

has been set aside as not "auditable." This meant that about 5.7 percent of a total \$1.5 billion in grants was questioned. Only about 0.23 percent was reported as not properly charged.

On the university side, there are complaints of changes in the way auditors interpret the rules. A widely held view is that the real trouble began when the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare a decade ago took over as lead auditing agency from the Department of Defense. Auditors from the Department of Health and Human Services (successor to HEW) are regarded as quicker to apply commercial auditing practices and as insensitive to the special characteristics and problems of universities.

Is A-21 graven in stone? In a few cases universities have been granted delays in implementing it, but the delays have been allowed by department auditors from DOD or HSS. OMB officials say that the delays signify no change of policy. OMB has ruled out any early overhaul of the circular, but Lordan notes that the National Commission on Research recommended that the issue be reviewed in 3 to 5 years, and he agreed that such a review might well be in order then.

In respect to time-and-effort reporting, Lordan recently expressed OMB's willingness to experiment with sampling methods to arrive at standard costs for some types of administrative activities. He said that experimental projects at several universities will be authorized. If it proves possible to establish statistically an acceptable estimate of the time that "everybody spends" on administering grants, for example, such an estimate could be used in reporting.

Lordan added that the test of statistical sampling is "evidence of good faith. We are prepared to go further, if it works here, on other aspects of documentation." Lordan said, however, that he does not see how researchers, working with support from two or more grants, could get away from detailed reporting.

A persistent difficulty has been the varied viewpoints of the major players. On the government side, legislators, agency program officials, and auditors all have differing priorities. In the universities, administrators and faculty have viewpoints and interests that are often significantly at odds. What has made the dispute over the nexus of federal-university relations a chronic one has been the collision of these agendas. And in what is in some sense a clash of two cultures—scientists' and auditors'—the present Washington predilection for accountability makes it easier for the auditors to explain their case.—JOHN WALSH

NIH Bills: Legislators May or May Not Compromise

As the current congressional session draws to a close, legislators appeared unlikely to pass a bill that would give themselves more control over the National Institutes of Health. But the legislation was given a new lease on life by a potential compromise between its competing sponsors, Representative Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) and Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.).

Late Friday afternoon, 19 September, aides to the subcommittee which Waxman chairs served up ideas for a compromise that Kennedy's staff decided to consider.

The decision surprised scientists because the senator just 5 days earlier was refusing to compromise with Waxman. Much to the delight of biomedical lobbyists who have bitterly opposed Waxman's bill, the senator's no-compromise position would in effect kill both measures for this session whether or not the two legislators meet in House-Senate conference. (*Science*, 26 September 1980, p. 1497.)

The House subcommittee aides offered to throw out one provision that Kennedy opposes while retaining another to which the senator objects. They offered to forego voiding a statute that allows NIH to obtain continuous funding even if Congress fails to appropriate the money by the end of the institutes' fiscal year. However, Waxman aides' stuck to their guns on a measure that would require periodic review of NIH's budget authority. Though Kennedy is considering the proposals, "no clear resolution is apparent," says a member of the Senate subcommittee staff.

Initial reaction of several scientists interviewed by *Science* were negative to the Waxman proposals. All along, they have objected strongly to reauthorization, fearing that the process will allow legislators to amend bills with favorite projects that may disrupt biomedical research.

The bills seemed doomed recently after Kennedy met 15 September in an unusual gathering with university presidents and deans of medical schools, who called the meeting to persuade the senator not to compro-

mise with Waxman. Among those attending were seven university presidents and four deans of medical schools from institutions including Stanford, Yale, and Harvard; James Sammons, executive director of the American Medical Association; and Theodore Cooper, former assistant secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The biomedical establishment views Kennedy's bill, which sets up a presidential advisory council on biomedical affairs, as relatively harmless compared to Waxman's bill.

Kennedy, who was already considering no compromise, came away convinced that he should hold his ground and oppose reauthorization.

Waxman had accepted an invitation by Kennedy to attend the meeting but at the last minute, "sent his regrets," a Senate subcommittee aide said. A House staff member said Waxman failed to show because he was busy working on other bills. The aide said, "He's talked to those people already."

Some lobbyists speculate that Kennedy may be willing to compromise on reauthorization to keep up good relations because he and Waxman must work together on future legislation. But because the most recent proposals by Waxman's aides are more palatable than the original bill, "Kennedy is in a good position," one lobbyist says. "He looks like a hero either way, with a compromise or not."

Kennedy's block of the House bill would be a substantial defeat for Waxman. The congressman worked hard to gain heavy support in the House where the bill passed unanimously in subcommittee, drew 23 out of 24 votes in full committee, and recently passed 292 to 48 on the floor.

Part of Waxman's success was, perhaps, because of a letter he circulated before the final vote was taken, an NIH official says. The letter, signed by NIH director Donald Fredrickson and assistant secretary of health Julius Richmond, expresses support for Waxman's bill. The letter was written at the request of secretary of health and human services Patricia Harris. But the relationship between Harris and Fredrickson is reportedly strained because of language in the House bill that strengthens her authority over the director. Fredrickson is said to oppose the bill and signed the letter "only under some duress," said the official.

"That is absolute nonsense, not

factual," said William Welch, assistant secretary of legislation at HHS.

The letter is far from enthusiastic about the Waxman bill. It says the bill "will not impede" biomedical research. "Indeed, the bill will allow the Congress and the Executive Branch to move the Nation's research agenda in an orderly manner."

It also addresses the roles of the secretary and the NIH director and says the bill defines their authorities in a way that "is consistent with every other Departmental authority."

Waxman referred to the letter twice during floor debate on his bill 28 August. A House aide said later that Waxman "would not anticipate that Dr. Fredrickson would sign a letter if he doesn't support the bill."

In his opening remarks on the floor, Waxman also said the bill was supported by "many scientific and health groups." When asked later to name the groups, an aide cited organizations such as the American Nurses Association, the American Diabetes Association, and the Arthritis Foundation.

Other groups, however, that have actively opposed the legislation are the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Association of American Universities, and the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology.

If Waxman's bill does not pass this session, he could resurrect the issue in the next Congress. But "he'll have to start from scratch," said a biomedical lobbyist. In the meantime, scientists hope to convince more members of Congress to fend off another NIH reauthorization bill. And Kennedy is likely to reintroduce the proposal of a high-level advisory group, an aide said.—M.S.

Frank Press in Line for Academy Presidency

Unless the Ethics in Government Act stands in the way, White House science adviser Frank Press will be nominated to succeed Philip Handler as president of the National Academy of Sciences. Handler will step down next June after serving the maximum of 12 years in office.

Science has learned that nomi-

nating committee chairman Kenneth Pitzer announced the selection of Press to the Academy's governing council at a meeting in Woods Hole last August. Pitzer declines comment, saying that the nominating process, which has yet to go its full course, is "internal" Academy business. Press's name will be formally placed in nomination before the council when it meets next on 26 October.

The one major question that has to be answered by then is whether accepting the Academy presidency would put Press in an untenable position under provisions of the 1978 act which was passed to slow the revolving door through which federal workers pass to lucrative and influential positions in the private sector. Academy lawyers are studying the issue now.

Press, who has declared his interest in the job to the nominating committee, will say on the record only that he is "honored" to be considered.—B.J.C.

Politics Embroils NSF Directorate

The National Science Foundation (NSF) director-designate, John G. Slaughter, is still awaiting confirmation by the Senate because his nomination has become caught up in party politics. A compromise that would allow him to be confirmed is believed to be imminent.

Cause of the logjam is a Republican policy of blocking approval of certain presidential nominees on the grounds that new appointments should be made by whoever wins in November. Republicans have been able to stage a workable blockade on nominations by the threat of filibusters and other maneuvers.

By law, the NSF director's appointment is for a 6-year term, an arrangement which the scientific community has regarded as reinforcing the non-political status of the directorship. Not so well known is that the law's full provisions say that the director "shall serve for a term of six years unless sooner removed by the President." Sources on the minority side of the Senate say it is this presidential option that may make the Republicans will-

ing to turn loose the Slaughter nomination.

Republicans may also be relieved to see Slaughter, who was nominated in early July (*Science*, 1 August 1980), finally confirmed. A black, Slaughter would be the first to head a major federal science agency. His choice had gained general approval in the scientific community and Republicans would have found thwarting his appointment politically difficult to explain.

Slaughter's nomination was released after a meeting of the Labor and Human Resources Committee on 17 September. The nomination had been "reported out" of committee early in August, but a replay of the meeting was forced because no Republican had attended the first one and there were objections that the favorable vote was taken without enough senators present at one time to make a valid quorum.

The nomination is now on the so-called executive calendar, which means the nomination is taken up in executive session by the Senate and voted on without debate. Objection by a single senator can derail the process, and the decision to go that parliamentary route usually means that agreement has been reached by leaders of the two parties.

Also to be confirmed are seven new members of the National Science Board (NSB), the policy-making board of NSF, whose nominations were announced by the White House on 20 June. The NSB nominees had also been caught in the blockade of appointments. NSB members, of whom there are a total of 24, are appointed to 6-year terms. There is no qualification providing for presidential removal as there is in the case of the NSF director. The Republicans apparently decided, however, to make an exception apparently on grounds that board members, who are mostly chosen for their credentials in science and science administration, serve only part time.

The new appointees are, Peter T. Flawn, president, University of Texas; Mary L. Good, Louisiana State University; Peter D. Lax, New York University; Homer A. Neal, Indiana University; Mary Jane Osborne, University of Connecticut Health Center; Stuart A. Rice, University of Chicago; and Donald B. Rice, president, Rand Corporation.—J.W.