Senate hearings, "to convince the American people this program ought to be adopted now."

One of the problems for the administration in championing the omnibus bill has been a skepticism in Congress, strongest apparently in the House, that the omnibus bill could actually be enacted. It was perhaps the inevitable happening last week, then, when House Education and Labor Committee chairman Adam Clayton Powell (D.-New York) and his subcommittee chairmen met and decided to dismember the omnibus bill and to push separate measures: a higher education bill and a "little omnibus bill" composed of the least controversial, most popular of the other proposals in the omnibus bill.

Chief victim of such a partition would appear to be the proposal for aid to elementary and secondary schools, always a controversial subject and now sorely beset by the church-state issue.

The effect of the carving up of the omnibus bill on the alliance which was formed to support it is, as this is written, not clear, but the NEA, which is mainly interested in elementary and secondary education, cannot be expected to be happy over the expressions of opinion by Powell and others that school aid is dead for the session.

Certainly there will be an attempt to make the new, smaller education package acceptable to all, but it seems that in creating the omnibus bill the administration may have built a better mousetrap from which it must now contrive to escape.—JOHN WALSH

## **Everest: The American Expedition Is Studying Itself under Stress as Part of Its Scientific Mission**

The American Everest Expedition, which will return with laurels earned as the first American party to climb the highest mountain, should also be bringing back data from the most ambitious scientific program ever conducted in the Himalayas.

Projects in the physical, life, and behavioral sciences were included in the expedition's plans, and in the established pattern of American research, a substantial part of the backing for the scientific effort came from federal agencies—primarily the National Science Foundation, the Office of Naval Re-