

Congress: A Broad Expansion of National Defense Education Act Passes Relatively Unnoticed

The 88th Congress, dubbed the "education Congress" by President Johnson for the bumper crop of education legislation it produced, ended in an anticlimactic wrangle over amendment and extension of the National Defense Education Act.

Conflict arose on both the authorization bill, which covers the substance of the legislation, and an appropriations bill, which provides the money. Both bills happened to come up for final action in the last part of the last week of the long session.

Controversy over the authorization bill had an ideological flavor, centering on the expansion of some sections of the bill to cover history and other subjects as well as the "strategic" subjects to which the NDEA was originally limited.

In the case of the appropriations bill, the main conflict was not on the NDEA itself, which has been generally esteemed by legislators and educators, but over another item lashed to it in the same legislative package. The NDEA amendments were tied to a 1-year extension of the act which provides federal aid to school districts "impacted" by substantial numbers of children of federal employees. This impacted-areas legislation is also popular, but the Senate this year insisted that District of Columbia schools, which have not been eligible for such aid, be made so, and the House resisted.

Questions of federal support of D.C. activities are fought out in Congress on complicated North-South, liberal-conservative lines, and the issue delayed adjournment for at least a day.

Sheer desperation on the part of House members to get home and start campaigning clearly had much to do with the settlement of the matter on the Senate's terms.

The skirmish, however, distracted attention from the radical remodeling of NDEA, which gives the bill its first major changes since it was passed in 1958.

The NDEA was an antisputnik measure. Its aim was to bolster the teaching of science, mathematics, and foreign languages, and it broke precedent with previous legislation by providing something for education at almost every level—a loan fund for students in higher education, fellowships for graduate students, summer training institutes for

high school language teachers and guidance counselors, funds for science teaching equipment for the schools, and for upgrading postsecondary technical education.

Without NDEA and its complement in the National Science Foundation's curriculum reform projects and training institutes for math and science teachers, it is very doubtful that the overhaul of American public education in recent years would have gone nearly as far as it has.

The NDEA's chief begetter, incidentally, was Representative Carl Elliott (D-Ala.), chairman of the House Select Committee on Government Research, who lost out in his state's "at large" primary earlier this year and is accounted another casualty among Southern legislators who failed to "race it up" enough.

Talk of revision and expansion of NDEA started soon after the bill went into effect, but until this Congress, not much came of the talk except short extensions of its life beyond the original 4 years. Then in the first session, the 88th Congress took a first step by fattening the undergraduate loan fund which had proved so popular that demand for loans had outrun the funds available. Loan funds were increased from the \$95 million then available to \$135 million. Congress also raised the limit on funds available at any institution from \$250,000 to \$800,000. The limitation had caused several larger universities to grant far fewer loans than there were applicants or to spread the money very thinly.

Congress Raises the Ceiling

This year Congress went further in the amendments, raising the total available to \$163.3 million in the current fiscal year, \$179.3 million in 1966, \$190 million in 1967, and \$195 million in 1968. The institutional ceiling on loans was removed entirely. And the yearly limit on loans for professional and graduate students was raised from \$1000 to \$2500. The total limit for loans to such students was doubled, to \$10,000.

Previously, special preference in granting loans was given to prospective elementary school teachers and to students with superior background in science, engineering, mathematics, and foreign languages. The amended law requires only that priority be given to students with "superior academic background."

The "forgiveness" feature of the loan

program, which permits cancellation of up to 50 percent of a loan for a borrower who teaches in public schools for 5 years, has been extended to include teachers in private elementary and secondary schools and those in institutions of higher education.

The number of NDEA graduate fellowships has been raised sharply, from the old rate of 1500 a year, to 3000 for the current fiscal year, 6000 in 1966, and 7500 in 1967 and also in 1968. The fellowship section in the original bill was designed to increase the supply of college teachers and required that the fellowships be granted only in new or expanded departments. As amended, the expansionary requirements are modified so that only half the fellowships need be awarded this year in new or expanding departments and one-third of them in the following 3 years.

The amended section, however, puts a sharper point on the proviso on career intentions, specifying that "recipients of fellowships . . . shall be persons who are interested in teaching or continuing to teach, in institutions of higher education, and are pursuing, or intend to pursue, a course of study leading to a degree of doctor of philosophy or equivalent degree." How this section will be administered is not yet clear.

Funds distributed to the states for guidance, testing, and counseling are increased from a present level of \$17.5 annually to \$24 million for fiscal '65 and by steps to \$30 million a year in 1968.

The most controversial changes in the final version of the bill were those made in the section authorizing training institutes for teachers. NDEA institutes were limited originally to teachers and supervisors of modern foreign languages and guidance personnel (NSF sponsors institutes for science and math teachers).

The new NDEA amendments expand the authorization to include institutes for teachers and supervisors of reading, history, geography, English, and of "disadvantaged youth," school library personnel, and "education media specialists."

This expansion was the main bone of contention among Republican members of the House Education and Labor Committee who opposed the final version of the bill both on principle and because they felt that the Democratic House conferees in the Senate-House conference on the bill had "receded" too easily on this and other points to

the Senate view. An agreement to knock history, geography, and some other subjects out of the bill had been part of a compromise reached to gain bipartisan backing for the bill when it was passed in the House in August, and the House Republicans resented the conference revisions and refused to sign the conference report.

The Republicans insisted that federal support of institutes in subjects such as history opened the door to federal influence on subject matter. They argued that the possibility is present in the institute program because the Commissioner of Education has authority to select universities to operate institutes and could pick institutions which stress particular teaching methods or subject matter. (Other sections of the bill which affect the public schools are administered through state education agencies according to state plans.) The critics see the risks as being greater in history, where the ideological implications are much greater, than in the sciences, mathematics, or languages.

These arguments did not prevail, and a motion to recommit the bill was defeated by a vote of 236 to 107. Final passage came on a 320 to 20 vote which probably reflected not only the general popularity of the NDEA, but the members' anxiety to adjourn.

Passage of the NDEA amendments furnished the capstone to the most impressive record of education legislation built by any Congress. Not only did the 88th enact the Health Professions Educational Assistance Act (*Science*, 3 May 1963), major amendments to the Vocational Education Act (*Science*, 14 June 1963) and the Higher Education Facilities Act (*Science*, 20 December 1963) but also provided substantial aid to education in measures not labeled education.

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, more familiarly known as the Poverty bill, is in large part designed to support education, broadly defined. Under the section which provides funds for community action, much of the money is expected to go into special programs to improve the education of "disadvantaged" children in urban and rural slums. Funds for adult literacy training are included in the law as is a special work-study program to stimulate part-time employment for students in institutions of higher education who come from low income families and need such earnings to continue their education.

The 1963 amendments of the Man-

power Development and Training Act adjust provisions of the law to make it better fitted to suit the actual needs of undereducated young people and the older unemployed as well.

The 88th Congress's record in education, therefore, amounts to a legislative feast after a famine dating from 1958. And it is natural to speculate on how it happened.

Much has been said about President Johnson's effectiveness as a persuader of Congress. Certainly his energy and skill in using all the stops on the presidential console cannot be minimized, but to chalk up the whole legislative bag of the last 11 months to him would be oversimplifying things.

The higher education bill and vocational education bill were passed in the month that remained of the first session of the 88th Congress after the assassination of President Kennedy, and these bills were at least in part memorials to the late President.

In addition to the atmosphere created by the assassination, Congress had bogged down in its consideration of the Civil Rights and tax-cut bills and was smarting under the reproaches of journalists and political scientists for institutional sclerosis. It, therefore, wanted to put some significant legislation into the record.

This year, also, the perennial House-Senate rivalry, which has been most apparent in appropriations matters, subsided somewhat, in part it would appear, because of the death of Clarence Cannon (D-Mo.), the shrewd, proud, and domineering longtime chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. It is also worth noting that the House leadership, with its first year of experience after the death of Speaker Sam Rayburn behind it, proved more adroit in the second year.

The record of the 88th Congress would appear to signal a significant alteration in the attitude of Congress to education legislation.

By handsomely increasing funds for the college loan fund the legislators proved ready to underwrite with federal funds the increasingly popular practice of "study now, pay later."

In broadening the categorical restrictions applying to teacher institutes and funds for equipment, Congress was, in part, reacting to criticism from outside and inside that federal aid in support of science, mathematics, and languages was causing imbalances in American education. Mrs. Edith Green (D-Ore.), chairman of the House subcommittee

which handles higher education legislation has been one of the most insistent and most effective voices calling attention to this imbalance.

By making federal stipends (of \$75 a month plus allowances for dependents) to teachers attending summer training institutes available to teachers in private schools, including church-related ones, Congress quietly finessed the religious issue, basing the payments on "individual benefit" rather than on benefit to the schools.

In the Poverty bill and by opening NDEA institutes to teachers of disadvantaged youth Congress more explicitly than ever before showed itself disposed to use federal funds as an "equalizer" in education.

Oddly, the magnitude of the changes in the NDEA seem not to have been widely noticed. Amendments which, for example, increase graduate fellowships fivefold by 1967, however, denote a very considerable expansion. And it is not really extravagant to suggest that these amendments will have as much impact on American education as did the original bill.—JOHN WALSH

Announcements

Fifty persons who have held Woodrow Wilson fellowships have been selected to teach for a year at 33 southern colleges, most of them predominantly Negro, under an internship plan worked out between the colleges and the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. The participants have had at least 2 years of graduate study, and most of them are between masters' and doctors' degrees.

The program is supported by a 3-year, \$405,000 grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, intended to help "provide a means of access to good graduate schools for those gifted students whose undergraduate training may have lacked breadth in the liberal arts." The Wilson interns will work with these students in extracurricular seminars and individual tutoring aimed at encouraging them to consider graduate schools and careers in college teaching. The interns will be released from one quarter of their teaching time to participate in this program.

The National Academy of Sciences has established a committee to study the application of electronic computers to mechanical translation and the automatic processing of **language data**. The