

# Science in the News

## **Funds for NSF and NASA: Senate Votes To Restore Cuts Made in the House**

The Senate has voted to restore the \$30 million the House cut out of the National Science Foundation budget, and to not only restore \$39 million cut from the space program, but to add another \$20 million to the budget request. The bill providing money for the NSF and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, as well as money for a dozen or so other independent agencies (independent, that is, of the ten cabinet departments) now goes to a House-Senate conference.

The NSF budget is following the steps foreseen by the foundation: a cut in the House, restoration in the Senate, followed by a compromise leaving NSF with all the money (about \$180 million) they really expected to get when they set up their budget. The NASA budget is a little more complicated. The Senate Space Committee, chaired by Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson, has been sharply critical of the space budget. Johnson thinks it should be bigger anyway, but he and his committee are more immediately disturbed by what they see as a lack of sophistication on the part of the NASA budget makers.

### **Honesty or Naivete**

They say the space program was delayed this year because NASA failed to allow some leeway for unexpected expenses, particularly money for back-up rockets for firings that did not go off as planned. They said they failed to make allowances, as other agencies do, for the normal cut in the budget to be expected in the House. NASA officials said they were just trying to be perfectly honest with Congress, but the committee seemed to feel there is a point where honesty passes into naivete. Beyond the specific criticisms of NASA's budget-makers the Space Committee applied the general Demo-

cratic criticism that the Budget Bureau, rather than the responsible agencies, is making the important decisions; that there is too much thinking about what we can afford to do and not enough about what we need to do.

But the agency has not been completely subservient to the Budget Bureau. The Bureau, it seems, suggested a guideline of \$515 million to the agency, but T. Keith Glennan, the NASA administrator, told the committee that "I just couldn't believe it, so we didn't accept it." The eventual estimate reached was \$915 million, which is probably just about what the agency will have when the bill gets out of conference. It will very likely get the additional \$55 million Johnson's Space Committee authorized as well, but this will come through a supplemental appropriation after the new Congress convenes.

## **The School Construction Bill: The Victim Is Revived after Being Pronounced Dead Several Times**

There may yet be a school construction bill, but it will have to come as the result of some of the most intricate Congressional maneuvering in years. As early as late afternoon of the day the bill reached the House floor it was clear that there was a majority in Congress ready to vote for a compromise bill acceptable to everyone except those opposed to any school bill at all.

Arthur Flemming, the Administration's Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, was in the gallery when the bill was being debated in the House. Just after the Powell amendment barring aid to segregated schools had been adopted and the bill, for the moment, appeared headed for defeat, Flemming sent down a suggestion for a compromise move that would have both eliminated the Powell amendment and substituted a bill that the President would be sure to sign. The Democratic lead-

ers, their backs against the wall at this point, were ready to accept Flemming's proposal, but the Republican leader, Charles Halleck, who was against any school bill, blocked the Administration move. The bill then appeared to be killed on a preliminary vote, but was revived and then passed on the formal roll calls that followed.

The bill then went back to the House Rules Committee, which had earlier held up action for 2 months, until it became clear that the school aid forces had the strength and tactical position to bypass the committee. Now two new roadblocks arose: there were two southerners on the Rules Committee unalterably opposed to any school bill. Five other Democrats were for school aid, and a sixth was "persuadable." But together they made up only half the committee, and a majority was needed to send the bill forward to its next step, a House-Senate conference. One of four Republicans on the committee would have to support the bill, and none appeared to be ready to do so. On top of this, Republican leader Halleck was ready to put Clare Hoffman of Michigan, probably the most conservative man in the House, on the House conference committee in place of Peter Frelinghuysen of New Jersey, who had seniority. Together with Graham Barden, of North Carolina, this would make a 2 to 1 majority of the House conferees opposed to any bill. They would combine to prevent the conference from reaching any agreement, so killing the bill.

At this point Vice President Nixon let it be known that he was working on Halleck to get the school bill through. Yet when the Rules Committee met last week no Republican vote was forthcoming and the bill once more appeared to be at death's door. It was an extremely peculiar situation. For Nixon's acknowledgment that he was working on Halleck was a tacit admission that it was the senior House Republicans who were killing this popular legislation which had the support of the Republican Administration. On the eve of his campaign for the Presidency Nixon had laid his prestige on the line on this issue. If the bill got through, Nixon could properly claim some of the credit. But because he had laid his prestige on the line, it was both surprising and damaging that all of the Republicans on the Rules Committee nevertheless voted against the bill.

Some Republicans tried to explain