

forts. But others argue that Hornig was a rousing success, for he presumably played a major role in convincing Zwick that NSF was in trouble and that he (Zwick) must make that clear to the President.

The fact that Hornig was reputedly not as close to the White House as some previous science advisers occasionally leads people to conclude that he was less effective than his predecessors. But many observers caution that this is not necessarily so. Even some of those who criticize Hornig believe he may have done as good a job as some or all of his predecessors. The comparison is difficult to make. There is a

paucity of published material that would shed light on the degree to which the previous three advisers (James R. Killian, Jr., Kistiakowsky, and Jerome B. Wiesner) succeeded or failed. Moreover, the various advisers were coping with different problems and different presidents, so each must be judged in his own context.

What did Hornig accomplish during his years in office? Not much, if one looks for a single grand monument that will claim attention in the pages of history as "Hornig's achievement." But quite a lot, if one looks at the cumulative impact Hornig had on scores of government programs.

There is much to praise in the Hornig record, and nothing seems more admirable than his loyalty and selflessness in sticking to an increasingly thankless job for 5 long years (Wiesner served 3 years; Killian and Kistiakowsky roughly a year and a half apiece). In one sense this was no hardship, for Hornig is said to have relished the perquisites of the job—the limousine, the opportunity to testify in Congress, the embassy receptions abroad, the chance to rub shoulders with the great and the powerful. "He enjoyed things that put him in the limelight," comments one disgruntled staffer.

But it is a little known fact that

HEW Urges Annual "Social Report"

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) issued a report last week which notes that the government lacks a "comprehensive set of statistics reflecting social progress" and calls for the establishment of "social indicators" to remedy this lack. Just before he left office, HEW Secretary Wilbur J. Cohen said that "an accurate assessment of our social well-being is essential" if we are to "make informed decisions about priorities and directions in this Nation's social programs." Social indicators, the report argues, would provide this needed assessment.

*Toward a Social Report** grew out of some recommendations by the Panel on Social Indicators, a group of 43 social scientists convened by HEW Secretary John W. Gardner in 1966. Their contributions were a first approximation to the present report, which was prepared under the direction of Mancur Olson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Social Indicators.

As its title indicates, the report is intended to be, not a prototype for future reports, but rather an invitation to criticism and suggestion, leading, perhaps, to an annual social evaluation similar to the annual economic evaluation made by the Council of Economic Advisers in its *Economic Indicators*. Social indicators, the HEW report argues, would provide an objective evaluation of existing social problems, thus making possible informed judgments about national priorities, and these indicators would serve as valuable measures of the efficacy of public programs.

"We have measures of death and illness, but no measures of physical vigor or mental health," the report says. "We have measures of the level and distribution of income, but no measures of the satisfaction that income brings. We have measures of air and water pollution, but no way to tell whether our environment is, on balance, becoming uglier or more beautiful. We have some clues about the test performance of children, but no information about their creativity or attitude toward intellectual endeavor. We have often spoken of the condition of Negro Americans, but have not had the data needed

to report on Hispanic Americans, American Indians, or any other ethnic minorities."

The report recognizes seven categories of social concern in which indicators might be developed: health and illness; social mobility; the physical environment; income and poverty; public order and safety; learning, science, and art; and participation and alienation. Most of the 200 pages are a review of what is known of the nation's condition in these seven areas, and of what ought to be known as a basis for public policy-making.

The social indicators called for in *Toward a Social Report* are to be numerical, rather than qualitative, and it is the reduction of social well-being to statistical form that is the heart of the problem. The report suggests two such social indicators: the expectancy of healthy life (years free of disability requiring institutional or permanent bed care) and the extent of "criminality." The report invites suggestions for other indicators.

The authors of the report anticipate that a comprehensive group of social indicators could be developed in about 2 years. They hope that it will be possible in the more distant future to determine the effect of public policy in the changes that occur in social indicators. For example, if expectancy of healthy life increases, this could be due to changes in private expenditures for medical care or to changes in living standards, quality of nutrition, or exposure to contagious diseases, as well as to changes in government programs. If the government programs are to be evaluated, their contribution to the increase in life expectancy would have to be distinguished from the contributions of the other factors.

Toward a Social Report is indicative of the increasing national interest in the social sciences and in improvement of the quality of life. If statistical indicators seem to lack humanity, they may at least provide better analysis than the seat-of-the-pants methods used so far.

—PETER THOMPSON

**Toward a Social Report* will be available by 15 February from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.