

ity party in Congress and the President are of the same political denomination, of the mutually embarrassing results of some investigations.

Minority Leader Ford has suggested that the Government Operations committees might be controlled by the party not represented in the White House to assure congressional vigilance. This suggestion apparently has not been received with wide enthusiasm in Congress.

The General Accounting Office, an arm of Congress created to assist in providing legislative control over receipt and expenditure of public funds, has proved to be an effective auditing agency, usually *ex post facto*. It does not perform the evaluative role for Congress which the Bureau of the Budget, for example, has acquired in the executive. The GAO, however, a separate organization which is of, but not in, Congress, may provide a model for a corps of professionals which could help Congress with its surveillance of administration.

Closer oversight of science programs seems certainly to be in congressional minds, as the creation of subcommittees on research and development in the space, armed services, and government operations committees indicates. And House Interior Committee chairman Oren Harris (D-Ark.) recently announced plans for a detailed study of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

The oversight question will certainly be raised during the new study on congressional reorganization authorized to take place this year. It is clear that if Congress doesn't wish to resign itself to being Number 2 behind the executive, it will have to try harder.

—JOHN WALSH

Defense: California Planners Try Novel Approach to Problems of Economic Reconversion

Although the war in Vietnam has managed to make the question of large-scale reconversion seem utopian, adjustments to the closing of bases and the defense economies initiated by the Johnson administration give people plenty to worry about nonetheless. Chief among the worriers is the state of California, where an estimated 30 percent of the state's manufacturing employment is tied directly to defense production. In the area around San

Diego the proportion leaps to about 80 percent. Faced with the prospect of wide unemployment, California has begun an experiment to discover whether its scientific and engineering manpower can be usefully employed in other fields.

The experiment has a particularly novel quality. California's approach is not to offer its vast army of aerospace engineers retraining but to see if other, nondefense, problems will respond to the "systems analysis" approach with which the engineers are already familiar. The hope is not just that the aerospace companies will prove to be competent in diverse areas but that they can demonstrate their competence in ways that will enable them to attract further nondefense business.

State officials began the project by considering a list of problems suggested by theorists of reconversion as likely to provide a fair test of the R & D community's ability to turn its skills to major public problems. Several additional criteria were used, among them the intrinsic importance of the problems to the state of California and the availability of funds to support large-scale undertakings in various fields if such efforts were suggested by the initial studies. From the list of possibilities, four subjects were chosen, and bids were invited from the industry.

The result of the competition, in which about 40 companies participated, is that Aerojet-General Corporation is now studying a long-range system to handle the state's waste-management problems; the Space-General Corporation is studying California's system of criminal justice; North American Aviation is developing specifications for a study of transportation in California through the year 2015; and Lockheed Missiles and Space is considering the requirements of an information system for the state government. "State officials are not so naïve as to believe that the four . . . contracts are going to have any significant economic impact on the research and development community," said a letter from state finance director Hale Champion to the *Los Angeles Times*. "But, should these preliminary studies lay the groundwork for the kind of massive research and development assault that any one of these study areas requires in order to provide significant breakthroughs, then our . . . investment indeed will have been worthwhile—both from the standpoint of research and development

workload for California industry and from the standpoint of the economies and other public benefits to be derived from systems improvement in the areas of study." Each of the contracts is for \$100,000, and all are scheduled to be completed between June and September 1965.

To supervise the contracts, the state has set up a small group under the auspices of the Department of Finance, which has responsibility for most of the state's economic development programs. Although state officials are monitoring the industrial contracts, they are frankly skeptical about their suitability for such a task. "We haven't got any experience along those lines," one official pointed out half-humorously. "Let's face it—we might be completely snowed." To keep from being "snowed" the state has invited the help of another R & D firm, the Systems Development Corporation, to assist in monitoring and evaluating the aerospace studies. "I suppose they could snow us too," the same official commented, "but we've worked with them before on some data processing problems, and we trust them."

So far, except for a minor dispute between the California legislature and the executive branch over the funding of the project, the experiment has aroused no opposition. The project originated entirely in California and has proceeded without outside advice. In Washington, however, federal officials in the Pentagon, the Department of Commerce, and the Disarmament Agency, are watching the experiment with great interest. And, judging by the number of unsolicited cheers from other defense-dependent communities across the nation, California officials feel confident that their efforts are raising hopes elsewhere as well.

—ELINOR LANGER

Announcements

A group transportation arrangement between Amsterdam, Netherlands, and Tokyo has been arranged for persons who plan to attend the international **congress of the physiological sciences**, 1–9 September in Tokyo. A plane will leave Amsterdam 17 August, and will be due in Yokohama 28 August. The trip will include 3 days in Moscow, and a 3-day side trip to Tashkent, Bokhara, and Samarkand. The return trip leaves Yokohama 17 September,