

## NEW WORLD

# Kennedy Bill meets Opposition and Runs Out of Time

by our Washington Correspondent

DR H. GUYFORD STEVER, Director of the National Science Foundation, went to Capitol Hill last week to complain about Senator Edward M. Kennedy's National Science Policy and Priorities Act (see *Nature*, 237, 306; 1972). Even though his remarks will have little effect on the immediate prospects for the bill—there is now almost no chance that it will reach the floor of the House of Representatives this year—they provided a clear indication of the Administration's thinking on its two key provisions: that the NSF should assume the leading role in trying to bring science and technology to bear on urban problems and that the Federal government should help to retrain unemployed scientists and engineers. Dr Stever reiterated the Administration's opposition to both proposals.

The forum for Dr Stever's complaints was two days of hearings held by a subcommittee of the House Committee on Science and Astronautics. The hearings also brought out a number of other interesting points. There was, for example, a marked difference between the testimony of Dr Roger Heyns, vice-chairman of the National Science Board (the policy-making body of the NSF), and that of Dr Stever. Dr Heyns and his colleagues on the board seem more amenable to the bill's proposals, which probably reflects the fact that Dr Stever's testimony was reviewed by the White House and therefore represents the election year thinking of the Administration. Another point that emerged at the hearings is that the bill has strong bipartisan support in the subcommittee on Science, Research and Development. This factor will be a key to the bill's fortunes if it is introduced next year, as now seems certain.

Dr Stever's chief complaint is that although the bill's objectives "are ones on which many reasonable men could agree", the bill itself is unnecessary. Senator Kennedy and his supporters are seeking to increase expenditures on civilian research and development directed towards improving services such as health care, urban transportation and pollution control, and they have proposed that the NSF should become the central point in the federal government for planning and executing such activities. But Dr Stever claimed that the Administration has already significantly increased expenditures on civilian science and that the projects encompassed by the bill are already under way, either

in NSF or in other mission-oriented agencies. "I believe that the Administration and the Congress are already taking constructive steps towards meeting the national needs perceived by (the bill's) sponsors," he told the committee.

Of particular concern to Dr Stever and the Administration is that the bill would involve the foundation in many projects that now fall under the responsibility of other agencies of the federal government. Policy planning, for example, is the responsibility of the Office of Science and Technology and the Office of Management and Budget, while "development, testing and evaluation of major civil science systems are, in most cases, more appropriately done in mission agencies responsible for implementing the systems".

But other witnesses did not agree. Dr Heyns, for example, approved the suggestion that the NSF should play a greater part in the development of national science policy, and agreed with some reservations that the foundation should be assigned the responsibility for developing, testing and evaluating civil science systems. He suggested that the foundation's relationship with the scientific community and its experience with the programme of Research Applied to National Needs (RANN) should stand it in good stead to carry out both tasks. The National Science Board's reserva-

tion, however, is that such new responsibilities should not be allowed to interfere with the foundation's chief role of supporting basic science.

As for unemployed scientists and engineers, Dr Stever repeated the Administration's policy that they should not be considered as special cases, but should wait for an upswing in the economy to lift them out of the dole queues. "Any solution to (unemployment) problems must include other groups of unemployed," he said, and in any case Dr Stever suggested that "the manpower problem is temporary". Support for this position has in fact already been provided by the Administration, because it has decided not to continue the Presidential Internship Programme which has provided temporary employment for some 560 scientists and engineers. White House spokesmen point out that the programme was only intended to last for one year, even though the job market has hardly improved. The bill, on the other hand, calls for a variety of programmes for retraining scientists and engineers, and for providing them with work on civilian projects.

The reason why the Administration has chosen to oppose the bill is relatively simple—the bill can be read as an indictment of the Nixon Administration's science policies. Dr Stever

## INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES

### Visitors from China

by our Washington Correspondent

SINCE the Chinese table tennis team broke the ice between the People's Republic of China and the United States last year, the scientific community in the United States has been looking forward to exchanges between the two countries. But, although there has been a slow trickle of US scientists travelling East, so far no Chinese scientist has paid a return visit. Next week, however, as announced last week (*Nature*, 239, 245; 1972) a party of ten medical doctors from the People's Republic will arrive in the United States for a three week visit at the invitation of the Institute of Medicine, the American Medical Association and four American physicians who visited China last year.

The Chinese visit will include a look at hospitals, research institutions and other medical establishments in Washington, New York, Boston, Kansas City, San Francisco and perhaps Chicago. The Chinese visitors have

expressed a special interest in cardiovascular diseases and cancer. An invitation was sent to the China Medical Association in May, and details of the visit were negotiated by Dr E. Grey Dimond, of the University of Missouri, during a recent trip to Peking.

The Chinese party will consist of Wu Wei-jan, Vice-chairman of the Association of Surgery, All-China Medical Association, and Capital Hospital, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences; Fu Yi-cheng, Deputy Secretary-General of the All-China Medical Association; Lin Chiao-chih, Peking Medical College; Wu Hsueh-yu, Hospital of the Wuhan Medical College, Hupeth Province; Li Ping, Jeh Tan Hospital, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences; Liu Shih-lien, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences; Han Jui, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences; Chou Kuan-han, Peking Medical College; Chang Shu-shun, Peking Tuberculosis Research Institute; and Hsu Chia-yu, Tung Fang Hung Hospital, Shanghai. Some members of the delegation are believed skilled in traditional Chinese medicine.