

in efforts to deal with a variety of ills that plague the nation, the fact is that a very productive and admirable structure is now destined for a severe battering.

Since the flow of money from the U.S. Treasury across the American landscape defies exact and timely measurement in even the most placid of times, it is difficult to assess the details of the situation, and this is especially so in the case of academic research, which is financially linked to government by an intricate and slow-moving capillary system. This is further complicated by the fact that Congress has been laggard in getting out its money bills, with the result, for example, that the NSF and NIH budgets which were designed for the fiscal year that began last July are yet to emerge from the Capitol. Under these circumstances the rules dictate that a federal agency may spend only as much as was contained in its most recently approved budget. Thus, in October 1967, NSF and NIH are laying out money on the basis of budgetary totals that were approved for the fiscal year that began in July 1966. The plans for that budget, it might be noted, were completed at the end of 1965. On top of this, as the economic and political fortunes of the administration rise and fall, the Bureau of the Budget now and then dictates that spending for certain purposes is to be accelerated, slowed, or stopped. Such was the case last week when, amidst violent congressional gyrations over government spending, the Bureau put a freeze on new construction "except where the national security is involved," and on anything else that can be postponed without disrupting "orderly government."

Consequently it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to describe the present or assess the future financial situation with any precision. But, on the basis of conversations with persons who are situated inside the federal bureaucracy at some of the key junction points of the research-money flow, the following broad picture emerges.

Without any master plan, and, in fact, without any general realization of what was happening, federal expenditures for research and development swelled from about \$5.8 billion in fiscal 1959 to about \$14.6 billion by 1964. Activities related to space, defense, and atomic energy accounted for the bulk of this growth; along the way, basic research kept pace at a rate of about

LBJ Meets Professors on Vietnam

President Johnson seems to be spending more time talking to his Vietnam critics these days. For instance, late in the afternoon of 26 September, the President met in a confidential session with a group of senior Harvard and Radcliffe professors and administrators at the White House to discuss Vietnam. The distinguished list included Franklin L. Ford, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Nobel Prize-winning scientists Edward M. Purcell and Robert B. Woodward, and Radcliffe College president, Mary I. Bunting, who served Johnson for a year as a commissioner of the Atomic Energy Commission.* Four chemists, three physicists, six social scientists, and an engineer were in the Harvard contingent.

These academicians are not known as out-spoken "doves" on Vietnam. For the most part, they have kept their views out of the press. They are, as one professor noted, representatives of "the troubled middle." In August, the group wrote the President asking what they could do to help him resist the pressure for extension and intensification of the Vietnam war. Much to the group's surprise, the President responded that such matters were difficult to discuss in formal letters and invited them to visit him in Washington. The meeting was arranged by John P. Roche, a White House aide who formerly taught political science at Brandeis. (The *New York Times* reported on 8 October that the President had introduced Roche on another occasion as the White House "anti-intellectual in residence.")

These representatives of "the troubled middle" came to Washington, in the words of Franklin Ford, "because of deep foreboding about the present drift of United States policy in Vietnam." The Harvard group agreed in advance that they would not discuss the nature of the meeting with the President. When criticized by the *Harvard Crimson*, the student newspaper, for not divulging the meeting's contents, Ford wrote a letter to the *Crimson* (published 4 October) explaining the reasons for the meeting and for the group's silence.

The confidential White House meeting lasted for almost 2 hours. The group made a formal presentation of its position at the beginning of the session, and then the President took over. It was somewhat difficult for the professors to get a word in after that point. "You know how the President is," one participant noted, "After a while I felt a little bit like a fourth grader being lectured." The participants largely seem to share Ford's view that the events and official statements of Administration policy over the summer have increased worries about Vietnam and that "the recent expedition to the capital did nothing to diminish them."

A White House aide said that there was nothing unusual about the meeting with the Harvard professors. "The President meets with all kinds of people all the time," he said. "He is not setting out to convert the academic types as such."

In addition to his talk with the professors, the President has had fairly cordial exchanges at the White House recently with some of the Democratic Senators who have argued against his escalation of the war. In a period when his popularity is rapidly plummeting, it is difficult to see how the President can do anything but help himself by meeting with those who differ with him. The President will not win any converts until he drastically changes his directives for Vietnam, but at least his personal conversations with his critics are likely to muffle the loudness of their cries of protest.—BRYCE NELSON

*The other professors at the meeting and their disciplines are: Paul D. Bartlett, chemistry; Abram Bergson, economics; Paul M. Doty, chemistry; Howard W. Emmons, mechanical engineering; Merle Fainsod, government; Wassily W. Leontief, economics; Robert G. McCloskey, government; Talcott Parsons, sociology; Robert V. Pound, physics; John H. Van Vleck, physics; and Edgar B. Wilson, Jr., chemistry.