

more attention now needs to be paid to organization at state and local levels, and in particular developing a more explicit involvement in electoral politics.

Some in the environmental movement

believe that its future now lies in action at the village green level, not with federal policies framed in Washington. Others hope that the Reagan Administration, like its predecessors, can be brought

around. But the general prognosis among environmentalists is that a period of federal neglect, be it benign or otherwise, is the likely lot of their cause during the next 4 years.—CONSTANCE HOLDEN

The Reagan Years: Regrouping on Education

*Reagan will not move to abolish new department immediately;
National Education Association mulls over Carter defeat*

The Department of Education was created a year ago on a narrow vote in Congress and after a long fight in which President Carter had to push hard to win. The new Cabinet-level agency was generally opposed by Republicans and the 1980 GOP platform said the party "encourages the elimination of the federal Department of Education." On the campaign trail, Ronald Reagan had no kind words for the DE, at one point saying of the department, "I believe it is naïve to think that it is anything but a first step toward federalized education in the land."

By forming the department Carter redeemed a 1976 campaign promise. Establishment of the new department was widely regarded as a quid pro quo for support by the National Education Association (NEA), which for years coveted Cabinet status for education and placed itself conspicuously in the Carter camp in his two national campaigns.

All of this suggests that DE, with a \$14.2-billion annual budget, will shortly be dismantled and NEA will find itself very much on the outside when Reagan reorganizes official Washington. Not necessarily so, or at least not in a reflexive, quick-draw way that some people expect of a Reagan regime.

The President-elect said that he will appoint a new Secretary of Education and indicated that he wants a close look taken at education activities before any major decision on organization is made. In the view of one staff member on the minority side of House Education and Labor Committee, abolition of DE is "a couple of years off, if it ever happens. Reagan is a pragmatist. He realizes that it takes a lot of energy to [abolish] a department." Organizational forms have "very little impact on policy." Certainly, "there will be intense study" of the organizational options, but the staff member expects the Administration to

"concentrate on programmatic and regulatory issues."

This does not mean that, on the Hill, hard feelings toward DE have evaporated. Representative John N. Erlenborn (R-Ill.), second ranking Republican on the House Education and Labor Committee, says he intends to introduce legislation to abolish the department. His bill would reestablish a Department of Health, Education and Welfare and transfer all DE programs to the resurrected HEW.

The performance of DE since it went on its own has apparently won few admirers in Congress. Pennsylvania Republican Senator Richard S. Schweiker, who sits on both the authorization and appropriations subcommittees for education, has been a vocal critic. Schweiker, who opposed creation of DE, recently told a meeting of student financial aid administrators, "In my wildest imagination I never thought the final product would be as bad as the new department is."

Schweiker said the most recent set of DE "horror stories" emerged during Senate education subcommittee hearings on reauthorization of the higher education act when DE persistently failed to provide information the panel needed to carry out its work.

Schweiker, who chose not to run for reelection, will not return to the Senate. He is, however, rumored to be a live prospect for Secretary of Education. In any case, criticism of DE seems unlikely to halt. Senate minority staffers note that recently released DE regulations on provision of bilingual education in the schools seem particularly calculated to inflame those who seek to minimize federal regulation of public schools.

As for NEA, will it be chastised for blotting its political copy book? Certainly, the biggest of the education associations cannot expect to influence Administration appointments in the education bureaucracy. And NEA's long nurtured hopes for general aid to education



Win some, lose some

and a federal collective bargaining law for teachers will have to be put indefinitely on hold. But, perhaps ironically, NEA lobbyists may not be as personally non grata as lobbyists for some other education groups less clearly committed to Carter.

NEA's missionaries seem to have had a better record in keeping contact with Republican legislators and staff during their lean years than did many education lobbyists. Particularly on the Senate side, NEA lobbyists seem to have provided information and generally kept in touch with Republican legislators and minority staff dealing with education questions. And neither the NEA's Washington staff nor the visiting lobbyists that NEA tends to import from legislators' constituencies, apparently indulged in threats or other offensively extreme tactics. Minority staffers are now getting "a lot of calls from people we never heard of," as one of them said. Many of these are lobbyists for other education groups. So, for NEA, being "professional" may somewhat balance out having been for Carter. NEA also contributed to the campaigns of many victorious candidates, Republican as well as Democratic, in House and Senate races. In that respect the association is not left friendless.

As part of the long and painful election morning after, NEA has been told that more than half of its members voted for Reagan. In postelection comments NEA officials have said that the association will stick to its goals and legislative agenda, but there are reports that a rethinking of strategy may be under way at a national legislative meeting in progress in San Francisco as this was written. At the very least, the experience is a reminder that the prudent lobbyists play both sides of the aisle.

While it has attracted considerable notice, the issue of the DE is, of course, part of a much larger question—what trend federal policy toward education will follow under a Republican Administration that is avowedly conservative, fiscally and otherwise, and promises to have more political leverage than the GOP has had in a quarter century. The question acutely concerns higher education and its lobby in Washington because of the importance of federal policies both to academic finances and the regulatory atmosphere in academia.

For higher education, uncertainty about prospects after the changeover in January is considerable because of the genuine novelty of the situation. Republicans will control the Senate for the

(Continued on page 994)

OSHA Backs Away from Strict Lab Rules

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is taking steps to soothe those in the research community who were alarmed by its threat in 1977 and again this spring to stringently regulate exposure to toxic chemicals in laboratories (*Science*, 21 February). A recent OSHA statement suggests that it has abandoned previous plans to require monitoring of exposure to individual chemicals—a proposal that laboratory directors had criticized as unnecessary and costly. Instead, the agency says it has tentatively decided that general standards for safe handling of any chemical in the laboratory should be sufficient.

The decision represents a victory for members of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) and officials at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), who have been pressuring OSHA to drop its plans and adopt their more flexible laboratory safety guidelines. The NAS alternative, in feverish preparation ever since OSHA announced its intentions, was released on 5 November.

"For most laboratory environments, we believe that regular monitoring of the airborne concentrations of a variety of different toxic materials is both unjustified and unjust," the report from the National Research Council concludes. Ventilation hoods, protective clothing, and good hygiene and safety practices should be adequate for handling "even highly toxic materials without undue hazard." Although these are considered standard practice at most industrial laboratories, academic laboratories—susceptible to high turnover of inexperienced workers—might need special advice from outside safety experts to get up to speed, the report suggests. In contrast to OSHA's requirement for regular medical examinations of laboratory workers, the NRC report says that "often, the analyses that could provide useful information for medical surveillance have yet to be developed. We therefore recommend that the need for regular . . . surveillance be decided on an individual basis."

OSHA, in an interim statement on its regulatory drafting, pledges not

only to consult the NRC and forthcoming NIH recommendations, but also to give scientists an opportunity to comment next year on whether compliance with the regulations will be mandatory or voluntary. Both NIH and the NAS, naturally, are pushing for voluntary compliance. Their argument has been that researchers, unlike workers in an industrial plant, are exposed to a multitude of chemicals in low concentrations for only a short time, a circumstance that reduces the risk of cancer or other disease but makes compliance with regulations for each chemical difficult.

OSHA took support for its proposals to monitor laboratory air and require regular medical examinations from a series of epidemiological studies which showed that chemists experienced an elevated risk of cancer. The NRC report points to deficiencies in these studies and calls for more definitive work, perhaps drawing on tumor registries in one or more states.

Classified Research

Any research proposal submitted to the National Science Foundation (NSF) could be classified by another agency if it relates to national security, the NSF acting director, Donald Langenberg, said on 6 November. His statement is intended to clarify the agency's position on funding and classification of cryptologic research. NSF has been referring such research to the National Security Agency for review since 1977 (see *Science*, 31 October 1980).

NSF officials say their responsibility to see that sensitive material is classified stems from an executive order on secrecy issued by President Carter in 1977. The order barred certain agencies, including NSF, from classifying anything on their own, but ordered each to hand over sensitive items to agencies with proper authority as the need arose.

Langenberg assures the research community that "NSF does not expect that the results of the basic research which it supports will be classified, except in very rare instances." With the exception of the cryptology proposals submitted to NSA, NSF officials say that to their knowledge no proposals have been referred to the CIA or other

(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 divi-

sive 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