

early days of the Revolution, when people were desperately needed to fill the medical ranks, the government lowered standards and cranked out graduates of dubious competence. But standards have since been raised to respectable levels. Today there are some 12,000 doctors in Cuba—about 1 for every 800 people. The comparable United States figure is 1 per 576 in 1976.

The Cubans now feel they have enough doctors to send many abroad to assist friendly regimes; more than 1000 are currently serving in Angola, Mozambique, Yemen, Jamaica, and other countries. And the expansion of the physician population is destined to continue. Already there are roughly 10,000 students studying to be doctors, almost as many as are now in practice; by 1985, there are

expected to be 35,000 such students.

Some experts criticize this as a waste of precious resources in a small country whose economy is strained and could not survive without Soviet subsidies. It apparently reflects a desire by the revolutionary government to outdo the Batista regime it overthrew, and surpass the medical services provided by other nations as well. This is not a country that

## Briefing

---

### Current Congress Could Give Cabinet Berth to Education

---

President Carter's proposal to consolidate education programs in a new, Cabinet-level Department of Education had been moving at a glacial rate, and, glacierlike, melting a bit as the political climate heated up. Intense opposition to inclusion of several big programs caused them to be dropped from the plan. In recent weeks, however, both the pace and the general prospects of the effort have picked up.

The Administration in mid-April finally made known what it wanted included in a new department. And the Senate committee handling the matter will soon begin its mark-up of the required legislation and expects to send the measure to the floor by early July.

One major unresolved issue currently is disposition of the education directorate of the National Science Foundation. In Senate testimony, Office of Management and Budget director James T. McIntyre said that the Administration position was that a department of education "should directly involve science education programs designed to upgrade school and college curricula. However, we think that the graduate training and scholarship programs, which recruit and prepare scientists for the nation's scientific research efforts, should remain in NSF, as well as some smaller education programs directed at improving communications between the scientific and nonscientific communities."

Higher education organizations and the scientific community in general have opposed transfer of the education programs out of NSF. The main argument has been that science education activities can best be carried out in an agency devoted to the support and encouragement of science. Dividing the program is seen as cutting the baby in half.

The issue is under active consideration by the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, which has jurisdiction over the proposal for a department. But it is very possible that the matter may not be finally resolved until the House has acted and Senate and House meet to reconcile their versions of the measure.

The general attitude of the higher education lobby toward the creation of a department of education appears to have altered significantly. Initially, higher education organizations bridled at the prospect on the grounds that higher education would be submerged and neglected in a department in which elementary and secondary education interests would dominate because of the preponderance of federal programs in those areas. On reflection, higher education organizations decided that relatively few programs vital to higher education would be affected. Perhaps more reassuring, Administration spokesmen indicated that higher education would be given visibility and high bureaucratic status through creation of an "Assistant Secretary for Higher Education." The American Council on Education and other major higher education groups now appear to agree that they should put their efforts into seeing that higher education's interests are fairly represented in a new department.

The Administration commitment to a department of education dates from a Carter campaign pledge to establish one. Not until this year's State of the Union address however, was the idea given official impetus and only in mid-April did the Administration come through with details. The Senate Governmental Affairs Committee was a friendly congressional host to the idea since Senator Abraham Ribicoff (D-Conn.) has long been an advocate of departmental status for education; he was Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) under President Kennedy.

The bill which goes to the Senate floor is expected to be basically Ribicoff's, but

will contain main features the Administration wants. The core of the proposed department would be the programs now in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and the National Institute of Education.

Major programs included out because of opposition of congressional patrons of politically strong constituencies are job-training programs now in the Labor Department, Veterans Administration education programs, and the Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, although the Administration wants to retain the option of considering the latter for inclusion later.

Prospects for the bill are viewed as brightening in part because of indications that the House Government Operations Committee will move promptly on the matter after the Senate completes action. The chairman of the House committee, Jack Brooks (D-Tex.), had been regarded as, at best, indifferent to the proposal and unlikely to take the initiative. Brooks has still not declared himself on the issue, but his committee is expected to follow good form and take it up this summer. Proponents say this makes it possible, if not probable, that a department could be sanctioned this year.

---

### Eskimos Honor Whale Quota, but Ask New Terms for Hunt

---

Alaskan Eskimos seem to have reached a modus vivendi with the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and the U.S. government in the dispute over the Eskimos' right to hunt the bowhead whale in their ancestral fashion. The spring hunt of bowheads migrating north through the waters off the northwest coast of Alaska has virtually ended with Eskimos abiding by a compromise quota set at the end of last year.

A clash between the Eskimos and national and international authority was

wants to rely on paramedics or "bare-foot doctors." That may be good enough for China, I was told, but the Cubans intend to provide everyone with access to "real doctors."

This deluge of doctors has been accompanied by expansion of the entire health manpower pool. The annual output of dentists, for example, increased tenfold between 1958 and 1975, while

output of technical aides jumped from a miniscule 32 in 1958 to more than 6000 in the mid-1970's. Thus the manpower base was both widened and deepened.

The manpower has also been better distributed. Cuba seems largely to have overcome a problem that plagues our own medical system—lack of services in rural and impoverished urban areas. Cuban medicine was respectable even be-

fore the Revolution, but like much else in prerevolutionary Cuba it was skewed to serve the urban well-to-do. Two-thirds of the doctors were jammed into Havana. In most rural areas there were few, if any, medical resources. The revolutionary movement, which drew its initial strength from the rural areas and then from the urban poor, has redressed the imbalance with a vengeance. A network

---

## Briefing

generated when the IWC last June declared a moratorium suspending the exemption under which the Eskimos had been permitted to hunt the bowhead. The big Arctic whale is otherwise completely protected as an endangered species. The Eskimos argued that hunting the bowhead is necessary to their culture and subsistence diet (*Science*, 26 August 1977) and that the international body lacked power in the matter.

After an emergency IWC meeting last December, an ad hoc, 1-year quota was set allowing the Eskimo hunters 12 whales killed or 18 struck. In recent years, Eskimo whaling activity has increased considerably, particularly the number of whales struck but not landed. In the 1960's the average kill rate was under 20 a year; in 1977, 26 whales were reported landed, 2 killed and lost, and 77 struck and lost. Concern about this increase precipitated the moratorium.

The Eskimos have complained that the 1978 quota is too small to supply Eskimo needs and that, as a result, there will be food shortages in the whaling villages this year. They say they agreed to abide by the quota, however, as a demonstration of good faith and of a desire to see a new "management" system for the bowhead established in which the Eskimos would participate.

This year the Eskimos have apparently operated effective machinery of self-regulation with an Eskimo whaling commission setting quotas for each village. Only one village is reported to have exceeded its quota and, over all, the Eskimo hunters stayed within the quota total.

The Eskimos have also cooperated with the Commerce Department in an unprecedented effort to make a count of the migrating whales. The size of the total bowhead population has been in dispute, with Eskimos arguing that widely accepted estimates—of a total of 1000 to 2000 animals—were too low.

This year Commerce went all out to get a more accurate reading on the bowhead stock. The research budget on the

whales was increased from \$75,000 to \$750,000, and a team numbering up to 50, with Eskimos on the payroll, was out on the ice making the count. Preliminary data are said to indicate that the bowhead population exceeds prevailing estimates, but officials caution that the data must be carefully analyzed before conclusions are drawn.

The Eskimos are asking that a special aboriginal whaling scheme be adopted with future quotas linked to biological limits which will permit both the continued recovery of the bowhead population and an adequate hunt for the Eskimos. Federal officials seem to be sympathetic to developing such a formula, but no firm policy stand has been adopted.

The bowhead issue is again on the agenda of IWC, which meets at the end of June in Cambridge, England, but the bowhead matter is likely to be overshadowed, since the IWC will be taking up the question of a 10-year moratorium on all pelagic whaling—that is commercial whaling on the high seas. A three-quarters majority of the 17 member nations is needed and a very close vote is expected.

---

### U.S. Planning for UNCSTD— Problems of Development

---

Complaints continue that U.S. preparations for the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development are getting back-burner treatment. Such feeling was reportedly conveyed in a recent letter to President Carter from House Science and Technology Committee chairman Olin E. Teague (D-Tex.). Teague, who has not received a reply to the letter sent in mid-May and has not yet made his letter public, is understood to have asked the President about the state of planning for the conference and urged that the matter be reviewed at the presidential level.

The conference, scheduled for August 1979 in Vienna, is expected to concentrate on technology transfer and other issues in the so-called "North-South dialogue" between industrial countries and less developed countries. American specialists in development matters have warned that a damaging confrontation could occur if U.S. policy positions are not well prepared (*Science*, 7 October 1977) and take into account the views of less developed countries.

The Administration had responded earlier by forming a separate office for UNCSTD headed by Ambassador Jean Wilkowski and appointing Notre Dame president Father Theodore Hesburgh to head the U.S. delegation to the meeting, but critics say the office has not been getting wholehearted support from the Executive.

Recently, critics have been protesting another cut, a literal one involving money. About \$900,000 for the UNCSTD effort next year was included in a separate line item in the State Department authorization bill passed on 31 May by the House. But the line item has reportedly been deleted by the House Appropriation Committee and the money included in a general item for State Department salaries and expenses. Proponents of giving UNCSTD planning a priority see the action as a slight by State and the Office of Management and Budget in their not supporting the line item, as well as by the committee. They fear that the UNCSTD item will lose out in the departmental competition for funds. Money for a series of scheduled meetings in coming months to involve U.S. industry and nongovernmental organizations, among others, in the planning process are thought to be particularly vulnerable. In the Senate, an effort, led by Senator Adlai E. Stevenson (D-Ill.), is being made to restore the line item at a reduced level of \$785,000. Even if the line item does not survive in the final funding measure, the effort could raise the consciousness of State's budgeteers about UNCSTD.

John Walsh