Johnson Health Policy Fellows: Joining the Scientific and Political

To leave academia for a year in Washington is not without its perils. On the one hand, you expose yourself to the animadversion of your colleagues back home who may not understand why on earth you would want to spend a year grubbing around on Capitol Hill. On the other hand, you expose yourself to Potomac Fever and the very real possibility that you will not want to go home again. And you run the risk of developing ideas that do not square with the customary thinking in academic circles.

Frederick B. Glaser took his chances last fall by coming to Washington as one of the first six Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellows. He bewildered his associates at the Medical College of Pennsylvania, where he was associate professor of psychiatry and chief of the section on drug and alcohol abuse. He caught a mild case of Potomac Fever. And he changed his mind about the political process. "Contrary to my previous thinking, it is no doubt better that the governance of the country is in the hands of generalists rather than experts," he concluded at the end of a year's work in the Senate. "I have gained increasing respect for the political process. It is not that it isn't often pretty awful. The point is that the *attempt* is honorably made—most of the time, the system seems reasonably well designed, and the people involved are far more impressive than I had expected. On the other hand, one cannot but be impressed, on the basis of this experience, with the parochialism of many people from the scientific community."

What a year in Washington can do to a person! The six Johnson fellows came to town with different motives, from different professional backgrounds, though all shared an interest in preventive medicine. They spent the year in Congress in assignments of their own choosing. None of them survived the experience unchanged. Two succumbed to Potomac Fever. Two, including Glaser, are returning to academic life but are maintaining formal ties with congressional offices. Two are going home to put their newly acquired political skills to political use.

Ever since federal support of research began to diminish about 8 years ago, a small number of politically inclined individuals has been trying to lower the barriers that the scientific community long ago erected to shield itself from political business. One manifestation of those efforts is the recent appearance on the Washington scene of the scientist as fellow (*Science*, 12 September). Scientists are coming to Washington in growing numbers these days to study the art of politics as though it were an art of self-defense, which it very well may be.

A Sojourn in the Real World

The Johnson health policy fellowships are part of this trend to offer scientists a brief sojourn in the real world but are distinguished from other programs by the type of fellow they are geared for. The Johnson fellows are not eager postdocs with a lot of promise; they are individuals of considerable professional accomplishment, with a lot of promise—future deans and statesmen of science, people say.

The fellowships, which carry a stipend of $30,000, are supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation of Princeton, New Jersey, and administered by the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences. Foundation president David Rogers, noting that "academics need preparation for dealing with Washington," recalls that one of the reasons for establishing the program was to "encourage objective research in public policy." The idea is that, at the end of the Washington year, the politically wiser fellows will return to their institutions where, instead of retreating to the laboratory, they will initiate programs to teach their associates and students about political reality. The fellows agree they have a lot to pass on, but they are still so close to the congressional experience none feels qualified yet to say he is speaking about it totally objectively. As the fellows found out, a staff job in the House or Senate does not leave you with time for much of anything else. Fellows who came to town with commitments to continue working on various projects back home soon regretted that they had not divested themselves of such responsibilities. Fellow David J. Sanchez remarks that he looked forward to a year with time to think and reflect. "How naive I was," he commented as he was about to head home to San Francisco where, with a Ph.D. in higher education, he is an assistant professor of ambulatory and community medicine in the University of California School of Medicine. Reflection and academic research may come later.

Life in Congress is quite unlike life in a university, although fellow Arthur J. Viseltear of the Yale University School of Medicine once likened Congress to graduate school. "The movement of people through congressional staffs reminds me of graduate school where you have the bright movers, a few hangers-on, and the occasional callow youth." Whether a person, once exposed, chooses to stay on the Hill must depend in part on how he reacts to the congressional tempo. One of the fellows found Congress so attractive that he decided early on that he wanted to stay. Johnnie L. Gallemore, Jr., a psychiatrist from Duke University, resigned his fellowship in May in order to take a full-time position with the House subcommittee on public health and environment. He is said to be thinking about running for Congress himself.

H. David Banta is the other fellow who decided he did not want to go home again—at least not for a while. Banta is an M.D. who came to Washington from the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, where he was associate professor in the department of community medicine. He came fully intending to return to Mount Sinai, where his department chairman and dean were actively thinking of ways to make use of his fellowship experience. But Banta decided to stay and has taken a job with the congressional Office of Technology Assessment.

(The matter of fellows not going home is one that Rogers says "concerns" him, as it does officials of the Institute of Medicine. Johnson fellows do not apply individually to the program. They must be nominated by their institutions—only one per institution per year—and the institution is required not only to take the individual back but also to make some special effort to allow the returning fellow to effectively share what he has learned. This year there were no complaints from deans and department chairmen who are losing their faculty members—they seem to be taking it in academic stride—but if, in the future, the no-return rate is high, institutions may think twice about sending their people to Washington.)

Like Glaser, who had his doubts about politics, Banta did not expect to be as favorably impressed as he was. "I now have great respect for the political process, which I did not have before," he says with the zeal of a convert. "The political pro-

cess works; it is legitimate, in fact, it is even less irrational than some of the policy processes I've seen in medical schools."

The observations the fellows have made about Washington are hardly unique but they are arrived at with the enthusiasm and openness of someone making a new discovery, and one can only judge it worthwhile that academic scientists gain as many insights into Congress and the Executive as they can. Banta, like all of his colleagues save one*, worked in both the House and Senate, gaining some appreciation of how the two bodies differ. On the House side, he worked for the health subcommittee chaired by Representative Paul G. Rogers (D–Fla.) and came away impressed by the depth of information about health issues that Rogers himself has at his command.

Rogers asked Banta to make a study of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in preparation for hearings planned for this fall. Banta recalls meeting with Rogers to discuss the proposed study. "I expected

*Glaser, who wished to pursue his interests in problems of alcohol and drug abuse, worked only in the Senate because there is no subcommittee in the House with primary responsibility for initiating action in this area.

Briefing

Psychologists Sit Still for Jensen

For anyone who thinks times haven't changed on the politico-academic front, ample evidence to the contrary was offered at this month's meeting of the American Psychological Association in Chicago. There, speaking in a packed ballroom, Berkeley psychologist Arthur Jensen, whose investigations of the heritability of intelligence have made him intensely controversial, was allowed, relatively unmolested, to give a talk elaborating on why whites do better on IQ tests than blacks.

Jensen, who shared the podium with Belvin Williams, a black psychologist with the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey, told the audience that his studies of the IQ scores of black and white California schoolchildren show that IQ tests are not "culture-biased," as many claim. "Culture-loaded," yes—as is any test that uses a particular language or shows pictures of such items as airplanes. But not culture-biased, says Jensen, who adduces as evidence the fact that both groups experienced the same "item difficulty." That is to say, both groups found the same questions difficult, and questions ranked the same in degrees of difficulty for both. The difference was that more blacks got more items wrong than did whites, even between groups of comparable socioeconomic status.

The other mainstay of Jensen's assertion that tests are not culture-biased is the fact that the average difference in scores between the two groups (one standard deviation, or 15 IQ points) is the same as the average difference between children of the same family. So, he attributes the difference to unequal racial distribution of what has been called the G factor (G standing for general), which he describes as the ability to perform mental manipulations and transformation of ideas. The harder the questions, the more "G-loaded" they are.

In past years, mature professionals have been roused to anarchic uproars by milder fare than that. This year the only disruption was from a band of five placard-carriers whose loud attempts to take over the microphone were shouted down by the otherwise calm audience (they were allowed to speak after the presentations)—and the presence of plainclothes members of the Chicago police force appeared to be an unnecessary precaution.

And what did Williams have to say? His speech, "Not by tests alone," dealt with the general difficulties of achieving test fairness, which in testing circles means the ability of a test to accurately predict performance in a given area.

When it came to refuting each other, there was no hand-to-hand combat. The closest Williams came was to observe that trying to identify innate group differences was "putting the cart before the horse. You can't get a clear reading . . . [until] you can say the difference is not a function of deprivation," and the only way to prove that is first to eliminate or compensate for the deprivation, said Williams.

Some APA officials were uncomfortable about having Jensen on the program at all, and were irritated that Jensen, in a press release, appeared to represent himself as having been invited by the leadership of APA when he was in fact invited by the division of educational psychology.

The willingness of psychologists to hear Jensen out is certainly an indication of the measure of civility and political apathy that has settled back upon academe. It may also be a sign that the race-IQ issue has retreated from its brief fling on center stage. Many psychologists either flatly reject or feel repelled by Jensen's theories, and most seem to feel that his findings, in any case, have little relevance when much remains to be done in correcting deficits that are clearly nongenetic.

—C.H.

Kissinger Promises Third World Technological Help

The Secretary of State's speech to the United Nations this month was remarkable for the profusion of technological promises held out to the Third World. Kissinger proposed the establishment of no less than four technically oriented institutes:

- An International Energy Institute to help devise conventional and alternative energy sources suited to the conditions of developing countries.
- An International Industrialization Institute to conduct research on industrial technology of relevance to developing countries.
- An International Center for the Exchange of Technological Information to act as a clearing house for "ongoing research and new findings relevant to development."
- An International Fund for Agricultural Development.

The most clearly thought out of these proposals is the International Industrialization Institute, which was suggested in 1973 by a panel of the National Academy of Sciences. The nearest to fruition is the International Fund for Agricultural Development, an idea mooted by the OPEC nations at the world food conference in Rome. The Administration has a request for $200 million before Congress, expenditure of which is conditional on the oil producers and other countries putting up some $1 billion. As at present envisaged, the fund will be an independent agency, which raises questions of how it will coordinate with the expanding agricultural

him to talk for about 5 minutes, making a few generalizations about NIH, and then turn to me to say, 'And now, how do you think this should be done?' Instead, Rogers spoke for about an hour about the issues he thought important at NIH, and it was clear he did not have to rely on his staff to do his thinking for him"—which is not to say that Rogers does not depend heavily on his staff which is generally regarded as first rate.

Banta was, no doubt, particularly struck by the knowledge of health issues some House members have because he came to the House after a stint in the Senate where, he observed, subcommittee staff people play an extremely critical role, sometimes to the point of conceiving and drafting legislation which is then handed over full-blown to the senators. Banta worked especially closely with Jay Cutler, chief minority staffer for the Senate health subcommittee chaired by Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D–Mass.); in this capacity, Cutler is responsible to Senator Jacob Javits (R–N.Y.), who is the ranking Republican on the subcommittee and who has shown a

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development program of the World Bank.

Kissinger's speech, read in his absence by United Nations delegate Daniel P. Moynihan, also announced that the United States would increase its bilateral support of agricultural production to $582 million this year. This makes good the promise held out in Kissinger's speech to the United Nations last year, that such support would be nearly doubled.

Another undertaking made in Kissinger's 1974 speech was to establish an International Fertilizer Institute. The institute is now operating at Mussel Shoals, Alabama.—N.W.

Scientists Say Astrology Is Not True

If any believer in astrology is likely to have his mind changed by the weight of scientific authority, he will surely be crushed by the manifesto published in the current issue of *The Humanist*. There he is informed by 186 scientists, including 18 Nobelists, that astrology has no scientific basis.

"We are especially disturbed," say the manifesto's luminous signatories, "by the continued uncritical dissemination of astrological charts, forecasts, and horoscopes by the media and by otherwise reputable newspapers, magazines, and book publishers. This can only contribute to the growth of irrationalism and obscurantism. We believe the time has come to challenge, directly and forcefully, the pretentious claims of astrological charlatans."

Why should an eminent group of academics think it worth their time to take out after astrology? Why not tarot cards too? Or scapulimancy? Or other nonempirical, nonrational systems of thought such as religions? Signatory Harvey Brooks, professor of technology and public policy at Harvard, sees the manifesto as a sort of consumer advocacy on the part of scientists—"People are being bilked by astrology," he says. The manifesto's originator is Bart J. Bok, emeritus professor of astronomy at the University of Arizona. Bok considers astrology to be of particular concern to scientists because its practitioners, by using computers and proper astronomical data, have spread the view that their activity has a scientific rationale. "Astrologers claim they have 20 million believers. It becomes necessary for scientists to speak out," states Bok.

The American Astronomical Society declined to denounce astrology, saying it was beneath their dignity, so Bok circularized some 225 scientists drawn from the society's membership and that of the National Academy of Sciences. No less than 186 proved willing to zap the zodiac. Signatories include NAS president Philip Handler, a Leo, economists Wassily Leontiev (also Leo) and Paul Samuelson (Pisces), the Libra-born Sir Francis Crick, and Piscean Linus C. Pauling.—N.W.

ERDA R&D Plan Aired

Hearings on the Energy Research and Development Administration's (ERDA) national energy plan were being held this month in three cities by the three members of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

Judging from the first 2 days' testimony, in Washington, D.C., the most noteworthy deficiency of the plan is its failure to promote, and evaluate the effects of, a systematic program of energy conservation. A number of witnesses from public interest and environmental groups noted that the plan puts its main conservation emphasis on efficiency of energy use and does not question the need of Americans to continue their energy-profligate life-style.

The plan (its full name is "A national plan and program for energy research, development and demonstration: creating energy choices for the future") emphasizes the need to shift reliance away from natural gas and oil to coal and nuclear power for the rest of the century. All the environmentalist critics complained that not enough attention is being paid to solar and geothermal power, and noted that other government reports predicted that solar and geothermal sources would contribute a substantially larger proportion of the national energy supply by 2000 than is estimated in the ERDA report. The Environmental Policy Institute joined others in decrying the government's fixation on "energy independence" and the report's use of oil import levels as the "sole criterion" for evaluating its various scenarios. (Everyone does scenarios these days; this report has six, the last of which—full steam ahead on all technologies—was adjudged the only way to avoid unacceptable reliance on oil imports.)

Industry representatives were, expectably, happier with the plan, and most suggested limited alterations—that is, the Atomic Industrial Forum wants more emphasis on the breeder reactor, the American Gas Association says gas can have a bigger role in America's future than the plan envisages, and so forth.

The tireless trio from CEQ, which seems to have a remarkable ability to sit through hours of listening to many witnesses say the same things, has moved on to hearings in Los Angeles and Detroit.

The council will then submit a report to Congress and the President, as required by law, that will serve as an aid to ERDA budget deliberations and a guide to next year's updating of the plan.—C.H.

greater concern for health legislation than many other members of the Senate. Nevertheless, as Banta realistically notes, health is not number one on Javits' list of political issues, and so the senator relies heavily on staff in that area. Reflecting a newfound sense of the importance of good staff in both houses of Congress, Banta says he now gets mad whenever he reads in the paper that Congressman so-and-so has drafted a piece of legislation.

Arthur Viseltear, who worked in the House for Representative Tim Lee Carter (R–Ky.), ranking minority member on the Rogers' subcommittee, and in the Senate for the Kennedy subcommittee, has some other observations about Congress. Noting how little the two houses work together in planning national policy, Viseltear diagnoses the problem as one of "sibling rivalry." Another aspect of Congress that sticks in Viseltear's mind is that so much happens by chance. "I've learned that there is no such thing as a normative policy process, for as much legislation is enacted as a result of accident, chance, and confusion as is enacted as a result of Machiavellian calculation," he concludes, noting in addition—and with a sense of regret—that getting legislation passed is not a matter of good policy but of good politics. "If policy and ideology conflict, it is ideology that prevails."

Viseltear reports suffering from a bout of Potomac Fever while here and says he seriously considered accepting one of a couple of offers he received to take a permanent staff job. "The trick," he says, "is to understand Potomac Fever and not let its fascination become an end in itself." Viseltear, who holds a Ph.D. in history, decided to return to Yale where he will teach medical students, but he could not resist keeping some ties to Washington. He will be a consultant to the Senate health subcommittee.

His colleague Glaser is taking a similar course in going back to academic life (to a new job at the Addiction Research Foundation Clinical Institute in Toronto) and also keeping a line open to Congress, as a consultant to the Senate subcommittee on alcoholism and narcotics.

Although there is always danger in generalizations, it may be said that Banta, Glaser, and Viseltear were interested in being Johnson fellows because they wished to learn broadly about how Congress works. The other two of the five fellows who remained with the program for the year had more specific goals in mind, coming to Washington more openly as advocates, men with a mission.

Robert J. Schlegel, at 47 the eldest of the fellows, is a pediatrician who is director of clinical services and associate dean for public policy at the Charles R. Drew Postgraduate Medical School in the Watts section of Los Angeles. Of all the fellows, Schlegel is the one with the only significant record of achievement in basic biological research, having made contributions in the genetics of human development. However, like the rest of the fellows, his present interest is rooted firmly in issues of community health and preventive medicine.

In comments about the fellowship year, and what it revealed about the political process, Schlegel expresses "disappointment about the way ideas are generated." Referring to the new budget committee in the Senate, he says, for example, "I am struck by the unwillingness even in the new committee to generate *new* ideas. For instance, no one challenges the idea that national health insurance is the keystone to changes in the health of the nation." His own experience with the poor in Los Angeles leads him to doubt that money is the whole answer. In some poor areas there, he states, "expenditures per capita for health are close to the national average, but the people's health is lousy."

Schlegel, committed to making the Drew school a better place and to developing programs that make sense for coping with problems in a community where the leading cause of death among young people is homicide and not disease, spent his time in Washington trying to learn highly practical skills to take home with him. How to write a budget was top among them. "My objective is to serve the purposes of the Drew school," said Schlegel, acknowledging that he wanted to learn how to use public policy to advance a cause. He chose his congressional assignments accordingly, working first with Senator Walter F. Mondale (D–Minn.) and the Senate Budget Committee. He prepared staff papers on the federal budget and learned to discuss such things as "overall spending totals, the budget deficit, the macroeconomic impact of the budget on the nation's economy, and countercyclical spending." All these things, he concluded, will be useful in helping Drew establish fiscal relations with the federal government and the state of California.

Schlegel's second congressional assignment was in the office of Representative Edward R. Roybal (D–Calif.), who sits on the labor–health, education, and welfare (HEW) subcommittee and who represents an area of Los Angeles. In this second position, Schlegel followed David Sanchez, a Johnson fellow from the Misson district of San Francisco, who is equally committed to problems of health among the poor. (Sanchez has had local political experience as an elected member and president of the San Francisco school board. His colleagues would not be the least surprised to find him running for Congress in the not too distant future.)

With Roybal, Schlegel and Sanchez followed what they discovered to be mutual concerns about medical care in California. "Congressman Roybal wishes to pursue the reasons why federal outlays for health have not had a greater impact on the health of Americans," Schlegel states. He and Sanchez traced the "metabolism of the federal health dollar through state and local government to managers and providers and recipients of health care." With their help, Roybal is going to use his district as a laboratory to study health problems; his findings will serve as the basis for future legislation.

If Schlegel came away from his experience on the Hill unhappy with the dearth of new ideas, Sanchez came away with a sense of shock at the lack of what he calls "third world" individuals, meaning Mexican-Americans and other minorities, either in Congress or on staff. He thinks that should change. He was disappointed by the lack of interest many people showed in legislation on maternal and child health, or aging, or education. And he is angry with the Ford Administration. In the Senate, with the subcommittee on labor–HEW, he and colleagues worked hard for legislation on education. Sanchez recalls the elation at seeing it pass Congress, the frustration at seeing the President veto it. "Too many social priorities are lost in Ford's vetoes," he asserts. What does Sanchez plan to do with his fellowship experience? For one thing, he says, he now has the knowledge to see when people he is fighting for should be heard in Washington. And he plans to get them here to testify before Congress; he sees it as a chance to end "third world" silence.

From the point of view of everyone involved—the fellows, the Johnson Foundation, and the Institute of Medicine, the first year of the health policy fellowship program was a success, though there is still no full assessment of its impact. Its purpose, however, may have been well expressed by Glaser, who has written, with respect to the governance of the country being in the hands of generalists rather than experts, "There is room for improvement, naturally. Perhaps this can come only when both the scientific and the political are combined within the same individual. Maybe that is what this experience is all about."—BARBARA J. CULLITON

A second article will discuss some of the fellows' legislative experiences.