

# News and Comment

## **Congress: Its Critics Fulminate, But Some Insiders See Chance for Most Productive Session in Years**

To hardly anyone's surprise, the first session of the 88th Congress has turned into a marathon, with the legislators jogging along, apparently saving themselves for the traditional uphill sprint in the weeks before adjournment, which is not expected before Hallowe'en, perhaps not until Christmas.

As the long, dry session dragged into August, Congress, which is more accustomed to brickbats than bouquets anyway, seemed to be getting more than its usual ration of reproaches from the press and academic critics. The unproductive legislative record of the 88th was noted, and congressional mechanics were deplored as the cause of inaction.

In addition, Congress was lectured on its ethics and behavior. There have been stories about congressional junketing, speeches in favor of applying conflict-of-interest rules more stringently to legislators, and even a hearing on a newspaperman's charges that one Congressman had profited from inside information about plans for land acquisition on Capitol Hill, rather in the manner of an opportunistic city councilman. Then there were the suggestions that the House of Representatives was indulging itself in Pharaoh-like splendor by building itself a big new office building.

The legislators have been nettled by this criticism, as the angry reactions to a *Life* magazine story last week on pork-barrel spending revealed. And a consciousness that the congressional image is not at its most brightly burnished probably contributed to an unwillingness within Congress this year to consider voting pay raises for themselves, for Cabinet officers, and for other top federal officials. Thus, the legislators effectively put a ceiling, probably until after the next elections, of \$22,500 on salaries of top government scientists and administrators, since it is a time-tested truism that no federal officials are paid more than legislators, except for the President, the Vice Pres-

ident, Cabinet members, and Supreme Court justices.

The most insistent and weighty criticism has come from the columnists, editorial writers, and political scientists who have been calling for reform of the rules and organization of Congress. The burden of their censure is that the seniority system converts Congress into a gerontocracy that is both unresponsive and undemocratic, and that the rules of both houses tend to prevent rather than permit debate and action on legislation.

Inside Congress there has been some support for radical reform, but it has come mainly from legislators who do not stand at the levers of power in either House or Senate. Last week, however, a Senate Rules subcommittee reported to the full committee three measures aimed at simplifying and speeding up congressional business.

One proposal, sponsored by Senator Joseph Clark (D-Pa.) and about 30 other Senators, would set up a joint Senate-House committee, with six members from each house, to make a study and recommend ways to improve the organization of Congress.

Another, much more modest, proposal, introduced by Senator Frank Church (D-Idaho), would permit committees to work through the morning hour when the Senate goes into session for routine business, such as formal speechmaking by Senators on subjects of less-than-earthshaking import.

While the third proposal, advanced by Senator John O. Pastore (D-R.I.), would establish a "limited germaneness rule," which would require that debate be germane to the subject at hand during 3 hours each day, the reformers have avoided hitting head on, the highly sensitive matter of the Senate rules on debate which permit the filibuster. The subcommittee voted, for example, to exclude from the joint committee study Senate Rule 22, which prescribes the method of closing off Senate debate.

There is no doubt, as Senator Carl Hayden (D-Ariz.) observed, that many Senators are interested in ways to "expedite and simplify legislative proc-

esses." And it is possible that his subcommittee's proposals may prevail. However, any changes are likely to be modest ones, for there is no real sign that Congress has been goaded by criticism into revolutionizing itself.

And one of the reasons is that many in Congress are optimistic about legislative prospects this year. The critics, they will tell you, judge Congress by what has happened on the floors of the House and Senate so far and this is deceiving. Congress started out this year with one main purpose in view—to pass a tax bill. The House Ways and Means Committee has worked steadily on the bill and last week virtually completed the job save for the writing of a report and the formality of a final vote. Congress set its pace to conform to the timing of the tax bill, but then in June the civil rights crisis peaked and a new major element was injected into the session.

The railroad work rules dispute also has been hanging over the reluctant head of Congress all summer and was the subject of the hearings in both houses. And then last week the test ban treaty debate began to take attention and time in the Senate.

The picture in Congress then is hardly one of inactivity. Furthermore, if Congress passes a tax bill and a major civil rights bill before going home the session will have been a highly respectable one in terms of significant legislation. In addition, advocates of education legislation see 1963 as possibly a banner year.

In successive weeks the House has passed a revised Vocation Education Bill [*Science* 140, 1196 (14 June)] and the College Aid Bill, which provides \$230 million annually in matching grants and \$120 million a year in loans over 3 years for construction, rehabilitation, and improvement of undergraduate academic facilities, plus \$145 million over the 3-year period to establish or improve graduate facilities.

In May the House also passed a Health Professions Educational Assistance Bill [*Science* 140, 469 (3 May)]. Enactment into law of these three bills would mark perhaps the biggest year ever for education legislation.

The three measures, however, await action by the Senate, and the "liberal" Senate is in general lagging behind the "conservative" House in its work. The Senate Finance Committee will not begin on a tax bill until the House passes its tax measure, and if a civil rights bill reaches the Senate Floor, a

last-ditch filibuster is apparently guaranteed.

At this point, therefore, it appears to be largely up to the Senate to determine whether the performance of Congress this year will confirm or confound its critics—JOHN WALSH

### **Mixed Band of Sponsors Propose Investigation of Federal Research**

The burgeoning of federal research programs in recent years has inspired growing misgivings in Congress about coordination and control of these programs, and last week this uneasiness found expression when the House Rules Committee opened hearings on a proposal, originating with four of its members, for the creation of a select committee in the House to investigate federal research.

The Rules Committee provides a significant forum for this particular discussion. Not only is the committee a kind of microcosm of liberal-conservative forces in the House of Representatives but also its prestige virtually assures that influential committee chairmen and members will take the hearings seriously and declare themselves candidly on the issue.

Introduction of the resolution caused not a little speculation because the four Rules Committee sponsors are at least as often divided as united on the legislation which comes before the committee en route to the floor. Rules Committee Chairman Howard W. Smith (D-Va.) and Clarence J. Brown (R-Ohio), ranking minority member, are conservatives who very often see eye to eye on restricting spending and federal spheres of activity. On the other hand, Representative Carl A. Elliott (D-Ala.), who before he was named to the Rules Committee served on the House Education and Labor Committee and is regarded as progenitor of the National Defense Education Act, and Richard W. Bolling (D-Mo.), who was one of late Speaker Sam Rayburn's lieutenants, are viewed as representing differing strains of liberalism.

Several other House members introduced similar resolutions, including Representative John Fogarty (D-R.I.) and Melvin Laird (R-Wis.), chairman and ranking minority member, respectively, of the Appropriations subcommittee which handles the budget of the Public Health Service's National Institutes of Health, and Olin E. Teague (D-Tex.), chairman of the Veterans Af-

fairs Committee and second ranking Democrat on the House Science and Astronautics Committee. Because this support cut across both party and coalition lines, there was some mystification about the intent of the move for an investigation of R&D. The Elliott Resolution (H.R. 455), on which the hearings, formally, are being held, specifies that the committee shall not restrict itself in its inquiries but shall give special attention to "i) the overall total amount of annual expenditures on research programs; ii) what departments and agencies of the Government are conducting research, at what costs and with what results; iii) the amounts being expended by the various agencies and departments in grants for research to colleges, private industry and every form of student scholarships; iv) what facilities, if any, exist for coordinating the various and sundry research programs, including grants to colleges and universities as well as scholarship grants."

Under the resolution, the Speaker of the House would appoint a five-member committee and name a member as chairman. The committee would be expected to make its report by 1 September 1964.

On these terms, a committee would have a roving commission. Such a committee would be expected to collect complete data on the extent of federal research programs and the amount of money being spent on them. But in the matter of evaluation of the programs the resolution is by no means clear.

There is a group of economy-minded legislators who believe that the rapid growth of the annual federal research budget—an increase of some \$10 billion in a decade—has gotten away from Congress, and that control must be re-established, on grounds of congressional responsibility and fiscal soundness. At the hearings last week, this point of view was expressed by one legislator who said, "We want to put some kind of horizon on the one program which has no limits—research."

There were indications during the 2 days of hearings last week that some of the economizers would like the investigating committee to look into specific projects with a view to judging whether or not they were worth while. Congress until now has concerned itself mainly with laying down the broad lines on which research was to be conducted and with nonscientific details such as contracting procedures. Congressional investigators who pushed into new ter-

ritory would probably have their competence in research evaluation and their motives sternly questioned.

Another group of legislators sees the growth of federal research efforts as both necessary and beneficial, but feels that if overlap and waste exist, they should be uncovered now, put in proper perspective, and corrected, lest they be disclosed later by hostile critics and used to discredit the research program in general.

These legislators seem to feel that the investigating committee should look closely at overall federal organization for research and point out how duplications in research can be ended and how anomalies, such as the differences in overhead payments paid by different agencies, can be corrected.

Opposition to the whole idea of an investigating committee was expressed at the hearings by some of the chairmen of committees that have authority over agencies which conduct and sup-

### **Deputy Director for OST**

Colin M. MacLeod, a microbiologist at New York University's School of Medicine, has just been named Deputy Director of the Office of Science and Technology in the Executive Office of the President.

The \$20,500 post has been vacant since OST was established 13 months ago. The appointment is subject to senatorial confirmation. As number-two man in the agency, MacLeod, along with OST director Jerome B. Wiesner, would be available to testify before Congress.

The new deputy director, who is noted for research in bacterial genetics and immunology, has been active as a government consultant. His appointment marks the first time a life scientist has been selected for full-time service in the presidential science advisory machinery. MacLeod is currently chairman of the life sciences panel of the President's Science Advisory Committee and head of the PSAC group that recently reported on pesticide hazards. His appointment comes at a time when OST is becoming increasingly involved in federal programs in health and medicine.