

with nothing better than a plan to dig a ditch along the mountainside to intercept the surface runoff; but this would at best reduce the seepage into the river by only half, and, if the SWCB staff is correct in its assessment, the reduction would be much less than that.

However severe and pressing the problems at Saltville, the SWCB has generally shown little sense of urgency in dealing with them. Even the matter of

finding a prophylactic remedy for the problem at the chloride plant site continues to drag on. "We haven't been balls of fire on this thing," acknowledges Richard Hill, an aide to one of the top SWCB officials. In part, the situation at Saltville seems to reflect the fact that, absent an imminent health threat or economic loss (both present in the Kepone affair), something such as a ban on eating fish from a mercury-contaminated river

does not appear to bring a public outcry in Virginia. Scarcely anyone showed up either at the public hearing which the State Department of Health held in 1973 on the Holston ban or at the one it conducted recently on the Shenandoah situation. In light of the sharp decline in fishing on the famed Shenandoah, the poor turnout for the hearing on the ban there—no local officials were present and only two citizens—was astonishing.

Briefing

Getting and Hogan Win IEEE Races

An electronics industry executive who challenged the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers board candidate for the number two spot in the IEEE hierarchy has been elected executive vice president. Very narrowly. Lester C. Hogan, vice chairman of Fairchild Camera, beat Carleton A. Bayless, a division manager of Pacific Telephone and Telegraph, by 149 votes in a poll of 45,437, or 24,793 to 24,644.

Hogan was backed by the so-called Good Government Group, an organization formed this year to identify and support what GGG regarded as the most able candidates for IEEE offices. GGG was identified with the view that IEEE's traditional functions of providing technical information and educational services had suffered because of the institute's emphasis in recent years on professional activities in behalf of the economic interests of engineers (*Science*, 19 August).

In campaigning for the post, Hogan was particularly critical of the growth of IEEE activities in Washington and what he saw as an increasing trend toward union-style political action.

The IEEE presidency went to Ivan A. Getting, who retired recently from the presidency of the Aerospace Corporation. Getting had the support of both the IEEE board and the GGG organization. He defeated Irwin Feerst, a consulting engineer and maverick in IEEE affairs who was making a third run at the top spot. The vote was 28,161 for Getting and 21,753 for Feerst.

The new officers do not take over until January so it is too early to tell what major changes, if any, are in store for IEEE. The fact that less than a third of the insti-

tute's 180,000 members voted for the top officers, the narrowness of Hogan's win—he is wryly calling himself "Land-slide Les" to his friends—and even the less than overwhelming margin of victory by Getting suggest a rather murky mandate for the new officers. Their task may well be to build a consensus rather than to express one in bold policy strokes.

Contretemps on Capitol Hill

Senator Edward M. Kennedy may have been indulging mild rhetorical license when he told his colleagues that "few issues before the Senate have created more controversy than the foreign medical student provision of the health manpower law." But American medical school officials would certainly go along with that.

The occasion for Kennedy's comment was an attempt on 4 November to bring the Senate within compromising distance of a House position on the transfer of U.S. students in foreign medical schools into American medical schools. The Senate rejected the compromise for an amendment that would wipe out the transfer provision. This action put the two houses at odds again on the issue.

It all started a year ago when the House voted a health manpower act amendment requiring medical schools in this country to accept as third-year students Americans who had satisfactorily completed 2 years of medical school abroad and passed part 1 of the national board examination. The medical schools were required to comply if they wished to continue to receive federal capitation funds of \$1050 per student (*Science*, 22 July).

No other criteria were to be consid-

ered, and the medical schools protested that the measure violated the integrity of the admissions process. The manpower bill was passed in the hectic closing weeks of the 94th Congress last year with the transfer provision surviving in the conference version of the bill despite exertions by Senate conferees.

In the interim, medical schools have harped on their unhappiness about the transfer clause to their legislators, hoping that the provision would be removed or modified before it took effect in the 1978–79 academic year. Several schools have gone on record that they will decline capitation money rather than have transfers imposed upon them, but have made it clear that they hope it doesn't come to that.

The author and chief proponent of the provision in the House is Representative Paul G. Rogers, chairman of the House subcommittee with major jurisdiction over medical education and research. Rogers has been irked by the medical schools' attitude. He is known to feel that the transfer provision is a way to increase the number of physicians being trained, after hearing testimony for years that this is necessary.

Rogers this summer indicated a willingness to meet objections about interference with the admissions process, and in October the House passed an amendment to the Public Health Service Act modifying the transfer clause. The main effects would be to permit the medical schools to apply their regular criteria in accepting transfer students and to reduce the number of overseas students that the schools would be required to accept.

The Senate subcommittee headed by Kennedy reported a bill similar in its main features to the House bill. This was the measure which the Senate ignored in favor of the amendment which, in effect, would repeal the transfer provision.

Actually, from a regulatory standpoint, the mercury pollution problem poses several hard questions that deserve the public's thoughtful attention. Especially is this true in the Holston River case where there is clearly an opportunity to go beyond measuring the extent of the contamination and to reduce the sources of further pollution.

For instance, how far should the state go in holding Olin accountable for the

problem at Saltville? After shutting down the plant, Olin gave most of its property there to the town and state, and at present retains title chiefly to some mineral rights and to the muck ponds (which it wanted to give away but could not). Although town council members praise Olin for treating Saltville fairly and generously, the company clearly does not feel that it has an open-ended obligation to see that the mess which it

created on the Holston is cleaned up.

Although willing enough to assist in trying to seal off the site of the chlorine plant from the river, Olin wants the SWCB and the town to agree that once a plan of remedial action has been approved and carried out, its obligation with respect to the problem will end. Yet there may not be complete assurance that the plan will succeed. Certainly the efficacy of any remedies tried at the

Briefing

Although not quite back to square one, the situation is fraught with parliamentary and personal complications. A House-Senate conference to reconcile the two versions of the bill must be held before the measure can be put to a final vote. At this point, no date for a conference has been set and the House has not even appointed conferees. The Senate conferees have been appointed and two of them, Senators Alan Cranston of California and Harrison Williams of New Jersey, were among those who voted for the overturn of the compromise proposal. And relations between Kennedy and Rogers have not been improved by the incident.

Hill observers note that the debate over energy legislation in the waning days of the session may squeeze out consideration of other matters. And changing the transfer provision gets increasingly difficult as time passes. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare is administering an elaborate process for qualifying foreign students and matching them to medical school places. In floor discussion, Kennedy and others have acknowledged that Congress has made a "commitment" to facilitate reentry to the U.S. system at least to those American students now in the pipeline. As time passes, that commitment would appear to be growing increasingly firm.

Although Rogers really doesn't see the difficulty in the present law, he is said to be willing to have a compromise discussed in conference before adjournment. Failing such a compromise, the original formula prevails. This would mean that some 564 students would be divided among the schools which have decided to "participate" and take the capitation money. At the moment 14 schools have indicated that they will not participate or have been granted exceptions under rules prescribed in the

law. Medical schools have until late February to decide, and the medical school grapevine is carrying the word that a number of other schools are likely to opt out and that the final total of non-participants could be 30 or more. This would mean a redistribution of transferes among participating schools and a raise in the quotas.

There is also a fairly strong rumor about that, after all, a compromise will be reached before adjournment. This would involve a 1-year arrangement with schools increasing third-year enrollments by 6 percent to accommodate the repatriates. And then the issue would be thrashed out next year. That's according to usually reliable sources, if there are any on this matter.

... and Meanwhile in the Caribbean

Entrepreneurs on some of the tourist-oriented islands of the Caribbean seem to see a promising market in the Americans unable to gain entrance to super-competitive medical schools on the U.S. mainland. A number of new medical schools there are offering offshore alternatives to the throngs of Americans who have been going to foreign medical schools as a roundabout route to the practice of medicine in the United States. Now medical schools in the Caribbean are coming under more outspoken criticism from American medical school officials and two new schools in Puerto Rico have been denied preliminary accreditation.

At a recent meeting of the deans of New York City medical schools, James R. Schofield of the Association of American Medical Colleges accreditation division called some of the schools "ripoff

places." The AAMC is in the process of sending letters to premedical advisers in the United States warning them about the schools which are generally characterized by high tuition and inadequate resources.

The two Puerto Rican schools denied accreditation by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education were D'Hostos School of Medicine in San Juan and Universidad del Caribe in Cayey. A third school, Boriquen University, declined to be inspected by the liaison committee on a trip in May. Boriquen is the subject of a complaint being pressed by U.S. Postal Service authorities. Results of a hearing on charges of false representation in the school's advertising are expected soon. A court injunction put a hold on delivery of mail to the school.

Schofield takes care to avoid a blanket condemnation of Caribbean schools. He notes that the liaison committee has granted provisional accreditation to a new medical school in Puerto Rico at the Catholic University in Ponce. The committee found that teaching resources and clinical facilities met required standards to open with an initial class of 26 in January.

Schofield makes the point that under current law, students of medical schools denied accreditation cannot be licensed to practice medicine in the United States. The committee's jurisdiction extends to the United States, U.S. territories, and Canada. Schofield notes, however, that information received on new medical schools in the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Barbados indicate that they are "questionable."

The new school boom in the Caribbean does not seem to be abating. The morning mail recently brought Schofield material on a new school in Antigua. With tuition set at \$5300 a year, the school proposes ultimately to take in 600 students a year.

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