theory that industry is more sensitive to the price of power than are small customers, Vanik has introduced a bill that would tax fuels and electricity on the basis of use. While it can be assumed that increased power costs would be passed on to the consumers of the goods manufactured, a Vanik aide explains that the purpose of the tax would be to stimulate industrial users to develop more energy-efficient processes. The bill would also create an "energy trust fund" to finance research on efficient production, conversion, transmission, and use of energy.

The energy tax proposal, if passed, would be one way of attacking the sacred basis of all electric power pricing—the rate structure, which encourages massive energy consumption.

The economics of the utility industry are unique in that they are structured in almost every conceivable way to encourage production and stimulate demand. This served the country well in the days when it was rapidly being electrified and cheap power was a key to rapid economic development. Now that the environmental costs are becoming painfully evident, shortages are looming, and profligate energy use has reached extreme proportions, the need for a revised philosophy is evident.

There is much talk of the need for flattening or inverting the declining block rate structure that, in effect, has small power users subsidizing the big ones, but so far this sacred cow remains unmolested. The Federal Power

Watergate Fallout: Administration Quakes, Science Sneezes

The Watergate affair has already decimated the ranks of the White House staff, assisted in the early demise of the new supercabinet structure, and ushered in a musical chairs routine among top level government officials. Its effects are even noticeable in such lower level matters as the administration of science. Like any other part of the government machinery, science to a large extent runs itself. Officials at the National Science Foundation, the National Bureau of Standards, and elsewhere say that business is proceeding as usual. But Stanley M. Greenfield, chief scientist at the Environmental Protection Agency, says that "anything which requires approval from above is just moving a great deal slower."

Certainly, White House response seems to be overdue on three major problems relating to science. One is the national cancer plan, which has never been released. Another is the implementation of the recent energy message which, in terms of R & D assignments and other plans, needs White House guidance. A third issue is the Administration's unpopular cuts in the health budget. In a marked display of indifference to the executive, the House of Representatives on 31 May restored some $216 million in biomedical research fellowship authorizations. The 316-to-5 vote, which some officials admit could not have occurred without Watergate, may foreshadow a long fight with Congress on these issues.

Equally important for science in the long term is that the Watergate paralysis is occurring at a time when almost every major science post in the federal government is either vacant, has only recently been filled, or has an incumbent burdened with a fresh set of marching orders. At the Department of Defense, for example, John S. Foster, Jr., the defense research czar, who had intended to resign on 1 January, has remained on (gossip has it that he seeks the post of Air Force Secretary Robert Seamans). However, Foster's successor, Malcolm Currie, has been on the job for several months, making two defense research czars. Meanwhile, the offices of the assistant secretaries for R & D of the Army and Navy Departments, and those of many of their deputies, are all vacant, leaving the military research establishment—so long dominated by Foster—in a state of confusion the like of which hasn't been seen for years.

The previously vacant post of assistant secretary of commerce for R & D has just been filled; the director of the NSF gets new duties, effective 1 July, as science adviser; the assistant secretary of HEW for health, Charles Edwards, has just formally taken office; there is a new chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, not to mention a changeover at the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and a new assignment for the director of the Advanced Research Projects Agency.

Some bureaucrats advance the theory that new centers of power could emerge. A former administrator rhapsodizes: "Boy, I'd give anything to be in Washington right now. I could do anything I wanted without having the White House on my back." But others said that the jamming of signals to and from the White House would only hinder these new administrators; "You can't make a significant move in Washington without offending someone," said a former Department of Commerce administrator. "These people won't try to do anything new because there won't be anyone to back them up." One research administrator recalls that White House backing hasn't been consistent for months. When the President and his former aides H. R. Haldeman and John Erlichman started reorganizing the White House in January, he said, "the word was passed down the pipeline: 'Don't hurry us; any commitments you thought you had from us are now open.' " Watergate may serve to keep key officials who are new to their jobs or who have new assignments in a continuing state of jitters and could usher in a highly cautionary period for many science-related programs.

Apart from these effects, however, some scientists interviewed in the last week declared that the myopic view of the outside world which allegedly led some Presidential aides to participate in the bugging coverup proves, retroactively, that they didn't know enough about reality to understand science advice. A former member of the President's Science Advisory Committee (PSAC) said bitterly: "They took criticism of their programs as criticism of themselves. They never bothered to do their homework on what PSAC was for. . . ."

The Watergate scandal may vindicate those scientists deposed by the Haldeman-Erlichman machinery. Or, if it brings decision-making by high level people to a halt, it could cramp science in the long run. For the time being some of the small wheels, anyway, are still grinding.—DEBORAH SHAPLEY