

at precisely defined times and then make sweeping gestures in their direction. In a previous study, I found that successful quarterbacks do the same thing, singling one player out of many after a precise number of counts and, with a precise overhand motion, projecting a score object in that player's direction. Since plots of quarterback and conductor ages show little overlap, it is evident that one could quite successfully become the other. This concept, called Sequential Career Commonality Utilization, is now being applied in many other fields, and the Sequential Career Commonality Utilization Branch is slated to achieve bureau

status in a few years. The greatest breakthrough achieved by this branch was the finding of politician-night watchman commonalities, such as random walking, peering into darkness, and lack of a requirement for intelligent conversation, suggesting that either could serve as the other.

"Modesty forbids that I dwell too long on my final point, but I cannot omit mentioning the question most often asked me: 'What accounts for your unbroken string of successes and innovations?' My success is, I believe, due to my advantage of the broader view, of seeing how it all fits together, of knowing, if you will, the grand design.

Knowing the game plan keeps one from reinventing the wheel, lets one leave the sinking ship, and lets one hit a home run without dropping the whole ball of wax, no matter how the cookie crumbles at any point in time. That's really the secret. The narrow, non-management trained specialist should be on tap, but never on top."

It is my deep pleasure to be able to share these insights with the readership of *Science*. It is easy to see how well this type of analysis and management skill applies to research management. I am, again, indebted to the Office of Management Resources for permission to reprint the above quotation.

#### NEWS AND COMMENT

## Congress: A Big Agenda— Can They Cope with It All?

When the 93rd Congress convened a year ago, President Nixon was riding the crest of his reelection wave and Congress was in disarray. The principal point of conflict then was the Administration's impoundment of funds voted by Congress in excess of the President's requests. The year of Watergate has changed all that, and now the major issue is not impoundment, but impeachment.

Congress, however, gives the impression of continuing in disarray, if for different reasons. Impeachment is not an issue on which a congressman can get much guidance by consulting the Gallup or Harris polls, or even by tapping the grassroots back in his district; many of the congressional rank and file are in the painful position of mistrusting the political instincts which serve as an inertial guidance system for most legislators.

Congress is beset not only by the dilemma of impeachment, but by an agenda jammed with new and old business. The energy shortage and the Arab oil boycott have raised a series of issues that, at least in peacetime, are probably unprecedented in their complexity and impact on the public. Furthermore, Watergate has put Congress on its mettle to set its own far-

from-tidy house in order. With respect to self-improvement, Congress is busy on three fronts: (i) "budget control" machinery is being created in both houses for the purpose of regaining a share of the budget-making power that has been lost to the Executive, (ii) overhaul of the committee system in the House is gaining momentum, with action rationalizing committee jurisdictions likely in this session, and (iii) tighter regulation of campaign financing is in the works in both the Senate and the House. To top it all off, this is an election year.

Symptomatic of the situation in Congress is the status of the emergency energy bill. Since well before Christmas the bill has caused serious overloads of congressional circuits. Yet another failure to achieve a compromise on the measure on 7 February apparently means delay of a Senate vote at least until 19 February, when Congress comes back from its Lincoln's birthday recess.

The measure (S. 2589) contains a number of controversial provisions, notably those which provide for taxation of windfall oil profits, and empower the President to postpone the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The latest hitch developed when the Senate on 29 January voted to recommit a

version of the bill agreed to by a House-Senate conference. The majority on the 57-37 vote was made up of an unusual consort of a dozen Northern liberal Democrats, 13 Southern Democrats, and 32 Republicans. Some of these odd bedfellows voted to recommit to defend the Clean Air Act, others to protect the oil companies from the windfall profits tax, and still others to back the Administration, which opposed the bill. President Nixon had expressed disapproval of the bill, asking that action on taxes, provisions to deal with unemployment, and creation of a Federal Energy Administration (FEA) be separated from the emergency legislation.

The issue of the organization of FEA seems particularly vexatious to critics on the Hill, who are charging that the Administration doesn't know what it wants. The word had been that the White House wanted a temporary FEA which would have power to allocate oil supplies and set prices, and an Energy Research and Development Agency (ERDA), which would do what the name implies. Now, federal energy chief William Simon is said to be rethinking the matter and to like the idea of a permanent agency combining the FEA and ERDA functions. Confusion on the issue has, therefore, been compounded.

In the sector of congressional self-reform, some early progress can be reported. Consensus on the Hill is clearest on the lines that budget control reform should follow. A Budget Control and Impoundment Act (H.R. 7130) passed the House on 5 December; the Senate Government Operations

Committee reported a budget control bill on 28 January, and, in an unusual effort, a task force composed of staff members from major Senate committees is now attempting to resolve remaining differences and provide the Senate Rules Committee with a bill likely to prosper when it reaches the floor. House and Senate versions would then have to be reconciled before a final vote is taken.

The House bill provides that the House and Senate each should have a Committee on the Budget with the main task of fashioning a "congressional budget" by setting total budget outlays and "an appropriate level of

new budget authority." The start of the fiscal year would be shifted from 1 July to 1 October, which would conform more realistically with the congressional cycle, and a series of deadlines would be set for various steps in the budgeting process. The bill provides for creation of a Legislative Budget Office, which would be a sort of mirror image of the Office of Management and Budget. The measure specifically confers the power to obtain data from all government agencies, the lack of which has frustrated Congress in the past.

Some storm signals raised recently seem to threaten the congressional

budget. Senate Majority Whip Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.) was quoted early this month as taking the position that "it is very difficult if not impossible" to devise a workable budget system for Congress. Byrd seems to think it wisest to "move gradually, step by step in the direction of budget reform, so that over the next two or three years, Congress may achieve the kind of system" the reformers are advocating. In the House there is still some sentiment for a sketchier "leadership budget" that would set general limits on spending. Current odds, however, seem to favor passage of a measure along the lines of the House bill.

## Reporters vs. Reporters: Who Should Sit in the Gallery

Earlier this month, when Richard L. Strout of the *Christian Science Monitor* had his membership in the House and Senate press galleries revoked by an organization of fellow reporters, the result was a sizable tempest in Washington press circles. To many of the 75-year-old Strout's friends and admirers, it was a clear case of following logic out the window. After all, in a half-century of political reporting that spanned from the Teapot Dome to Watergate, Strout had earned an unchallenged reputation for integrity. Tossing him out of the newspaper correspondents' association for an apparent conflict of interest—accepting government money (\$240 in 1973) for moderating a series of Voice of America programs—seemed a bit like banishing the Venerable Bede for a minor civil infraction.

Strout's eviction is the most celebrated controversy over press gallery membership in recent years, but it's not the only one.

There are three other gallery organizations that accredit reporters covering the Congress—one each for radio-TV, photographers, and periodicals. The last of the three galleries, which is supervised by the 630-member Periodical Correspondents' Association (PCA), is currently locked in a fight over membership rules the association says were intended to keep out lobbyists and other "advocates of special interests" who might pose as journalists; the dispute, which escalated this month to the U.S. Supreme Court, presents the odd spectacle of reporters accusing other reporters of trampling on the freedom of the press.

The PCA's 6-member governing committee—in enforcing a rule approved by the House Speaker and the Senate Rules and Administration Committee—has traditionally withheld press credentials from nonprofit publications, a category which happens to include not only the propaganda organs of lobbying groups but also many of the nation's scientific and educational journals (*Science* among them), as well as public-interest magazines such as *Consumer Reports*.

Last July, *Consumer Reports* sued to overturn the PCA's ban on nonprofit publications. The magazine won

a federal district court judgment declaring the ban to be an unconstitutional abridgment of the first and fifth amendments. Now the magazine has gone to the Supreme Court for an injunction to set the rule aside while an appeal by the correspondents' association works its way through the courts. In an added twist of irony, the reporters' association, claiming congressional privilege, is relying on the Justice Department to defend it.

In the meantime, the PCA has turned down applications for credentials submitted by *Science News* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* on the ground that both are published by nonprofit organizations. The gallery association also has denied a request for temporary accreditation from Luther J. Carter, a member of the *Science* news staff since 1965; Carter began negotiating for full accreditation last summer.

Other science news organizations have been denied press credentials in the past on the same ground. Richard L. Kenyon, the American Chemical Society's communications director, says the PCA has rejected applications from *Chemical and Engineering News* at least three times in the past 15 years. "We finally gave up," Kenyon says. "It's an inconvenience to us, makes our job a little harder, but we think we manage pretty well anyway."

Indeed, for both sides the issue is mostly one of principle, though some useful perquisites of accreditation are at stake. Gallery membership admits a reporter to the Capitol's cramped pressrooms equipped with telephones, typewriters, and some overstuffed chairs and sofas convenient for snoozing.

More important, membership provides access to press galleries overlooking the House and Senate floor; to special lobbies where pages will summon a senator or congressman from the floor for an interview; and to the press tables in hearing rooms. Without credentials, a reporter is obliged to compete with the general public and may not be admitted at all to crowded hearings.

Congressional press galleries were first set up in 1857, partly to move reporters off the crowded House floor and mostly to shield congressmen and senators from

The House also leads the Senate in its effort to reconstruct its committee machinery. A 10-member Special Committee on Committees appointed by House Speaker Carl Albert (D-Okla.) and chaired by Representative Richard W. Bolling (D-Mo.) has worked for a year to complete a full-scale study of the House committee system and has proposed extensive changes in both structure and procedures.

Bolling's chairmanship marks a kind of return from the House equivalent of the British Commons back benches. As Speaker Sam Rayburn's lieutenant in the late 1950's, Bolling played an unusually active role for a young con-

gressman in the House leadership. When Rayburn died, Bolling briefly opposed John W. McCormack for the Speakership, and, when McCormack won the post, Bolling was shouldered to the sidelines. During a somewhat disgruntled decade, Bolling distilled his knowledge of the House (he sits on the redoubtable Rules Committee) into two books advocating reform of the House. In 1971 Albert succeeded McCormack as Speaker. Albert and Bolling see eye to eye, and last year Albert made it clear he thought Bolling was just the man to head the study of committees. Bolling, who is acknowledged as an astute tactician as

well as theoretician, is said to be back in top form, if a bit mellower than a decade ago.

So far, the committee has attracted most attention for its "jurisdictional plan." Realignment of the committee jurisdictions would appear to be overdue, since the existing committee structure dates back more than two decades, and responsibility for dealing with newly emerging problems in areas such as energy and the environment has often been assigned in an illogical or conflicting pattern.

Territorial imperatives are, of course, very strong in the House, and practically any proposal for change in the

## Is the Question in an Odd Congressional Fight

bothersome "claims agents" posing as journalists. Over the years, elected committees of reporters evolved to supervise the galleries and to help Congress phrase the rules of admission. Today, each of the four galleries requires that its members be "bona fide" reporters and prohibits them from "prosecuting claims" pending before the government.

The galleries' main purpose is still to protect Congress from lobbyists in disguise (though an impostor has ample opportunity to buttonhole legislators as it is) but only three of the four gallery associations explicitly prohibit "lobbying activities" by their members. For reasons that remain obscure, the periodical gallery is less direct. Its rule, which *Consumer Reports* is contesting, limits members to those which: "published for profit and supported chiefly by advertising, and owned and operated independently of any industry, business, association, or institution."

This language has led to a number of apparent inconsistencies. For one, no other gallery uses ownership or the profit motive as a criterion of eligibility. Thus, *Science News* publisher E. G. Sherburne, Jr., says his magazine was accredited for "at least 30 years" in the daily press gallery by virtue of a syndication service it ran for newspapers. When the service was phased out last year, *Science News* applied for membership in the periodical gallery, only to be declared ineligible.

Among the periodicals that are eligible, and do enjoy accreditation, are *Modern Tire Dealer*, *Oil and Gas Journal*, *Baking Industry Magazine*, *Public Utilities Fortnightly*, and a large number of other periodicals catering to special interests.

There would seem to be other inconsistencies as well. The interests of Time, Inc., for example, extend beyond the immediate concerns of turning out a news magazine and include such things as book publishing, ownership of radio and TV stations, and large land holdings in Texas. This, and the fact that Time, Inc. retains the professional lobbying services of Charles E. Walker Associates, Inc. to represent the company's views in postal rate matters, suggest that the parent company of Time

may be as much or more an "advocate of special interests" as some of the organizations barred by the PCA—whose executive committee traditionally includes a reporter from *Time*.

Taking note of these anomalies, federal district judge Gerhard A. Gesell accused the correspondents' association last October of an attempt to "censor" publications on the basis of ownership or the ideas they expressed. "There should be no glossing over what this record discloses," Gesell wrote in a sharply worded opinion. "Authority has been given to certain newsmen to prevent other newsmen from having access to news of vital consequences to the public. . . ."

The gallery association, for its part, felt unfairly handled by Gesell's charge of censorship. Among others, Roy L. McGhee, the superintendent of the Senate periodical press gallery, insists this was never the group's intention. "We look at ownership, not editorial content," McGhee says. "We don't care what a publication writes."

The association, moreover, sees a legitimate distinction between the special-interest magazines it admits and many, if not all, of those it bars. Thus, Samuel Shaffer, a *Newsweek* reporter on the PCA's governing committee, says a privately owned magazine catering, for instance, to the auto industry, would feel free to criticize the industry whereas a publication put out by the industry, or one manufacturer, might not. (It can also be argued that magazines living on special-interest advertising are most unlikely to bite the hands that feed them.)

Shaffer acknowledges that present rules for press accreditation may be "less than perfect," but he says the PCA hasn't been able to come up with anything better—and that even if it did, responsibility for changing the rules rests with the Congress, not the reporters. "It's a hellish problem, one we've been batting around for a year now," Shaffer says. "How do you separate the white hats from the black hats?"

The problem comes down to one of deciding what is journalism and what is not. Some of the most prominent journalists in Washington seem to be having a hard time making up their minds.—ROBERT GILLETTE

status quo would have its challengers. Bolling and his committee know this and also know that the reform proposals will have to promise at least as much pleasure as pain for the House membership which will vote on them. Observers note that the Bolling group has hardly touched the prerogatives of the Appropriations Committee and made only minor inroads on the broad domain of the Ways and Means Committee. These two powerful "fiscal" committees have been the Scylla and Charybdis of would-be reformers.

Under the committee's plan, Ways and Means would lose primary authority over trade legislation and over health insurance, as well as Medicare and Medicaid, but would retain review powers over both trade and national health insurance and Medicare legislation.

Until very recently it would have been unthinkable to have suggested a

reduction in the prerogatives of Ways and Means chairman Wilbur D. Mills (D-Ark.), the last real authority figure left in the House hierarchy. A Mills illness, his committee's slowness in dealing with tax reform legislation and other major issues, and a general decline in the belief in the divine right of committee chairmen in the House has made it possible at least to contemplate taking such liberties.

A few House committees would be disbanded altogether—Post Office and Civil Service, Merchant Marine and Fisheries, and Internal Security (formerly the House Un-American Activities Committee)—and their functions performed elsewhere. A few committees would be given new jurisdictions which would substantially expand their horizons; the Public Works Committee, for example, which would become the Public Works and Transportation Committee.

The Bolling committee proposals would have a very strong impact on science and technology, particularly on biomedical research. (See example below of recommended jurisdictions of the proposed Commerce and Health and Science and Technology committees.) The reforms would consolidate authority over most federal health programs, biomedical research, and the prospective national health insurance program under the new Commerce and Health Committee. The present Commerce committee chairman, Representative Harley O. Staggers (D-W.Va.), and Representative Paul G. Rogers (D-Fla.), chairman of the present subcommittee on health and the environment, would wield authority over virtually the entire range of federal health programs, authority which hitherto has been highly fragmented. If one subscribes to the rather complex theory that biomedical research has

Examples of changes in committee jurisdiction under proposals of House Select Committee on Committees.

*Commerce and Health Committee (now Interstate & Foreign Commerce)*

Present jurisdiction	Loses	Gains	Proposed jurisdiction
Aviation	Aviation (Public Works and Transportation)	Biomedical research (but Science and Astronautics retains overview)	Biomedical research (shared)
Communications	Energy regulation (Energy and Environment)	Commodities exchanges (Agriculture)	Communications
Consumer protection	Environment—clean air, solid waste disposal, noise (Energy and Environment)	Maternal and child health (Ways and Means)	Consumer protection
Energy regulation	Health service training (Education)	Nontax aspects of Medicare and Medicaid with review in Ways and Means (Ways and Means)	Health care, nontax aspects
Environment	Surface transportation (Public Works and Transportation)	Patents, trademarks, and copyrights (Judiciary)	Insurance
Health	Weather (Science and Technology)	Population—demography (Interior)	Patents, trademarks, and copyrights
Insurance	Clean drinking water (Energy and Environment)		Population—demography
Regulatory agencies			Regulatory agencies, except transportation agencies
Securities and exchanges			Securities and exchanges, including commodities exchanges
Surface transportation			Time
Time			Trading with the enemy
Trading with the enemy			
Weather			

*Science and Technology Committee (now Science and Astronautics)*

Present jurisdiction	Loses	Gains	Proposed jurisdiction
Measurement	Science scholarships (Education)	Overview of military R & D (shared with Armed Services)	All scientific R & D, and applications
Research and development	Biomedical R & D (except for overview) (to Commerce and Health)	Oceanic and atmospheric sciences (Merchant Marine and Fisheries)	Astronautical R & D
Science		Energy R & D (Interior, Commerce, Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, Merchant Marine and Fisheries)	Biomedical R & D overview
Science fellowships, scholarships, and grants		Civil aviation R & D (Commerce)	Civil aviation R & D
Science policy		Environmental R & D (Interior, Public Works, Commerce, Merchant Marine and Fisheries)	Energy R & D
Scientific centers		Weather (Commerce)	Environmental R & D
Scientific measurements and observations			Military R & D overview
Scientific programs			Oceanic and atmospheric sciences
Scientific resources including manpower			Science programs and policy
Space, exploration and control of			Scientific centers
Space programs			Scientific resources, including manpower
Technology			Space exploration, control, and programs
Technology assessment			Standardization of weights and measures, metric system, measurement
Technological transfer			Technological transfer
			Technology
			Technology assessment
			Weather

suffered from this fragmentation and that Rogers is a knowledgeable friend of biomedical research, the reform could bode well for the future of research.

Changing the present Science and Astronautics Committee into a full-fledged Science and Technology Committee on the lines of the Bolling prescription would hasten the transition away from the "space committee" image that the committee has sought to modify in recent years, but with only moderate success.

Equally major transformations would be in store for the Interior and Agriculture Committees, which would become, respectively, the Energy and Environment Committee and the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee with the latter taking over jurisdiction from the Interior Committee of national parks, forests, and public lands.

Another sort of change calls for the splitting of the present Education and Labor Committee into two independent committees. A new Education Committee would assume authority over medical education now held by the Commerce Committee, but few other significant transfers are contemplated.

The split seems logical, particularly because the burden of education legislation and related matters is certainly heavy enough to keep a committee occupied. But there are both liberals and conservatives on Education and Labor who are reluctant to see the committee divided and whose reasons have little to do with logic or efficiency. The committee has traditionally attracted liberals sympathetic to social legislation and also some conservatives with exactly opposite sympathies. The frequently bipartisan action on education legislation seems to have helped prevent a bitter polarization within the committee on other more controversial issues. Some members feel, for example, that members who chose to join a separate Labor Committee might split into rigid pro-labor and anti-labor factions with damaging results. Other members who may be interested in education issues or social legislation in general but come from "labor" districts are reluctant to give up either education or labor as a specialty. Still others argue that a split might result in a loss of the support of organized labor on education legislation, support which has been crucial on some occasions in the past.

Similar, subsurface, "internal" objections affect many of the proposed

changes, and Bolling and his allies will encounter real difficulties if these objectors form an effective coalition, as there are some signs they are doing. There is no doubt, on the other hand, that Bolling will have the backing of his own coalition. His committee is holding "markup" sessions this month

and next, and he hopes to emerge with a bill which will pass the House by Easter. That date may be optimistic, but the jurisdictional plan seems to have strong momentum.

As for campaign reform, the prospects are somewhat murkier. The Senate has passed a bill (S. 372) to

## Financing Postsecondary Education

A congressionally created commission last month produced a report that it described as a beginning effort at introducing a new measure of rationality into fiscal policy-making among institutions engaged in postsecondary education.

*Financing Postsecondary Education in the United States* is a complicated document, 14 months in the making, which is supposed to give the federal government guidance and a comprehensive data base for higher education support policies.

Commission members stress that the report is unique in that it does not actually make any recommendations. Rather than add to an already crowded field of educational financing proposals, the report seeks to clarify matters by offering a "comprehensive analytical framework" that can be used by any and all policy-makers to find out whether their financing schemes will in fact achieve the desired objectives.

The framework is designed primarily for the evaluation of national educational financing plans such as those put forth by the Carnegie Commission and the Committee for Economic Development. It is based on a set of national objectives that boil down to affording everyone who wants it maximum choice in institutions and types of education and encouraging institutional excellence, diversity, independence, financial accountability, and solvency. Policy-makers who accept the framework's objectives, measures of their achievement, and assumptions of future trends can contact the Office of Education and arrange to have financing proposals run through a computer programmed for that purpose and packed with data assembled by the commission. State governments and individual institutions may also use the computer, although the commission emphasizes that they should be encouraged to develop their own analytical models in accordance with their needs and visions. The Office of Education has taken over the commission's computer contract, and the only cost to users of the service will be for computer time.

Another major thrust of the report is the recommendation that the government devise and adopt uniform national standards for estimating per capita costs of educating students in comparable institutions. Such a proposal (the commission has already concocted interim standards to be used on a voluntary basis), if adopted, could considerably tighten methods of financial accountability among institutions that wish to be eligible for outside aid.

Members of the 17-person commission, headed by Nebraska lawyer Donald E. Leonard, appeared to be very pleased with themselves over the report. But Representative John Brademas (D-Ind.), a commission member and a guiding spirit of the project, warned that the higher education community might find some of it hard to swallow. Many educators are "Neanderthals" when it comes to fiscal matters, observed Brademas, who said it is high time financial planning was put on a more scientific basis. The House Education and Labor Committee plans to hold hearings within the next couple of months to chew over the commission's findings and discuss how to get policy-makers interested in the approach it has created.

The 442-page report, which cost \$1.5 million, is available for \$4 from the Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.—C.H.

place tighter regulations on campaign contributions and expenditures; the House Administration Committee is holding hearings on the issue, but its controversial committee chairman, Wayne Hays (D-Ohio) is not known as an ardent reformer.

Asking Congress to reconstruct itself at a time when it is coping with the impeachment crisis and a heavy docket of urgent legislation puts maxi-

mum stress on the institutional nervous system. There is a normal congressional rhythm which assumes that perhaps one or two major issues, such as tax or trade legislation, are handled in each session, with preparations for action often taking several years. The energy shortage alone, with all its ramifications, would push Congress to its limits in a normal year. An added difficulty this year, according to

Nixon critics, is that the Administration is suffering a post-Watergate paraplegia which prevents it from taking the actions which permit Congress and the Executive to interact effectively. Hill leaders have so far shown no signs of seizing the tiller so that, under the circumstances, it is difficult to foresee whether, after all, this will be the session for a showdown or simply a slowdown.—JOHN WALSH

## Watergate Tapes: Critics Question Main Conclusion of Expert Panel

Nothing in the last month has damaged President Nixon more than the conclusions reported by the panel of experts suggesting that the 18½-minute gap on the 20 June tape was erased deliberately. Conversely, few things would have helped Nixon more than if the panel had come in with a report that the erasure and buzz might have been caused accidentally. As it happens, all the data the panel has revealed so far can be accounted for by an explanation which the panel apparently failed to consider, but which implies that the erasure was accidental and not deliberate.

This alternative explanation has received surprisingly little attention, maybe because the panel's conclusions fitted so well with people's expectations. It has been mentioned in passing by Charles S. Rhyne, the attorney for Miss Rose Mary Woods, but his remarks have been reported skeptically in the press. Rhyne himself has not had the report proposing the explanation checked out by technical experts, and delayed a week before passing it on to Judge John J. Sirica on 6 February.

The report is the work of a small electronics firm, Dektor Counterintelligence and Security Inc., located in Springfield, Virginia. The Dektor people argue that the sounds and magnetic marks discovered by the panel on the 18½-minute segment could all have been caused, in a single continuous operation, by the sputtering on and off of the tape recorder's internal power supply. The Uher 5000 used by Miss

Woods is known to have a defective rectifier circuit, which in fact burned out while the recorder was in the panel's hands. The panel of experts, on the other hand, based their conclusion—that there must have been at least five separate manual erasures—on their belief that the magnetic marks could only be imprinted by hand operation of the button controls.

Two electronics experts consulted by *Science* say that the Dektor hypothesis is technically feasible and is as compatible as is the panel's version with what little data is given in the panel's summary report. The panel's testimony before Sirica's court, which runs to more than 300 pages of transcript, contains nothing to suggest that the panel considered the Dektor hypothesis, and, in fact, there are positive indications that the panel did not.

Citing an order by Sirica not to talk to the press, members of the panel refused last week to say whether they had considered the Dektor explanation before releasing their summary report, or whether they have since performed tests to rule out the explanation. According to Barry Blesser, an assistant professor of electrical engineering at MIT, who advised on the selection and work program of the panel (*Science*, 14 December, p. 1108), the data in the summary report do not allow a decision to be made between the two hypotheses. But he finds the panel's more believable because the magnetic marks on the 18½-minute gap fall into the classic pattern made by some in-

experienced with recorders trying to erase a tape.

Blesser adds that he cannot imagine people of the panel's caliber failing to perform the obvious tests that would rule out the Dektor theory. On the other hand, Allan D. Bell, president of Dektor, observes that the panel members are experts in acoustics and computer processing—sensible fields to choose before one knew what the problem was—but not particularly familiar with the workaday problems of tapes and tape recorders.

Bell's company, headquartered above a cookie factory just beyond the Washington beltway, has a staff of 30 professionals, most of whom have backgrounds in the intelligence community. The company develops equipment for use in counterintelligence and security—two recent products are a psychological stress evaluator and an instrument for testing whether a telephone has been converted into a listening device. The company put about 100 man-hours into its analysis, which was based on the data in the panel's summary report and tape recorder tests conducted in Dektor's laboratories. The analysis was done for the "fun of working out a logic problem," Bell says, and because of an intuitive feeling that the experts' report was incomplete. Dektor is receiving no fee from Rhyne, nor is Bell interested in anything beyond the technical issues, such as how the gap could have lasted 18½ minutes. "I'm limiting my entry into this mess," he says.

The explanation developed by Bell and his colleagues goes as follows. A malfunction started in the tape recorder circuitry (maybe in its filter capacitor) which rectifies the alternating current from the mains into direct current. Because of the malfunction, there occurred a series of intermittent voltage drops in the d-c supplied to the bias oscillator, which energizes the erase and record heads. (The voltage