(Continued from page 992)

first time since 1954, and the House will be more conservative in makeup, and presumably in behavior, than it has been in years.

As to the immediate future, some clues should be available when the report of an education policy task force comes in. The task force, formed during the campaign, is headed by W. Glenn Campbell, director of the Hoover Institution at Stanford. The group, dominated by members from higher education, will make policy recommendations across the education spectrum. Campbell says the report, which is expected to be submitted soon, will be confidential, and the President-elect will decide whether to make it public.

In general, higher education legislation has a history of greater bipartisan support than legislation affecting elementary and secondary schools. This seems likely to continue and disagreements, for example, over school busing and prayer in schools could be particularly sharp after the changeover.

Republicans have persistently urged that funds for schools come with fewer federal strings attached. The new year should bring efforts to shift funding from the prevailing form of so-called categorical grants for special purposes to block grants that would be more fully controlled by the states. Also expected is more debate on the matter of tuition tax credits for both private schooling and higher education.

In the higher education sector, nearly $5 billion for financial aid to students—grants and loans—represents the largest component of spending in the $5.9-billion higher education budget. All higher education institutions share a keen interest in these programs because of their importance to enrollment. (The recently reauthorized higher ed act provides for $48 billion over 5 years.)

Despite past bipartisan support for higher education, some potentially divisive issues are emerging. Notable is the matter of student loans for which the government provides guarantees to lenders and subsidizes interest for borrowers. Now, with tuition tax credits likely to be proposed, both Republicans and Democrats will have to consider how to revise an aid system that contains grants and work-study funds for low income students and loans and tuition tax credits that appeal to the middle class.

Such a discussion assumes that higher education programs will escape deep cuts that could be imposed as the new Administration seeks to make good on its intention to reduce federal spending and cut taxes.

What higher education may reasonably hope for under a Republican dispensation is some lessening of the regulatory pressures that have increased costs and administrative burdens and, say academics, caused a souring of the government-university relationship.

—JOHN WALSH

Police Science and Psychics

Atlanta consults a seer from New Jersey to help solve a series of murders

"I can't lock people up, but if I had the authority, I'd have locked up a suspect by now," says Dorothy Allison, the New Jersey housewife who took herself and her supernatural powers to Atlanta this month help the local police solve a series of child murders. She claims to know who the guilty ones are, but as of this writing her verdict has not been seconded by the Atlanta authorities.

City officials are reticent about Allison's visit, perhaps because they are awakening to a cold feeling that they were gulled. For her part, Allison maintains that she did help the police, but she says she cannot tell the whole story now, lest she disrupt the investigation.

While Allison may not have slammed anyone behind bars, she did accomplish something on her trip to Atlanta: she put the claims of the "police psychic" before the public in a most spectacular fashion. This trial could be discouraging for believers in her powers, for she seems to have produced no usable information. And yet, setbacks of this sort do not deter true believers. The publicity may even encourage other police departments to try the same experiment.

Alexander Wilensky Photo

The seer from Nutley

Dorothy Allison, visionary detective.

Fortunately for nonbelievers, Allison does not have the power to arrest and jail the villains she conjures up. But she has given her advice to scores of police officials and claims quite plausibly to have influenced the course of hundreds of investigations. Many people may have been picked up and questioned as criminal suspects because she intuited their guilt. In Atlanta, however, her biggest consulting job so far, she proved a flop.

A spokesman for Atlanta's police department, Partenia Jefferson, said on 14 November that Allison had been essentially of no help in the investigation. "There are no suspects and no one has been taken into custody" since Allison's visit early this month. Allison's publicized prophecy that a major break in the case would occur on 12 November (give or take 24 hours) also proved wrong. "The general feeling" of the detectives, according to the spokesman, "is that they were not impressed with her information." Why was Allison invited to consult at all? "She had made several claims that she'd helped other police departments," the spokesman said, "and we didn't want to leave any stone unturned." Thus the city's taxpayers bought Allison a round-trip ticket to fly down from Nutley, New Jersey, for a 4-day visit.

The police in Atlanta found themselves in the kind of predicament that has driven others to solicit psychic advice. Confronted with a major unsolved criminal puzzle, having no promising

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clues, the investigators decided to listen to anyone claiming to have new information. Allison, who is promoting a book on her work, appeared on a national talk show boasting about her detective work and claiming to know the identity of the killers in Atlanta. The city decided it could not ignore her.

Public officials are remarkably agnostic about the value of supernatural detective work, even those who might be expected to have a crisp opinion. For example, Gary Hayes, director of the Police Executive Research Forum, says his group has done no research on the subject and offers no guidelines to members. He explains that there are cases in which you "have to do something," and talking to psychics may be better than doing nothing. Hayes says, "I don't want to debunk it because I don't have the evidence." The Forum did try something innovative in this case however, after Allison had shared her insight with the city of Atlanta. The Forum assembled from around the country a posse of five detectives who had some experience in solving this type of crime and sent them off to Atlanta. It was a good idea which had not been tried before.

James Stewart, commander of the criminal investigation division of the Oakland, California Police Department, has supervised cases like the one in Atlanta, and he is quite willing to listen to supernatural sleuths. Stewart notes that hypnotism was once considered a suspect practice but is now used as a productive investigative technique. He thinks it is possible that psychic advice might gain respectability. It can be useful, he thinks, when "all the leads dry up" and new ideas are needed.

Allison herself holds affidavits from more than a dozen police departments, sheriffs, and prosecutors, all attesting to her investigative skills. Many come from towns in New Jersey, but others come from Pennsylvania, New York, and as far away as Washington State. The reason she has so many, she explains, is that she never asks for money when she consults on a criminal case. Her "strict Catholic upbringing" taught her that to do so would be unethical. Therefore, she takes payment in each case in the form of a police badge and an affidavit.

Even the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is uncertain about the potential for psychic police work. (Allison has an affidavit from an FBI man.) Roger Depue, chief of the behavioral science unit at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Va., says he knows of no evidence supporting psychic claims, but that the FBI has not debunked them either. Like Stewart in Oakland, Depue believes that Duke University is doing important research on this subject.

Duke does not support work on parapsychology and has not done so since the early 1960's. A former Duke professor, J. B. Rhine, founded the Institute of Parapsychology in Durham. The Institute no longer has any link with Duke. Deborah Weiner, a researcher at the Institute, says she knows of no good studies on psychic sleuthing. The best study, probably the only one, she believes, was conducted by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in 1978 and published last year in the *Journal of Police Science and Administration*.

Martin Reiser, chief author of the paper and director of the LAPD's behavioral science section, explained why the study was undertaken. The city's "Hillside Strangler" murders generated widespread publicity and brought the police a lot of unsolicited advice. Much of it was of mystical origin. Not knowing how to dispose of this material, the police decided they would have to talk to some psychics and make a rational judgment about their usefulness.

With the help of a local psychologist who knew the psychic community, the LAPD invited 12 seers to its offices to take part in a controlled test. The guests were asked to look at bits of evidence from four crimes, two solved and two unsolved, and to give the police information about the victims and the suspects. Only 50 percent of the answers were verifiable, and, for these, the accuracy rate was not much better than one would obtain by a chance selection of data. The authors note that many of the psychics believed that the cases were connected with the Hillside Strangler investigation, which was not true. And "the most commonly repeated conception of these crimes was that the victim was a female prostitute murdered by a male. . . ." Except when guessing such basic facts such as the sex of the people involved and the nature of the crime, the psychics showed no inclination to agree on details. "Some of the participants were extremely verbose, while others provided only very sketchy responses." The conclusion: "Little, if any, information was elicited from the 12 psychic participants that would provide material helpful in the investigation of the major crimes in question." According to Reiser, a follow-up study done this year found that psychics, homicide detectives, and night school students are all equally competent at divining facts after observing a few isolated bits of evidence connected with a crime.

A study done this year found that psychics, homicide detectives, and night school students are all equally competent at divining facts after observing a few isolated bits of evidence. . . .

Although the police may be cautious in their criticism, one student of parapsychology is not. James Randi, a professional magician also known as "the Amazing Randi," has made a second career of recording and attacking the claims of supernaturalists. One of his earlier targets was Uri Geller, the man who claimed to bend spoons with his psychic powers. In the last year, Randi has gathered a thick file on police psychics, including Allison. Their methods are simple, he says.

The psychic usually offers the police an unsolicited statement, and the police have no alternative but to take down the information. The statement may be vague, rambling, and loaded with hundreds of unconnected details. Often the psychic elicits bits of information from the police and then feeds the data back in a slightly altered form. In the mass of detail that is supplied, a small percentage proves correct. Randi says that when a case is solved, the police psychic issues a press release taking credit for the 2 or 3 percent of the prophecies that proved correct. No one bothers to put out a release on the 97 percent that proved wrong.

Randi has not looked into the Atlanta case, but preliminary reports suggest the city may be eligible for the "Uri Award" for parapsychology which Randi intends to give out next year on 1 April. The trophy is a stainless steel spoon, "bent in a pleasing curve (paranormally, of course)," mounted on a "flimsy and quite transparent base," Atlanta could win it as sponsor of the most widely reported psychic experiment of 1980.

—ELIOT MARSHALL