

offering commercial service with the system in 1972. The system's heart is 200 hard disk drives. Its head is two mainframe computers, an IBM 3033 and an AS-9000, one of which handles calls arriving through Tymnet and the other calls from Telenet.

Conversations with data bank systems are instructive but highly dangerous. Like Circe with Odysseus' crew, the system continually tempts the visitor to linger longer, to have a little more, to browse for a while in rich pastures of arcane knowledge that deaden the mind to the computer's silent but relentless accountancy function. When you start to your senses and escape from the spell, you learn that you have been made to pay for every microsecond of pleasurable dalliance.—**Nicholas Wade**

## Weak Creationist Bill Filed in Maryland

Maryland is the latest state to face a legislative initiative on the teaching of creationism in public schools. The bill as it stands does not conform to the successful formula that has been enacted in the states of Arkansas and Louisiana, but its sponsor, Patrick Scanello, told *Science* that he expects to amend the wording substantially when the legislative session begins in January.

If enacted in its present form, the bill would not mandate creationist teaching but would merely allow it. "If students in a public, elementary, or secondary school in this State are taught evolution the students may be taught creationism," states the bill.

Opponents to the measure interpret this cautious wording as a tactic to achieve easy passage. Others say that the bill is redundant because there is nothing in the state legislation that prevents the teaching of creationism. Such teaching could be challenged as unconstitutional, whether or not the bill was passed.

The bill's formulation may however be the result of hasty drafting rather than careful tactics. "I just wrote it up and shot it in," says Scanello. "Yes, I'll change that 'may' to 'shall,' and there will be lots of other changes too."

Scanello says he introduced the bill

because of a promise made to some of his constituents when he was elected in 1978. "There's no pressure group or religious body behind it," he says. "I just want the religious alternative to evolution taught in the schools, and to be taught as science."

In contrast to the Arkansas and Louisiana bills, Scanello's does not assiduously avoid religious overtones. For instance, in its definition of creationism, the bill states that "matter and life were spontaneously created by a deity." However, Scanello hopes to obtain a copy of the Arkansas bill and he plans to base his amendments on it.

Scanello, who is a Roman Catholic, has yet to study the creationist literature. He says he does not agree with the creationists' literal interpretation of a 6-day creation, which conflicts with the view taken by the Catholic Church and by other branches of the Christian religion. "I hope to be able to read some of their magazines and books before January," says Scanello.

In the absence of coordinated and articulate support that the creationists have mustered elsewhere, the prospects for the Maryland bill look poor.—**Roger Lewin**

## Peace Commission Calls for Federal Establishment

Supporters of a national peace academy believe the nation is now closer than ever to realizing an idea that has been batting around since the 1790's. A congressionally mandated commission on 20 October presented to the President a report recommending the creation of a federally subsidized United States Academy of Peace for research, education, and training in conflict resolution. Legislation to that effect will be introduced shortly in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

For close to 200 years, there has been talk of setting up an office or department of peace to balance the country's war-making apparatus. The modern version of the idea has been the subject of an organized campaign since 1976. Although repeatedly rebuffed by Congress throughout the years, proponents believe the time is

now ripe for a peace academy because, they claim, conflict resolution is well on its way to becoming a mature and scientific discipline.

According to Milton Mapes, director of the National Peace Academy Campaign, the theoretical progenitor of the academy is economist Kenneth Boulding, who set up a center for conflict resolution at the University of Michigan in the late 1950's. His wife Elise, head of the sociology department at Dartmouth University, served on the commission, which was headed by Senator Spark Matsunaga (D-Hawaii). Other prominent supporters are James H. Laue, director of the Center for Metropolitan Studies at the University of Missouri, and Roger Fisher, professor of law at Harvard University, who has been involved in developing methods of international conflict resolution.

The proposed academy would be an independent, nonprofit corporation and would receive money from outside sources as well as government appropriations. It would be primarily a training academy, according to Mapes, designed as a degree-granting graduate school for mid-career professionals working in such fields as diplomacy, labor, and human services. The main focus would be on international problems but domestic and community conflicts will be studied too. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the academy would also have 15 regional centers associated with universities and other institutions were it to come into being and develop as fully as its supporters hope it will.

Getting the academy idea through Congress may not be easy. As Matsunaga remarked, "peace is one of the most difficult things to sell to the Congress" because members tend to equate it with a weakening of the national defense. The State Department has always been cool to the concept, perceiving an attempted intrusion on its turf (Edmund Muskie has been the only Secretary of State to support the idea). Other critics think a peace academy should not be tied with the federal government.

Matsunaga and Senator Jennings Randolph (D-W.Va.), who delivered the report to the President, said that Reagan, while not endorsing the academy idea, seemed "comfortable" with it.—**Constance Holden**