

influenced by the decision of the House leadership to give custody of the reorganization effort to the Rules Committee, the graveyard of other reform efforts, and by the choice of Rules Committee member Representative B. F. Sisk (D-Calif.) as chairman of the special subcommittee that handled the bill.

Sisk represents a Fresno district where agricultural interests predominate; he serves on the Agricultural Committee as well as Rules. Sisk was looked upon as an establishment man but at the same time was widely known to his colleagues as a conscientious member who has taken on a number of the unrewarding "housekeeping" jobs in the House. Furthermore, as one close observer put it, "Once [Sisk] takes responsibility for getting something accomplished he sees it through." His integrity was unquestioned and his patience proved almost inexhaustible.

After the subcommittee was appointed in early 1969, Sisk improvised a staff by borrowing two able men from the LRS and the Legislative Counsel's office and mustering other staff help from the Rules Committee and his own office. He began a careful study of other reorganization bills and, even before holding hearings, ran a series of seminars for congressmen and staff members on reorganization proposals.

Sisk's first big task was to convince skeptics that his subcommittee was not a burial detail. By last spring the Democratic Study Group (DSG), a self-help and research organization of younger Democrats in the House, began to believe that a reorganization bill could be passed. It assigned staff to the project and cranked up a press relations effort which Sisk had lacked.

The DSG and a smaller group of Democrats headed by Representative Thomas M. Rees (D-Calif.) made common cause with the Rumsfeld group and formed a coalition. It was this coalition that worked out an agreement on a series of amendments lining up cosponsors in depth and laying out alternatives in preparation for debate.

Allocating credit for the coalition's work is difficult, but in the debate Representative Sam M. Gibbons (D-Fla.) said the group "consisted of well over 100 members. However, those Republicans who worked most consistently in the preparation of the amendments were Barber Conable, John Dellenback, and William Steiger. The

Democrats included Don Fraser, Tom Rees, Jim Corman, John Brademas, Jim O'Hara, Joe Waggoner, and myself."

A member of the Sisk subcommittee, Representative Richard Bolling (D-Mo.), who learned his way around the labyrinth of House politics as a protégé of the late Speaker Sam Rayburn, is the leading proponent of congressional reform and author of two books on the subject. Bolling had good contacts inside the coalition, and so the subcommittee and the coalition were in communication.

Sisk's insistence on an open rule allowing amendments to be made on the floor was of central significance. The only exception was a prohibition on amendments affecting committee jurisdiction. This is a supersensitive subject in the House, and Sisk judged, no doubt correctly, that a refusal to exclude the jurisdictional question would probably doom the bill.

As manager of the bill on the floor, Sisk, with firm backing from Representative H. Allen Smith (R-Calif.), ranking minority member on the subcommittee, played a "permissive" role, seldom using his considerable powers to cut off debate and maintaining, through 11 days of discussion scattered over nearly 3 months, a climate of good will in which the bill was considerably strengthened.

In the debate this summer it was difficult of course to argue in favor of secrecy or archaic folkways. There are those who do suggest that now a congressman will always have to vote his "district" rather than his "conscience" and that Congress will have lost its insulation against radical or reactionary pressures. Some predict that the liberal proponents of the reorganization bill will suffer from it most.

The biggest veil of secrecy, that which conceals the workings of the Appropriations Committee even from other members of Congress, still remains firmly in place. The seniority system is unscathed, and there are thorny questions in congressional ethics, such as those about campaign contributions and expenditures, with which Congress seems incapable of coming to grips.

It is possible that the reorganization bill will lead nowhere. Much depends on conventional political factors such as what happens in the November election and in the Democratic leadership succession in the House. But there are new factors as well. For example, if the coalition of younger members maintains momentum and the peace groups pick their targets as astutely as they did on teller votes, it would be possible to believe that the House is really on the road to reform.—JOHN WALSH

White House Advisers: Nixon Cool to Plans for Health, Social Aides

The increasing visibility and influence of the President's Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) during the past decade has made this body a highly attractive model. Many members of Congress interested in the problems of environmental protection, health care, and development of overall strategies for advancing the general welfare have called for the establishment of similar bodies in those policy areas. In 1969, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) was established by act of Congress. Recently, bills were passed by the Senate to establish two more Presidential councils—one would be a National Council on Health Policy, the other a Council of Social Advisers. The sponsors of these measures believe that

present government programs in the fields of health and social policy are fragmented, poorly defined, and often beset by an appalling lack of information about the problems being addressed and the results being obtained.

Like the CEA and the CEQ, the health and social advisers councils—bodies which, as now conceived, would to some extent be duplicative—would each have three full-time members and the task of continuously defining and analyzing problems and policy alternatives in their respective fields. Also, each would prepare an annual report, analogous to the economic and environmental quality reports, which the President would submit to Congress. The health report would describe the health

of the population and evaluate the nation's efforts, private as well as governmental, to deliver health services. The social report, through analysis of various "social indicators" derived from statistics on health, nutrition, education, housing, and income, would provide an assessment of the general welfare and set forth future goals.

The health council would be established under a provision that has been tacked on to a Senate bill which extends two major existing health programs and which must be passed this year. The bill is now in House-Senate conference, but it is by no means certain that the health council provision will survive. Although the measure establishing a council of social advisers has reached the House late in the legislative year, several strategically placed representatives are interested in this bill. Its Senate sponsors give it at least a chance of receiving favorable House action.

The Nixon Administration, however, wants no further proliferation of statutory councils in the White House. In its view, establishing more such councils would interfere with the President's ability to organize his own office. Initially, the Administration even opposed the idea of setting up the Council on Environmental Quality, although later President Nixon signed the act establishing the CEQ with considerable fanfare and he has since seemed to give it an attentive ear.

Duplication Feared

As for the proposed health council, Robert H. Finch, formerly Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare and now a Presidential counselor, has said it would duplicate activities of HEW and of the President's new cabinet-level Domestic Council and its staff under John Ehrlichman, Nixon's assistant for domestic affairs. In Finch's view, a health council, unlike the CEA and the CEQ, would not be dealing with concerns for which no one federal agency has a dominant role, because HEW is dominant in the field of health.

Last year Administration officials testified against the bill to set up the social advisers council. They said that the CEA and the Bureau of the Budget (now the Office of Management and Budget) are increasingly incorporating social data in their analyses and reports. A more fundamental objection raised was that, given the present un-

developed state of the social sciences other than economics, a council of social advisers would not have useful advice to give.

Even proponents of establishing such a council agree that there is truth to this. The CEA can, with some probability of being right, advise the President whether in certain circumstances a budget deficit will reduce unemployment or increase inflation. But a council of social advisers would have neither the data nor the well-established theory on which to base judgments on questions such as how investments in schools and public housing affect alienation and crime rates in the ghetto. In fact, some social scientists are apprehensive lest the council idea be oversold—the danger being that the establishing of such a council would raise expectations which the council could not meet.

The proposals to establish the social advisers and health councils both emerged this past summer from the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare. Senator Walter F. Mondale (D-Minn.), chairman of the Subcommittee on Evaluation and Planning of Social Programs, was pushing the social advisers bill. His personal friend and political ally, Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), a member of the Subcommittee on Health, was sponsoring the health council proposal. Neither Mondale nor Kennedy wished to oppose the other's proposal even though the bills were competitive and though either bill would be easier to sell without the other. The result was that the committee took the easy way and reported both bills favorably to the floor of the Senate.

The health council proposal was approved without debate on 9 September, and the next day Mondale's social advisers bill was approved, although it met opposition from Republican floor leaders. The only hearings held on the health council proposal were those that had been conducted by Senator Abraham Ribicoff (D-Conn.), chairman of the Subcommittee on Executive Reorganization and Government Research and a former Secretary of HEW. These hearings had revealed a lack of coordination of health programs even within HEW. Moreover, the health council proposal had been endorsed by a number of major professional groups, such as the Public Health Association and the Association of American Medical Colleges.

In Mondale's hearings on the social advisers bill two witnesses who had held high rank in the Johnson Administration—Wilbur J. Cohen, former Secretary of HEW, and Joseph A. Califano, Jr., formerly a key White House aide—strongly favored establishing the council. Califano suggested that the way cabinet officers now decide whether to begin, eliminate, or expand vast social programs is not too far removed from the intuitive judgment exercised by tribal chieftans. Several witnesses said that establishing the council would in itself encourage faster progress in the development of the data and theory necessary to help social scientists improve their predictive capabilities. And even now, it was argued, such a council could help frame issues and improve the guesswork. (The bill establishing this new White House council also would establish an Office of Goals and Priorities Analysis as an advisory arm of the Congress.)

Suffer in Faculty Clubs

A major theme developed in the Mondale hearings was that having a council of this kind would make for greater candor and openness in government decision-making. Council members would ordinarily be social scientists on leave from universities or research institutions, and, it was said, they would have to be thinking of their professional reputations. "Every mistake they [make], they will suffer for in the faculty clubs for the rest of their lives," said Mancur Olson, Jr., associate professor of economics at the University of Maryland and formerly director of an HEW project on development of social indicators.

Of course, the importance of any Presidential advisory council turns on whether the President seeks and respects its advice. The CEA had little influence under President Truman, but its influence has since been on the rise. The chairman of the CEA now has direct access to President Nixon, a privilege shared by few other White House advisers. By contrast, the chairman of the CEQ, while he is not without influence, must go through intermediaries. Any new council may have difficulty getting the Presidential ear, especially if it is created under legislation the President only reluctantly accepts. Furthermore, as the councils proliferate they may find themselves competing for Presidential attention.

—LUTHER J. CARTER