

hallucinogenics. As it happened, the legislation was out of date before it went into effect because of what one ex-BDAC official calls the "hallucinogenic explosion"—that is, the LSD vogue and the snowballing use of marijuana.

In a period when the Hippie subculture flowered and a growing number of young people have sought to define their "alienation" in confrontations such as those at Columbia, Chicago, and now San Francisco, drugs have taken on an antiestablishment, anti-authority significance. For a generation who differ with their elders on both values and vices, the use of soft drugs has been elevated by some to a criticism of society.

As public men, members of Congress are self-conscious epitomes of the "straight" society, but as legislators they have shown a mixed reaction to what has been happening in the expanding drug community.

In 1966 Congress left a modest landmark when it enacted the Narcotic Addict Rehabilitation Act, which, for the first time in federal legislation, treated narcotic addiction as a disease rather than as a crime. The key section of the law was a "civil commitment" provision which allowed young narcotics offenders the option of treatment and rehabilitation therapy in place of a prison term.



John E. Ingersoll

In other significant drug legislation Congress this year followed an administration recommendation by stiffening penalties for illegal manufacture and sale of stimulant, depressant, and hallucinogenic drugs and also by providing criminal penalties for illegal possession of such drugs. Possession had not been a punishable offense under the original Drug Abuse Control Amendments of 1965, as it is under laws on hard narcotics. The House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, which reported the bill, noted its opposition to making possession a criminal offense, on the grounds of

the effects of arrest, prosecution, and criminal records on young offenders. The committee reported that it had decided to impose criminal penalties primarily "as a tool to aid in the enforcement of prohibitions against trafficking." It made illegal possession a misdemeanor punishable by a \$1000 fine or up to one year's imprisonment, or both, for the first and second offense and a \$10,000 fine or up to 3 years in prison, or both, for subsequent offenses.

The committee did, however, give courts the option of placing first offenders on probation and of setting aside the convictions of those who did not violate probation, so that they would not be left with a criminal record.

Congress thus followed the dominant punitive theme in federal drug legislation, but did give authorities greater flexibility in handling persons charged simply with possession rather than with illegal manufacture or sale of drugs.

Congressional assent to the creation of the narcotics and dangerous-drug control agencies also revealed a new adaptability. Merger had been urged as long ago as 1949 by the Hoover Commission and was a main recommendation of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Narcotics and Drug Abuse (*Science*, 14 February 1964) but was written off as a reformers' pipe dream on the assumption that the Bureau of Narcotics and its congressional champions would reject consolidation.

The atmosphere has altered, however, in 5 years. The impetus toward merger seems to have come from a legislative task force last year, and early this year President Johnson called for merger. An original proposal to move the Bureau of Narcotics from the Treasury Department into the Food and Drug Administration, with BDAC in HEW, might well have run into trouble, and the marriage contract was probably assured when James L. Goddard, who was FDA commissioner at the time, and others urged that the new agency be lodged in the Justice Department. Not only was Justice neutral ground departmentally, but also is the government's chief enforcement agency, and this reassured those who suspected a move toward "liberalization."

An oblique legislative approach was chosen in the form of a Presidential reorganization plan which would go into effect if Congress did not act negatively

Science Policy Study Group Formed

A study group has been formed to serve the interests of universities with programs in science and public policy. The Science and Public Policy Studies Group is based temporarily at M.I.T. and chaired by Eugene Skolnikoff, head of M.I.T.'s science and public policy program. The purpose of the study group is to serve as a clearing house for information, to organize symposia and conferences of interest to those in the field, to discuss academic curricula, to exchange experiences, and to develop priorities in public policy issues involving science.

The study group was organized by Skolnikoff, Christopher Wright of Columbia, Norman Kaplan of George Washington, Brewster Denny of the University of Washington, Howard Lewis of the National Academy of Sciences, and Robert Kreidler of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The idea for the study group generated from the discussions at last year's annual meeting of the AAAS in New York.

Skolnikoff told *Science* that any university with an active teaching and research program in science and public policy would be eligible for affiliation with the study group, which already has some 50 university affiliates. He said that the estimated \$20,000 needed to meet study group expenses during the first 2 years has been assured through contributions from a number of universities and a matching grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The first study group conference will be held in conjunction with the AAAS meeting in Dallas this month.—M.M.