

NEW WORLD

Conflicting Philosophies on Higher Education

by our Washington Correspondent

THE House of Representatives has done almost as much as the Senate to win friends in the colleges and universities. Like the Senate, it has departed from established traditions in voting for a huge infusion of federal money into higher education, although the proposals which have so far been agreed by each legislative body differ substantially about the method by which the largesse should be distributed. One common feature shared by the House and the Senate bills, however, is that both versions are likely to be opposed at least in part by the Administration.

The chief new provision contained in the bill which was passed last week by the House of Representatives is that federal grants would be distributed to every college and university in the United States. The bill, which was passed after four days and one night of debate, authorizes expenditure amounting to \$20,000 million over five years, including \$1,000 million a year on grants to institutions. Two-thirds of the institutional grants will be distributed on the basis of the number of students at each university and the remainder will be distributed according to the number of students at each institution receiving federal assistance grants.

In several respects, the bills passed by the House last week and by the Senate in August (see *Nature*, 232, 518; 1971) represent differing philosophies on how to rescue colleges and universities from their present financial troubles. The Senate bill would set up a system of educational opportunity grants to each student, the amount of each grant depending on parental income, and it also provides for grants to institutions allotted on the basis of the numbers of students receiving these educational opportunity grants. The House bill carries these institutional support grants one stage further by also providing assistance to all colleges on the basis of their total student intake. It is that part of the institutional support provision that is likely to provide the chief stumbling block in the conference committee that must now sort out the differences between the two bills.

General institutional support is also likely to be opposed by the Administration, which favours institutional grants on the lines proposed by the Senate. The House rejected a move to knock general institutional support out of the bill, however, by a vote of 310 to 84, and the representatives of the House in the conference committee now have a clear

mandate to keep the provision in the bill. The amendment to delete general institutional support from the bill was proposed by John N. Erlenborn, who argued that there is not enough evidence of financial hardship in every college and university to warrant grants to every institution, while Edith Green, chief proponent of the bill, argued that colleges and universities in the United States are "facing the greatest financial crisis they have ever seen".

In spite of their concern over the financial state of American universities and colleges, however, members of the House of Representatives removed from the higher education bill a provision for bailing out the most severely affected institutions with emergency aid. The bill originally proposed an authorization of \$150 million this year and the same amount next year for such institutional support, but this was struck out on the grounds that the Commissioner of Education could not determine fairly which institutions should receive the support.

The House bill also extends the education opportunity grant system, raising the grant level from \$1,000 a year to \$1,500 for needy students, and extends the guaranteed student loan programme. The bill also bans discrimination on the grounds of sex for any institution receiving federal grants, but an amendment making the ban inapplicable to student admissions was carried by a small margin on the grounds that it would effectively impose federal admissions policies on the universities.

Other measures included in the bill are:

- An authorization of \$5 million in 1972 for federal aid to college and university libraries, increasing to \$40 million in 1976.
- Authorization for student loans at the rate of \$425 million in 1972 rising to \$675 million in 1975 and 1976.
- The setting up of a new National Institute of Education in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, on the lines of the Senate-passed measure. This proposal, supported by the Administration, would have the primary function of conducting educational research.
- The bill also calls for the setting up of a special commission on the financing of postsecondary education, to report by June 30, 1973.

Although both the Senate and House-passed bills contain much that is accept-

able to the Administration, they will both stick in the throat of the Office of Management and Budget because each raises the federal higher education bill much above its present level. The Senate version, for example, asks for \$18,000 million over the next three years, while the House version asks for some \$20,000 million over the next five years. Present funding runs at about \$1,300 million a year.

Whatever the outcome of the conference, which will not take place for some time because of the difficulty in sorting out the areas in which the two massive bills do in fact differ, it is clear that the final measure will contain some provision for direct institutional support. The Senate wants such support distributed to colleges and universities whose students receive federal aid, while the House favours the major part of the federal grant money going to all universities on the basis of their total intake. Either provision would, however, be a landmark in higher education in the United States.

CANCER RESEARCH

NIH wins Round Two

by our Washington Correspondent

IT now seems almost certain that the House of Representatives will vote to give the National Cancer Institute a budget of \$1,600 million during the next three years, but to keep it firmly a part of the National Institutes of Health. This is in sharp contrast to the Senate which agreed last July, by a vote of 79 to 1, to set up an independent agency devoted to finding a cure for cancer, and it means that the crucial decisions on the future organization of cancer research in the United States are likely to be taken behind the closed doors of a conference committee.

The mood of the House of Representatives can be judged by the fact that the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce committee last week agreed by a vote of 26 to 2 to send to the floor of the House the bill introduced recently by Paul G. Rogers with the relatively minor amendments tacked on by the subcommittee on Public Health and Environment (see *Nature*, 233, 228; 1971). The support for Rogers's bill in the Commerce committee was in fact so strong that a move to amend it by striking out the word-