

Mr Daddario's Swansong

by our Washington Correspondent

THE impending departure from the House of Representatives of Mr Emilio Q. Daddario, who is running for the governorship of Connecticut, will bring to a close a seven year period in which he has been the chief steward in Congress of the affairs of science. As chairman of the House Subcommittee on Science, Research and Development, he has investigated and effected significant changes in such broad fields as Federal science policy, higher education in science, the National Science Foundation, technology assessment and the management of Federal scientific activities.

The record of this achievement, or at least the bare bones of it, is outlined in a valedictory chronicle of the subcommittee's deeds and hearings (*Summary of Activities of the Subcommittee on Science, Research and Development 1963-1970*. US Government Printing Office). The subcommittee, chaired by Mr Daddario since its inception, was quick to take up an interest in the environment, once unheard of but now on everyone's lips, and indeed decided as early as 1965 to give special attention to the pollution aspects of environmental quality. The upshot of this prescience was a report published the following year that identified areas of needed research in air and water pollution and challenged the scientific community "to work on pollution problems with the same sense of urgency as they have in the past on such national problems as the United States space programme".

The subcommittee was equally quick on the draw with the problems of predicting the consequences of new techniques. Technology assessment, as the concept is now labelled, is a term coined by the subcommittee in a report published in 1966. Further hearings resulted in a draft bill to set up an Office of Technology

Assessment (see *Nature*, **226**, 895 and 894; 1970) which may be taken before the House of Representatives shortly in the form of an amendment to the Congressional reform bill now under debate.

Whether or not the Office of Technology Assessment comes into being, the subcommittee has left a permanent mark by its diligent studies of Federal science policy, expressed in a stream of reports that have covered most aspects of the government's connexion with science, and have paved the way for Mr Daddario's last enterprise as chairman of the hearings now in progress on whether the United States should promulgate a national science policy. The subcommittee itself has made a major contribution to science policy in its reorganization and strengthening of the National Science Foundation. Following an intensive review of the foundation's activities, the subcommittee, in a bill which became law in 1967, broadened the foundation's interest in the social and applied sciences, increased the responsibilities of the National Science Board and enhanced the authority of the director. The new law also required the foundation to receive an annual authorization from Congress for its appropriations and to make two reports to Congress each year on the state of health of American science and on the distribution of Federal research funds to colleges and universities.

Another aspect of government science that has passed beneath the subcommittee's scrutiny is the effective use of federal laboratories, particularly in encouraging flexibility so that the laboratories can be more responsive to pressing national problems in transport, pollution and crime. To this end, the subcommittee has recommended, in a report now before the full committee, the establishment of a National Institute of Research and Advanced Studies (NIRAS) which would bring under one roof the Federal responsibilities for basic research that are now carried out by the National Science Foundation, the National Bureau of Standards, the Atomic Energy Commission and other agencies (see *Nature*, **226**, 391 and 402; 1970).

Under Mr Daddario's eventful reign, the subcommittee has done much to prod the Federal support of basic science into more intelligent and coherent channels. One reason why the subcommittee has been able to do so much may be that it has avoided any appearance of making special pleas for science, always arguing that science must compete for Federal funds on equal terms with other activities. Mr Daddario is not a scientist himself, although as a law student at Wesleyan University he was exposed to courses in physics, astronomy and biology. Serving in the Office of Strategic Services during the last war, he entered Congress in the same year as the Committee on Science and Astronautics came into being, of which he was appointed a member. The committee was preoccupied with astronautics almost to the exclusion of science and, when George P. Miller of California assumed the chairmanship, Daddario was able to persuade him to appoint a subcommittee which would be more attentive to the affairs of science. Mr Daddario became first chairman of the Subcommittee on Science, Research and Development in 1963.



Mr Emilio Q. Daddario.