

Fulbright Program: Retrenchment Is the Word

The Fulbright program, which after World War II mushroomed into the world's most extensive international educational exchange program, has been dealt the sharpest blow in its history. Just before recessing, an economy-minded Congress reduced funds for international exchange programs by an unprecedented 30 percent—from \$46 million to \$31 million.

Officials of the State Department's Educational and Cultural Affairs Office say that the number of Fulbright grants available will drop from 3600 to 2500. The cuts will affect students and faculty selected during the coming year to hold grants during the academic year 1969-70. Hardest hit will be the programs for U.S. graduate students and exchange faculty abroad, where funds will be reduced by 67 percent. While statistics on exact cuts have not yet been developed, it is estimated that the reduction will mean a drop in the number of U.S. students participating in the program from 906 to about 300 and a drop in the number of U.S. university lecturers, research scholars, and teaching assistants from 933 to about 300.

The number of foreign students studying here will be reduced by 20 percent, a drop of about 800 students from a total of 2700, and a drop of about 260 faculty from a total of 1300.

Congress was brusque in making the reductions. Representative John J. Rooney (D-N.Y.), chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Justice, Commerce, and the Judiciary, said the committee reduced the

fellowship program because "the President does not want the public traveling abroad because of the balance-of-payments situation and these professors are bound to take some money of their own and do some purchasing. . . ." Representative Durwood G. Hall (R-Mo.) claimed that the Fulbright program duplicated and overlapped similar travel programs within the National Science Foundation, and added, "I might say that this program has supported the sending overseas of some people who have not entirely agreed with the position of the government and they never should have been allowed to go."

When the appropriations bill moved out of committee and was passed in both houses, concern for the balance-of-payments deficit and the need for a general spending reduction were stressed in the debates.

State Department officials said they had "anticipated the cut" but had not expected it would be so great. In recent years there has been some pressure on the program, and in each of the past 3 years it was cut by 10 percent (the budget in 1966 was at an all-time high of \$53 million). This year's 30-percent reduction is the deepest cut in the history of the program.

Government financing of an international educational exchange program dates back to September 1946, when freshman Senator William J. Fulbright (D-Ark.) introduced a bill to use foreign currency from the sale of surplus military property abroad to establish an international educational exchange

program. Fulbright steered the bill around such controversial issues as the jurisdiction of the federal government in international education and the possible future cost of a continuing program to the American taxpayer. Fulbright had been a professor of law and, later, president of the University of Arkansas. As a student he had spent 4 years in Europe, 3 at Oxford as a Rhodes scholar and 1 in Austria, and he was a strong advocate of an international educational program.

When the Fulbright program went into effect in 1948, it was limited to countries in which the United States had accumulated large amounts of foreign currency; these were principally in Europe. The early program provided travel funds and expenses for Americans studying in designated countries where foreign currencies were available, and it provided travel grants for foreign students studying in the United States. In 1948, the first year of the program, a total of 84 grants were made—48 to Americans, of which more than half were faculty grants; and 36 to foreigners, of which one was a faculty grant. The average amount per student grant was \$2190, although the individual grants varied greatly in size.

In 1948 Congress passed the Smith-Mundt Act, which, unlike the Fulbright Act, did not authorize bilateral agreements based on foreign currency settlements. Instead, it was financed by dollars appropriated annually by Congress. The Smith-Mundt Act was much broader and more flexible than the Fulbright Act and provided for information, entertainment, and cultural exchanges, thus going beyond the Fulbright Act, which was limited to academic exchanges. Moreover, agreements under the Smith-Mundt Act were not restricted to nations where the United States held large amounts of foreign currency. The two programs were coordinated; foreign students, for example, received Fulbright travel-fund grants and Smith-Mundt study fellowships. In 1948, some 1833 Fulbright grants were made, 831 to Americans and 1002 to foreigners. The average size of the grants was still about \$2200, and the proportion of faculty to student grants for both U.S. and foreign was about half-and-half. A total of \$6.2 million was spent in international exchange programs, about \$2 million for Smith-Mundt fellowships and about \$4 million for the Fulbright program.

In 1954, because funds from the sale of war materials were drying up and

Visits to East Europe "Discouraged"

Since the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies sent troops into Czechoslovakia last week, the State Department has been "discouraging" travel to these countries by American scientists planning to attend meetings and by other U.S. citizens. No travel ban had been put into effect at the time of the *Science* deadline; but officials say the situation is uncertain, and they are advising against visits to Czechoslovakia, the U.S.S.R., Poland, East Germany, Bulgaria, and Hungary. The caution list includes Rumania, which does not have troops in the occupying contingents. Yugoslavia is not on the list. It is estimated that more than 75 scientific meetings of interest to Americans are scheduled in Eastern Europe before the end of the year.—J.W.