

than from others. He censures them harshly for not accepting full responsibility for the effects on society of their work. And his tone when speaking of scientists was often reproachful, as it is in this excerpt from his 1937 book of essays, *Ends and Means*.

"In our institutions of higher learning about ten times as much is spent on the natural sciences as on the sciences of man. All our efforts are directed, as usual, to producing improved means to unimproved ends. Meanwhile intensive specialization tends to reduce each branch of science to a condition almost approaching meaninglessness. There are many men of science who are actually proud of this state of things. Specialized meaninglessness has come to be regarded, in certain circles, as a kind of hall-mark of true science. Those who attempt to relate the small particular results of specialization with human life as a whole and its relation to the universe at large are accused of being bad scientists, charlatans, self-advertisers. The people who make such accusations do so, of course, because they do not wish to take any responsibility for anything, but merely to retire to their cloistered laboratories, and there amuse themselves by performing delightfully interesting researches. Science and art are only too often a superior kind of dope, possessing this advantage over booze and morphia: that they can be indulged in with a good conscience and with the conviction that, in the process of indulging, one is leading the 'higher life.' Up to a point, of course, this is true. The life of the scientist or the artist is a higher life. Unfortunately, when led in an irresponsible, one-sided way, the higher life is probably more harmful for the individual than the lower life of the average sensual man and certainly, in the case of the scientist, much worse for society at large."

—JOHN WALSH

Congress: Hearings on Science Advisory Staff Reveals Interest, but No Strong Inside Demand

Without much fanfare or notice in the daily press, a subcommittee of the House Administration Committee last week held a morning hearing on proposals to give Congress its own science advisory staff.

The House Administration Committee handles housekeeping, staffing, and

budget matters related to the operation of the House which are mundane in the larger legislative sense but are close to the hearts of congressmen. The science advisory hearing was held before the subcommittee on accounts, whose chairman, Representative Samuel N. Friedel, a Maryland Democrat, displayed a measure of unpartisan magnanimity in scheduling the hearing, since both proposals before the committee were introduced by members of the Republican minority.

Under consideration were two bills, different in detail but similar in general provisions—H.R. 6866, sponsored by Representative Abner W. Sibal of Connecticut (*Science*, 21 June), and H.R. 8066, by Representative William B. Widnall of New Jersey. The Widnall bill is a companion measure to one introduced in the Senate by Senator E. L. Bartlett (D-Alaska), who has been perhaps the most insistent advocate of better scientific advice for Congress.

All the witnesses who appeared at the hearings last Wednesday expressed approval of the idea, in varying degrees. Representatives of three associations of professional engineers declared themselves generally in favor, and the witness for the American Psychological Association endorsed the proposal but argued that psychologists should be included among the science advisers.

The witness who went furthest in arguing that defects in the present federal science establishment make science advisory apparatus for Congress essential was John Heller, executive director of the New England Institute for Medical Research, located in Sibal's district. At the hearings Heller demonstrated that he had spent time and effort reviewing federal research agency reports and talking to scientists and administrators involved in research for the government, and also that he is a man with active capacity for feeling outrage. Heller said that while some federal agencies are doing excellent work, others, conspicuously, are not. He cited government literature in which agencies falsely claimed credit for specific pieces of fruitful research, and charged that some agencies are using research not necessarily connected with their missions to build budgets and bureaucratic empires. Heller has had experience as a recipient of federal grants and as an agency consultant, and he gave advice on science to Richard M. Nixon during the last presidential campaign.

Heller did not speak from a prepared statement but said he would submit documentation for his remarks, to be included in the record of the hearing. Friedel announced that the record will be kept open for 2 weeks to permit other interested persons to submit statements. The hearings should be in print and available fairly soon afterward.

Inside Congress, the feeling seems to be spreading that Congress faces two major problems in dealing with science: (i) the present dependence by Congress on the executive branch undermines the legislative branch's constitutional responsibility to exercise judgment independent of the Executive, and (ii) authority for science is scattered over so many committees that it is virtually impossible to develop balanced and coherent scientific programs in many vital fields.

The practical difficulties implied in the operation of a Congressional Office of Science and Technology (COST) such as the Bartlett-Widnall bill suggests were barely intimated in the single-morning session. How a congressional science advisory apparatus can be meshed with the committee structure and where to draw the line between Congress and the Executive on the making of science policy are two posers.

There is unquestionably an upsurge in concern over science in Congress, but at present it is taking an investigatory form.

The hour for action on proposals for a science advisory staff will likely be most propitious when results are in on studies such as that being carried out by the Elliott Committee (see page 1443) and when and if Congress can bring itself to modify its rules and structure.—J.W.

Kennedy's Assassination: Study Organized by Social Scientists

The day after the assassination of President Kennedy, a group of social scientists met informally in Washington to organize a study of how Americans were reacting to the terrible event. The assassination, it was felt, fits into a category of events known to the social psychologists and psychiatrists, as well as to the rest of us, as "disasters"—fires, floods, tornadoes, wars. Study of it, according to one spokesman, could "add to the tradition