for such a body is the cancer panel, which was created at a time when those who had won the political battle over the launching of a war on cancer were determined not to see it snarled in red tape as the NCI director tried to foster initiatives with all deliberate speed. The NCI director could have been designated the man to call the White House if things bogged down, but he wasn't. The cancer act created a special, presidentially appointed National Cancer Advisory Board to advise the NCI director. Its chairman could have been granted a direct line to the White House, but he wasn't. In the grand scheme of things, it was felt necessary to have a rank of supreme commander that was more prestigious still, and so the panel was mandated, and Schmidt, a Republican businessman who could speak the language of the Administration, was named to lead it.

Benno Schmidt is a person whose influence derives from his position and his personality. He is strong and determined and not easily pushed around. To top it off, he has taken his role in the cancer program seriously. There is no doubt that he has played an important, indeed central, part in the development of the cancer program. People tend to link the fortunes of Schmidt and the cancer program to each other, seeing him as an undefeatable power broker on behalf of his cause. There is some truth to that but a lot of exaggeration as well. Schmidt persuades, but he does not dictate to agencies such as the Office of Management and Budget, where he has won some battles but also lost some.

Nevertheless, the perceived influence of Schmidt and the cancer panel has

Conferees Collide on Bill for White House Science Office

Legislation which would restore science advisory machinery to the White House hit another snag when House and Senate conferees held their first meeting on 2 April. Seeking to reconcile differences between House and Senate bills, the conferees agreed equably to major sections of the bills creating the basic advisory machinery. The falling out came over two somewhat secondary issues.

The House and Senate conferees, headed, respectively, by Representative Olin E. Teague (D–Tex.) and Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D–Mass.), appeared to be solidly deadlocked. Sources close to both sets of conferees, nevertheless, said that the principal interested parties, including those in the White House, are anxious to move the bill forward and expect to resolve differences quickly. When *Science* went to press on 6 April, however, it was not clear what lines such agreement would follow.

As anticipated (*Science*, 27 February), a section of the Senate bill which would provide federal encouragement to state and regional science policy programs met opposition from House conferees. The House conferees also objected to the Senate bill's proposal to insert the word "engineering" in all titles in the legislation. The White House office, for example, would be the Office of Science, Engineering, and Technology Policy.

The change in wording apparently resulted from a late but intensive lobbying campaign by a coalition of engineering societies. The campaign was prompted by feelings in the engineering community that for too long engineering and engineers have been slighted in government science policy discussions and arrangements.

The House conferees in general argued that explicit mention of engineering is not necessary because it falls under the rubric "science and technology." Furthermore, they suggested that specific mention of engineering might incite other technical subgroups—medical and agricultural scientists, for example—to demand equal consideration.

In the case of the State and Regional Science and Technology Program, which appears in the Senate bill, the House conferees indicated sympathy with the aims of the proposal but argued that it should not be included in a bill designed to establish federal science policy machinery.

The Senate proposal has two main parts. It calls for creation of an Intergovernmental Science, Engineering, and Technology Advisory Panel with mixed federal-state membership to identify major problems important to the states and to foster technology transfer and utilization.

The second provision is a one-shot program of grants to the executive and legislative branches of the states to help establish or strengthen state offices of science, engineering, and technology. A total of $8 million would be authorized, with each state to receive not more than $200,000 on a 80 to 20 federal-state matching basis. The House conferees urged that such a program would be handled more suitably through National Science Foundation (NSF) legislation and that financing it under the federal science advisory legislation might create practical difficulties under new budget procedures.

Despite the impasse on the two disputed points, the conferees agreed easily on the main sections of the bill, ratifying a series of compromises between House and Senate versions reached in detailed negotiations in which staff members had acted as go-betweens.

In addition to the creation of a science advisory office headed by a director and four assistant directors, reminiscent of the Office of Science and Technology abolished by President Nixon in 1973, the bill imposes on the new office policy responsibilities which are more highly formalized than in its earlier incarnation. The bill, for example, calls for creation of a blue-ribbon study committee to conduct a 2-year survey of the federal science and technology effort and to come up with a report containing comprehensive recommendations.

The compromise version also requires the new office to produce an annual report on science and technology which would supplant the report now done by the National Science Board and also to prepare and update each year a 5-year forecast of federal investment in science and technology and assist the Office of Management and Budget in planning federal R & D investment.

One issue which had concerned many proponents of returning the science adviser to the White House had been the question of the adviser's role in military matters. With the present arrangement, under which the NSF director serves as the President's science adviser, scientific aspects of military matters are excluded from his jurisdiction. In the language of the new bill, the science adviser would be a "statutory adviser of the National Security Council [NSC]." This does not make the science adviser a full member of the NSC, but affords him the same status as the director of the Central Intelligence Agency and is said to restore the science adviser to an effective role in military questions.—J.W.