

government as well, because the Soviets have violated a gentleman's agreement not to detonate blasts larger than 150 kilotons in the period before the treaties are ratified by each country (*Science*, 27 August 1976).

Late last week, the new State Department spokesman, Frederick Z. Brown, told reporters that the Carter Administration would like to see the Senate ratify both treaties as a "way station" on the road to a comprehensive ban. Ironically,

then, as a means of fulfilling his own campaign pledges, Carter's first order of business may be to put his stamp of approval on the unfinished business of the previous, Republican Administration.—DEBORAH SHAPLEY

Congress: House Redistributes Jurisdiction over Energy

The House of Representatives, dominated 2 years ago by fractious reformers, has unobtrusively organized itself for the 95th Congress. But the results of earlier changes are still working themselves out and this is nowhere more evident than in the energy sector.

The most conspicuous impact on committee operations in the new Congress has been caused as a consequence of the redistribution of the functions of the moribund Joint Committee on Atomic Energy (JCAE). The JCAE's jurisdiction has been cut up among five committees—Armed Services, Interior, International Relations, Commerce, and Science and Technology.*

The JCAE was a committee at bay in the latter days of the last Congress (*Science*, 19 November 1976) and was given its quietus on 4 January when the House, in the process of adopting the rules for the 95th Congress, provided for the division of jurisdiction.

By most estimates, the demise of the JCAE was attributable mainly to the strong feeling in the House, particularly among newer members, that the committee had been too long and too much the uncritical proponent of nuclear power and had failed to raise legitimate questions about the safety and economics of nuclear energy.

Some observers, however, have been quick to note that the transfer of jurisdiction could mean a shift from excessive centralization of authority to excessive decentralization. Most obviously, it will

be difficult to define jurisdictional boundaries—the line between the responsibilities of the Commerce and Interior committees may prove particularly hard to draw. And the move seems to further encourage the chronic tendency in Congress to fractionalize authority. The tendency is particularly strong in areas which are regarded as important or prestigious. And energy is currently very fashionable; it has been estimated that more than a score of panels already have pieces of the action in the two houses.

A practical problem will be to coordinate energy activities of House committees with the corresponding committees in the Senate, which will also be expected to take over JCAE functions. The Senate has been moving toward the same sort of reform of its committee system which the House began in the early 1970's. Final agreement on a compromise is expected imminently, but the senators have been advancing with the same sort of hesitation step which the House demonstrated in its own dance of reform.

Another problem of parallelism will arise in dealing with Executive agencies. In this sector, the claims of committees on agency officials often overlap and conflict. One House committee staff member said of the Hill approach to the new arrangements, "I don't think that anyone understands it yet. We'll just have to go through a cycle and see how it works out."

Reservations about the decentralization of authority were aptly expressed in the 4 January floor discussion by Representative John D. Young (D-Tex.). Young's remarks were both pointed and a touch poignant since he had been a member of the JCAE for some years and under the system of alternating chairmen between House and Senate would have

headed the committee for the 95th Congress. As he put it:

... it has long been my feeling and deep conviction that the interests of this country and indeed the interests of this House in the field of energy require and I think will ultimately demand that all energy, whether it be nuclear or nonnuclear, be within the jurisdiction and authority of one committee of this House. . . . I was pleased to read and hear public statements made, as I understand it, by the President-elect of the United States and by our distinguished Speaker, that it is their intention to move in the direction of having one committee to handle the matters of energy. Obviously, with the fragmentation that has existed in the nonnuclear field, some committees at some point are going to have to be willing to step back and be deprived of some authority and responsibility in their various fields.

The transfer of authority in the House over domestic regulation of nuclear energy to the Interior Committee coincides with the rise to the chairmanship of Morris Udall (D-Ariz.). Udall, a liberal Democrat, has a strong record as an environmentalist and a reputation as a skeptic about nuclear energy. Udall has been an advocate and sponsor of legislation for strict regulation of strip mining and he is expected to press immediately for revival of the sort of strip-mine control legislation which passed both houses but was vetoed by President Ford (*Science*, 22 October 1976).

Udall will continue as chairman of Interior's subcommittee on energy and the environment which will take over the JCAE's writ on regulatory matters. It will be the legislative subcommittee for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and will handle the NRC's budget authorization. One legislative initiative expected from Udall in the regulatory area is a bill giving states increased influence in the process through which construction permits for nuclear plants are issued.

The shift of the JCAE's jurisdiction over research to the House Science and Technology Committee, chaired by Representative Olin E. Teague (D-Tex.), makes the latter committee more than ever the focus in the House for those interested in energy R & D. Largely because of election casualties there are a number of realignments and reassignments within the committee, but the sub-

*Under the formula incorporated in the House rules the Armed Services Committee gets responsibility for overseeing nuclear energy for military purposes, Interior and Insular Affairs for domestic regulation, International Relations for export of nuclear technology, Interstate and Foreign Commerce for facilities regulation and oversight, and Science and Technology for all nuclear research including jurisdiction over the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA).

committee structure remains substantially as it was.

The committee has two energy R & D subcommittees. The panel which handled fossil fuels is now called the fossil and nuclear energy research, development, and demonstration subcommittee and is chaired by Representative Walter Flowers (D-Ala.). The other energy panel, chaired by Representative Mike McCormack (D-Wash.), is the advanced energy technologies and energy conservation research, development, and demonstration subcommittee, a title which adequately suggests its domain.

The subcommittee on science, research, and technology, which exercises legislative authority over the National Science Foundation (NSF), has a new chairman, Representative Ray Thornton (D-Tex.). Thornton, 44, succeeds James W. Symington, who was defeated in last year's senatorial primary in Missouri.

Thornton, in his third term, is an attorney who followed an electoral pathway which lawyers often follow into Congress—he was a prosecutor and then state attorney general before being elected to the House in 1972—but Thornton's education provided him with more of a technical background than most lawyers in Congress have. He earned a political science degree as an undergraduate at Yale, but was enrolled in a Navy reserve program which required him to take a number of science and mathematics courses. As a Naval officer during the Korean war he served in communications and navigation assignments and has kept up a general interest in science and science education.

Committee staff regard him as generally knowledgeable about science and scientific issues. Thornton says that among the things he hopes the subcommittee will examine is the chronic question of research grants for industry, and he says that he is interested in seeing a move toward a uniform patent policy for all government agencies which support research.

Like other subcommittees, Thornton's panel will have to deal with first things first—the necessity to examine and report the NSF authorization bill in order to meet the deadline required if the full committee, in turn, is to meet the 15 March due date in the congressional budget-making schedule.

At this point, the subcommittee has been signaled that the Carter Administration will not seek major changes in the NSF budget sent to Congress by President Ford (*Science*, 28 January).

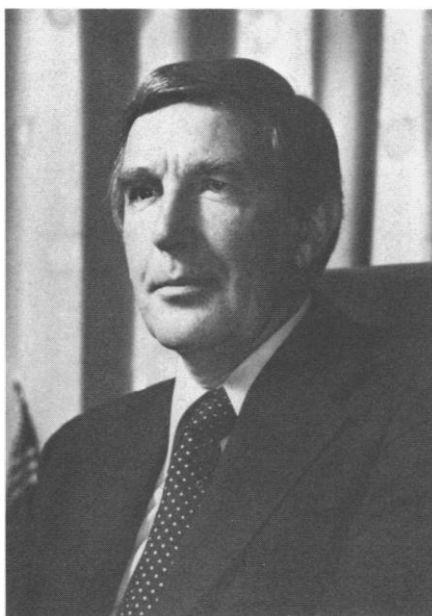
Thornton will have another tie with basic research in this Congress. He and



Representative Ray Thornton

Representative George Brown (D-Calif.), chairman of the Science and Technology subcommittee on environment and atmosphere, both have seats on an Agriculture subcommittee which this year takes formal responsibility for agricultural research.

The change in the subcommittee's brief was made in good measure because of the reappraisal of agricultural research which has been gaining momentum in recent years (*Science*, 21 May 1976). Until now, research matters in Agriculture had been handled by the full committee and as a result had received only passing attention from the committee. In the last Congress several other issues, including food stamps, were also handled by the full committee. So both be-



Representative Morris Udall

cause research is perceived as an increasingly important subject and because of the wish to unburden the full committee, responsibility for research was assigned to what is now the subcommittee for department investigations, oversight, and research chaired by Representative E. de la Garza (D-Tex.).

For Science and Technology, the consolidation of energy R & D responsibilities accelerates the committee's transition away from its original identity as "the space committee." Although it was established in the late 1950's as the Committee on Science and Astronautics, the stress during its first decade of existence was very much on the astronautics. With the decline of NASA budgets and of public interest in the space program the committee looked to other scientific horizons, and when the House reformed its committee structure and reshuffled functions the space committee was renamed the Science and Technology Committee.

The new importance of energy both in the committee and in the bigger scheme of things in Congress is reflected by the demand for seats on the two energy R & D subcommittees. The two energy panels are now the biggest by far in the committee. The Flowers subcommittee has 17 Democratic and 7 Republican members, and McCormack's subcommittee has 16 Democrats and 7 Republicans. Space science and applications are now handled by a single subcommittee chaired by Representative Don Fuqua (D-Fla.) with nine Democratic and four Republican members. At the peak, four subcommittees dealt with space activities. The subcommittee on science, research, and technology was not overrun by aspirants for seats when the committee organized—it has seven Democrats and two Republicans assigned to it. But three of the Democratic members—Brown, Fuqua, and McCormack—are chairmen of other subcommittees, and its members are regarded as knowledgeable.

Energy questions are obviously perceived in Congress these days as where the action is. The cold winter has created another energy emergency. But, since the new Administration is expected to propose new energy policies and to seek to reorganize the government structure that deals with energy problems, for the moment there is a decided mood of "waiting for Jimmy."—JOHN WALSH

Erratum: As several readers have pointed out, in an article on penicillin-resistant gonorrhea (*Science*, 24 December), it stated "In the hope of making patients feel guilty, scientists . . . recently agreed to give them [venereal diseases] another name. . . . The sentence should have read, "In the hope of making patients feel less guilty. . . ."—B.J.C.