

in the hands of a commerce committee subcommittee, headed by Adlai Stevenson (D-Ill.). The Stevenson subcommittee already authorized JOP and LST funding earlier this year, but whether it can muscle the appropriations subcommittee that oversees NASA into doing likewise, remains to be seen. The appropriations subcommittee, headed by William Proxmire (D-Wisc.), which has different members this year, may not necessarily sympathize with the cries of planetary researchers.

Frosch faces a more complex challenge with the Carter Administration that appointed him. Aside from his job inter-

view with the President, in which the ex-naval engineer asked the ex-naval research administrator a lot of questions ("He sure gives a tough job interview" says Frosch), the incoming NASA administrator has not been dealing with the President or his immediate staff. And while he has dealt with the newly reestablished office of the Science Adviser, which, under the leadership of Frank Press will probably be sympathetic to NASA and planetary science generally, the overall Administration attitude towards the space agency is a big unknown.

To add to the uncertainty, rumors

have been circulating around Washington that NASA will be rolled into the Commerce Department or the Defense Department. But a spokesman for Harrison Wellford, Carter's government reorganization chief, denies that those rumors have any basis—at present. Says the spokesman, "NASA is not on our docket at this point. But then we're not going to eliminate anything either." So, while Frosch may preside over the strengthening of science at NASA, he could also preside over the "streamlining" of the agency into some new, perhaps unrecognizable, form.

—DEBORAH SHAPLEY

Water Projects Dispute: Carter and Congress Near a Showdown

The confrontation between President Jimmy Carter and Congress over the water projects "pork barrel" is now approaching high noon. Either the President must soon back away from his demands that Congress terminate or drastically modify nearly a score of ongoing projects as a start toward sweeping reforms in water resource development policies, or the Congress must do his bidding, at least with respect to the worst projects on the White House "hit list." Some political commentators have regarded the President's crusade as a Quixotic tilting at windmills that will gain him nothing except the ill will of powerful senators and representatives who can make trouble for the rest of his legislative program. But there is reason to think that the President can in fact prevail, or certainly gain substantial concessions, if he is as willing as he seems to veto the public works appropriations bill that the Congress will be sending him.

As recently reported by the House Committee on Appropriations for floor action on 13 June, the bill reflects what appears to be almost a contemptuous disregard for the President's ideas about reform of water resources policy.

Only one of the projects which Carter wanted terminated—the economically submarginal Grove Lake flood control project in Kansas which has lacked firm support even from the member of Congress in whose district it was to have been built—was omitted from this mea-

sure. Planning money for some controversial and admittedly nonessential dams associated with the Central Arizona Project was deleted, and certain conditions were imposed on several other projects—most notably, the committee sensibly decided that further funding of the Auburn Dam project should await the outcome of a study to determine whether an active earthquake fault underlies the dam site. (Should this 700-foot-high dam be built and then fail as the result of an earthquake, a 30- to 40-foot wall of water would come crashing down upon Sacramento.) Apart from these concessions, the committee appears to have gone out of its way to let Carter know that it intends to continue doing pretty much as it pleases.

Besides refusing to stop further spending on the 15 projects the President wants terminated altogether and on several others he wants redesigned, the committee put money in the bill for a dozen entirely new projects that had not been included in the Administration budget. Furthermore, it indicated that, in the future, funds might even be provided to allow work to be restarted on the Cross Florida Barge Canal, a project which President Nixon stopped in 1971. Both the state of Florida and the Carter Administration have called on Congress to bury this half-dead project for good by rescinding the 1942 act by which it was authorized.

Almost alone among his colleagues on

the Appropriations Committee, Representative Silvio O. Conte, a Republican from the Berkshire region of Massachusetts, is taking President Carter's side in the water projects dispute and he will offer one or more amendments to bring the bill more in line with the President's wishes. So strong is the tradition among House members of looking out for one another (and collecting IOU's from one another) in matters of this kind, Conte may at best succeed in knocking out a few of the more controversial or questionable projects, and even that is perhaps unlikely. But if, as expected, he gains the support of at least a third of the House members present, this will serve notice on the Congress that a presidential veto of the bill could probably be sustained.

Two of the heavies on the Appropriations Committee, Representative George H. Mahon (D-Tex.), the chairman, and Representative Tom Berill (D-Ala.), head of the public works subcommittee, have shrewdly attempted to undercut the President's effort to justify the hit list partly in the name of fiscal responsibility. They had the committee make a 3 percent blanket cut in funding affecting all items in the public works bill, thus achieving a reduction greater than the cut of a few hundred million dollars that was contemplated in the Administration's fiscal 1978 budget request (although doing nothing to save the nearly \$4 billion which completing all of the projects in dispute would ultimately cost).

But everybody in Congress knows what really is at issue in the public works money bill. It is the long-standing congressional practice of logrolling, of mutual back scratching and accommodation, of putting good, bad, and mediocre projects into one big bill, then resolutely fending off those who would tear the bill

and the pork barrel apart. Party lines mean nothing here, for the pork barrel is a bipartisan institution. Representative Edgar A. Cederberg of Michigan, the ranking Republican on Appropriations, is as determined a defender of the present bill as can be found.

Indeed, the fact that a member of Congress is known as a liberal or conservative may in itself offer no clue as to whether he or she is a defender of the pork barrel system. The Central Arizona Project (CAP) to transport water from the Colorado River to the Phoenix and Tucson areas perhaps cannot be written off simply as pork, but by anyone's reckoning, it has included some highly questionable features. Yet, understandably, both Representative Morris K. Udall, whom everyone recognizes as a Democratic liberal, and Representative John J. Rhodes, the Republican Minority Leader and a highly vocal conservative, have been unstinting and largely uncritical in their support of the CAP. (A passionately eloquent supporter of water projects in general is Representative Jim Wright of Texas, the Democratic Majority Leader; in a recent floor speech exploring the President's water projects initiative, Wright held up a glass of water to extoll its goodness.)

In essence, the pork barrel system seems to involve a simple but compelling set of interactions. Particular local and regional interests exert strong pressures to have their representatives in Congress obtain water projects, some of which are indisputably beneficial to the recipient regions even if of dubious value according to national benefit-cost calculations. Also, the members put pressure on each other through a kind of time-honored institutional abuse which most members, fearful of retaliation, dare not challenge. As a result, Congress comes nowhere near applying a consistent yardstick of merit, and some of the projects that win approval are more a testament to the persistence and influence of their congressional sponsors than anything else. The very fact that Congress is known to behave in this way encourages the local and regional interests to push all the harder and hold their representatives accountable if they fail to deliver.

Environmental lobbyists such as Brent Blackwelder of the Coalition for Water Project Review certainly have not found many House members to be openly hailing President Carter as the Moses who will finally liberate them from the comfortably cynical pork barrel tradition. But they do say that many members are receiving them sympathetically, if a bit ruefully. "When you point out the weak-

nesses in these projects, they find it hard to wriggle out of not trying to stop them," says Blackwelder. He is focusing on members who, in the environmentalists' perspective, went wrong on a test vote of sorts that took place on 27 April, about 10 days after the final White House hit list was announced. On that occasion, the House voted 252 to 143 (the losers constituting better than a third of those voting) to reject an amendment that would have, as a gesture of support to the President, reduced the ceiling on congressional spending for water projects by \$100 million.

Better than His Word

As a presidential candidate last year, Jimmy Carter made it clear that he regarded many water projects as environmentally destructive boondoggles, and that, if elected, he was going to bring about some reforms. What seems to have surprised everyone is that he has been as good as his word, and then some. Instead of merely insisting that all projects started in the future survive a far more rigorous evaluation than any applied in the past, he has chosen to dramatize and build popular support for his position by trying to fish out some of the pork that is already in the barrel.

In following this strategy, the Carter Administration has come up with a list of projects which, when judged on the merits, are indeed vulnerable to attack. At the discount rate* of 6¾ percent currently applied by the Administration to water projects—a rate that is itself well below the "opportunity cost" of capital, which is about 10 percent—nearly half of these projects promise more costs than benefits. This is true even if one charitably assumes that all of the benefits claimed by the construction agencies will materialize (34 percent of the benefits claimed by the Corps of Engineers for the Grove Lake project in Kansas would have been for recreation; yet for these benefits to have been realized, the reservoir would have had to have received nearly as many visitors as Yellowstone National Park).

Many sophisticated students of water resource policy regard any project that has a benefit-cost ratio of less than 2 to 1 as marginal simply because while the costs are certain, many of the benefits are speculative. Yet only one of the proj-

ects on the hit list shows a benefit-cost ratio greater than 1.5 to 1.

Another criticism of the projects is that the benefits promised, such as they are, would in some cases favor a relatively few individuals or interests. For instance, the Atchafalaya River project in Louisiana involves the enlargement of a navigation channel primarily for the benefit of two companies that are building large floating rigs for offshore oil exploration.

Many of the projects would have severe environmental impacts, and this fuels much of the regional and national opposition to them. The Cache River Basin project in Arkansas, which would promote the clearing and drainage of hundreds of thousands of acres of bottomland hardwood forests for the planting of soybeans, would eliminate one of the Mississippi flyway's most important wintering grounds for mallard ducks. In light of this, the attorneys general of seven midwestern states on the flyway filed briefs several years ago in support of an ultimately unsuccessful Environmental Defense Fund suit to stop the project.

Even where the environmental effect of a project would be felt only within the immediate region where it is to be built, the impact can be significant nevertheless, as in eliminating or drastically reducing a particular kind of wildlife habitat or scenic area found nowhere else within that region. For instance, the Lukfata Lake project on Glover Creek in Oklahoma, which began under the potent sponsorship of former House Speaker Carl Albert of Oklahoma, would eliminate an important stretch of the last major free-flowing smallmouth bass stream in Oklahoma's Ouachita Mountains.

About a third of the projects on the hit list are in serious political trouble even in the regions where they are being constructed. Take, for instance, the Richard B. Russell Dam, a Corps of Engineers project in South Carolina and Georgia, and the Oahe Irrigation Unit, a Bureau of Reclamation project in South Dakota.

The Russell Dam, which would be built on the Savannah River between the home districts of Representative Butler Derrick (D-S.C.) and Representative Douglas Barnard, Jr. (D-Ga.), poses a difficult political problem for both of these congressmen. As their aides freely admit, their constituents are badly divided about whether this 300,000-kilowatt hydropower project, which Jimmy Carter once warmly endorsed when he was governor, should be terminated.

Barnard is committed to the project, even though his hometown newspaper the *Augusta Chronicle* is against it, as is

*A discount rate is applied to water projects in an effort to express future benefits in terms of present values, taking into account the fact that a dollar in benefits to be received some years hence is worth less than a dollar in benefits received today. For instance, if a dollar in benefits to be received 50 years from now is "discounted" at 3 percent, that dollar is worth only 23 cents today; if discounted at 10 percent, it is worth slightly less than 1 cent.

the politically powerful Georgia Wildlife Federation. Derrick also has been a supporter of the project but he recently decided that it should be terminated. "It was a no-win situation for the congressman," says a Derrick aide. "He based his decision on the merits of the project rather than on the politics." Derrick began a study of the project after the President recommended killing it, and finally concluded that the peaking power which the dam would generate would be very high priced, trivial in amount, and, in any case, probably unneeded.

The \$504-million Oahe Irrigation project has gotten into a wretchedly difficult and complicated political snarl. South Dakota's Governor Richard K. Kneip, together with one of the state's U.S. senators (George McGovern) and its two congressmen are still backing the project, but the elected conservancy board, which is responsible for seeing that local financial commitments to the project are met, is now dead opposed to it and Senator James Abourezk is supporting the board.

The Carter Administration is insisting on a sweeping redesign of the project to reduce its size and its environmental and economic costs. As now planned, the project would involve constructing a canal system to move water 100 miles to the east of the Oahe Reservoir on the Missouri River, channelizing and polluting (through a 50 percent increase in dissolved solids) the James River, and eliminating up to 23,800 acres of prairie wetland. The government's investment per farm unit benefited would come to more than \$735,000.

Bevill Does Not Budge

Yet, however vulnerable the projects on the hit list may be to criticism, the leaders on Capitol Hill thus far seem determined to fight out the water projects issue more on the basis of congressional versus executive prerogatives than on the merits of the projects and of the way Congress went about approving them. Representative Bevill has not budged from his position despite the entreaties which President Carter has made to him in face to face meetings at the White House. And, for his part, Representative Mahon tries to dismiss the whole disagreement as a "failure of communications."

The Senate will take up the public works bill once the House acts, but it is not expected to treat the President's recommendations any more kindly than have Mahon and company. In fact, given its club-like atmosphere and tradition of "senatorial courtesy," the Senate may

treat them even less kindly if that is possible.

But, besides his power of veto, President Carter has going for him what seems a widespread recognition on the part of the press, and presumably the public, that there really is a public works pork barrel system at work—and that it is a costly and environmentally damaging indulgence. The terms "pork" and "pork barrel" are as familiar as any in the American idiom, and what they have seemed to convey is a sense of helpless and inevitable institutional abuse.

That the President's campaign against the pork barrel system may have tapped a deep wellspring of support is apparent from a glance at a few of the many newspaper editorials that have appeared in support of the President. "Water Projects & Sacred Cows" (*Wall Street Journal*), "Protecting the Pork" (*Washington Star*), "Pork and Water" (*New York Times*), and "Politics Wins First Round in the Pork Barrel Battle" (*Louisville Courier-Journal*)—such headlines convey a message which can only produce a sense of unease on Capitol Hill.

The congressional leaders are now appealing to the President not to resort to confrontation politics—which is to say, not to use or threaten to use the veto—on either the public works bill or other important measures (such as the farm bill and the Labor-HEW appropriations bill) on which his wishes have been flouted. For him to do so, they suggest, would be to depart from the model of good conduct established by other recent Democratic presidents in their dealings with Democratic congresses. In effect, Carter is asked to mind his manners and not upset senior Democrats in the House and Senate who are unwilling to accept challenges to their way of legislating from a President who is of their own political party.

In view of these appeals from leaders on whom he must depend to get his legislative program enacted, President Carter is in a ticklish position. So as not to rough up and antagonize more senior Democrats than he has to, the President might choose to veto one of the several bills now in contention but let the others go by. But should he veto any of the bills, it may have to be the public works measure—which has received much more press attention than the others—if he is to avoid seeming to back down in a game of chicken. Having dramatized the water projects issue by announcing the hit list, President Carter may find that the only road for him now is the one leading straight up Capitol Hill, to a showdown with dispensers of the pork.

—LUTHER J. CARTER

APPOINTMENTS

Ronald L. Harper, associate director, School of Allied Health Professions, Ohio State University, to dean, School of Allied Health, University of Kansas. . . . **Edna L. Leumann**, chairperson of nursing, Wichita State University, to dean, College of Health Sciences, Lamar University. . . . **R. W. Newburgh**, chairman of biochemistry-biophysics, Oregon State University, to dean, Graduate School at the university. . . . **Paul R. Paslay**, professor of engineering, Oakland University, to dean, College of Engineering, University of Illinois, Chicago Circle. . . . **John E. Norvell**, associate professor of anatomy, Medical College of Virginia, to chairman, anatomy department, Schools of Medicine and Dentistry, Oral Roberts University. . . . **Robert C. Summerfelt**, leader, Cooperative Fisheries Research Unit, Oklahoma State University, to chairman, animal ecology department, Iowa State University. . . . **LeRoy Heinrichs**, former professor of gynecology and obstetrics, University of Washington School of Medicine, to chairman, gynecology and obstetrics department, Stanford University School of Medicine. . . . **Lafayette Frederick**, chairman of biology, Atlanta University, to chairman of botany, Howard University. . . . **Roy Hunter, Jr.**, professor of biology, Atlanta University, to chairman, biology department at the university. . . . **Margaret H. Peaslee**, professor of biology, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, to head, zoology department, Louisiana Tech University, Ruston. . . . **Raymond Siever**, professor of geology, Harvard University, to chairman, geological sciences department of the university. . . . **Robert W. Coon**, vice chancellor for health education for West Virginia State Board of Regents, to dean, School of Medicine, Marshall University. . . . **H. David Lipsich**, professor of mathematics and university administration, University of Cincinnati, to dean, College of Arts and Sciences at the university. . . . **Russell R. Monroe**, acting chairman, psychiatry department, University of Maryland School of Medicine, to chairman of the department. . . . **Marvin B. Sussman**, professor of sociology, Case Western Reserve University, to chairman of medical social science and marital health, Wake Forest University. . . . **Richard J. C. Pearson**, associate professor of epidemiology and community medicine, University of Ottawa, to chairman of community medicine, West Virginia University.