

Economy Drive in Congress Hits Science Legislation

The news from Washington is bleak for the sciences in general and physics in particular. The money bills have had hard going through Congress and the already austere fund requests by the Administration have been further chopped by economy-minded congressmen. The National Science Foundation, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Office of Science and Technology and the Atomic Energy Commission were all cut back. And other bills were still up in the air, including copyright and patent legislation and a National Science Foundation reorganization bill.

The National Science Foundation was hardest hit and saw its budgeted \$500 million cut 20% on its way through the House last month. The amount requested for fiscal 1969 was only about 1% above this year's level to begin with, so the cutback deals a severe blow to NSF plans. The House particularly recommended cuts in the NSF fellowship grant programs and in its institutional-support programs, but put a spending floor of \$37.6 million under NSF activities in supporting the training of secondary school science and mathematics teachers. An amendment to give NSF officials free rein in using this money in other programs was offered by Rep. Emilio Q. Daddario (D-Conn.), chairman of the Subcommittee on Science, Research and Development, but was defeated. Another amendment was accepted and added a prohibition on the distribution of NSF funds to dissenting college students who disobey university regulations. In bringing the bill to the House floor, Rep. Joe L. Evins (D-Tenn.) noted, "While this is a large reduction, it certainly does not indicate any lack of interest in science and research by our committee."

NSF officials could expect no help from the Senate. A few years back the Senate was less economy minded than it is now and managed to restore half the cuts made by the House. In the last couple of years, though, the Senate has either approved House action on NSF or has agreed to take the House figure during conferences

to iron out differences between the House and Senate versions.

NASA, OST and AEC. The NSF appropriations were part of a catch-all Independent Offices Appropriations Bill, which also included funds for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Office of Science and Technology. NASA's appropriations were cut to \$4 008 223 000, or \$363 177 000 less than requested. This level is about 14% below fiscal 1968, a loss of nearly \$600 million, and almost \$1 billion below fiscal 1967. The big item for NASA is the Apollo program, funded at \$2.2 billion for next year. The Office of Science and Technology was given \$1 750 000, an 8% cut.

Earlier Congress passed and sent to the President a bill authorizing \$2-618 301 000 for Atomic Energy Commission activities in fiscal 1969. This is significantly below the \$2.9 billion requested by the administration. The big casualty here was the nonmilitary atomic energy program, cut 23% from

what was requested. Physical research programs fared better, with a loss of only 1% from the requested level. Congress approved \$277 million for physical research: high-energy physics gets \$119.4 million, medium-energy physics \$11.6 million and low-energy physics \$30.1 million. Controlled thermonuclear research will get \$27 million. The hopes for a high level of funding for the Weston accelerator did not survive the request stage. The bill signed by the President authorizes \$25 million compared with \$242.7 million the AEC originally asked for the coming year. Instead, increased construction funding is being put off (see Resonances, below).

Other bills of interest to the physics community were faring badly, too. The copyright revision bill, which passed the House a year ago, is sitting in Senate committee although hearings have been completed. A bill to change patent procedures is in a similar fix with hearings completed in both houses but no action foreseen. A rider

RESONANCES

The "Schwartz Amendment" was rejected by members of the American Physical Society. The tally on the amendment, which would have allowed APS members to vote on resolutions on "any matter of concern to the society," was 9214 against and 3553 for. Altogether 13 201 members, about 55%, voted.

The Weston accelerator is still in trouble. The House has appropriated only \$7.1 million for the 200-GeV National Accelerator Laboratory instead of the \$25 million authorized last spring. The action would prohibit the start of construction and the purchase of equipment this year. The bill has gone to the Senate, where hearings were to begin on 28 June. Officials of Universities Research Association, which will operate the accelerator, say the action will delay the project beyond 1972, when Weston expected to produce a beam.

The proposed CERN accelerator is in trouble too. Late in June the British government announced it would not join in building the 300-GeV machine. The action came despite recommendations of government advisory groups, including the Science Research Council, that Britain should join.