

NEW WORLD

HIGHER EDUCATION

Funding in Limbo

by our Washington Correspondent

CAUGHT in the usual pre-Christmas backlog of legislation, the Senate has decided to put off until January at the earliest further consideration of bills designed to increase funding for institutions and students in higher education. The chief reason for the delay is that early in November the House of Representatives passed a bill that is so different from legislation passed by the Senate in August that there will be a lengthy fight in the Senate even before a conference committee is given the formidable task of sorting out differences between the bills. Consequently, the whole issue has been sent back to the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare for its consideration.

Apart from the sharply differing philosophies that are embodied in the versions of the bill passed by the House and the Senate, senators are concerned about the fact that measures for desegregating schools, and in particular amendments opposing the busing of children from one school to another to achieve a racial mix, were tacked onto the bill passed by the House. The Senate passed its own desegregation bill earlier this year, and will probably combine the two pieces of legislation to have a consistent policy to take to a conference committee. In addition, Senators who are opposed to busing have promised to try to put the anti-busing amendments passed by the House into the Senate bill.

While these skirmishes over desegregation are going on in Congress, college administrators will be anxiously looking on to see how Congress will deal with their interests. The chief point to be resolved is whether the conference committee will finally decide to distribute federal support for higher education in the form of grants to institutions or of grants to students. The House version called for general grants to institutions, distributed largely on the basis of the total number of students at each university or college, while the Senate bill would establish the right of each qualified student to receive \$1,400 minus the amount that his family would be expected to contribute.

Although colleges will not be badly affected by the delay in agreeing on the legislation, since appropriations for 1972 have already been agreed on, a long delay next year would present some difficulties for planning budgets for the 1972-73 academic session. Those involved in the legislation are predicting that it will take several weeks to sort out the differences.

Horrendous Problems

IN his last annual report as President of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Dr Howard W. Johnson has issued a stern warning of the financial problems that lie ahead for higher education. Dr Johnson's bitterness at past funding policies in higher education is evidenced by these extracts from his annual report for 1970-71:

"I have spoken in each of my annual reports on the problems of financing MIT. We are a special place, and we fare a bit better than many others. But the financial problems ahead for higher education are horrendous. Increasing tuition must continue in the face of rising costs, but I, for one, fear that such a continuation will bear most heavily on the large middle group of our students that fall in the financial range between the very needy and the very affluent. I fear that a steadily rising collegiate

budget could eventually prevent many of them from attending MIT. There is a very real need here that has not received adequate attention by anyone in higher education.

"We must maximize our efforts at raising private resources. The satisfaction of investment in private education is still there despite the occasional uneasiness for some that accompanies the support of youth. But quality institutions need federal support in addition, and new forms of that support must be devised if the long-term interests of our society are to be protected."

Dr Johnson's warnings could well be directed at the Administration which should, if a conference committee can sort out the differences in bills passed by the House and the Senate, soon be considering a Congressional proposal to give federal grants to institutions of higher education.

Short Notes

Enzyme Detergents

A COMMITTEE appointed by the National Research Council—the operating arm of the National Academy of Sciences—has come to the conclusion that "the average enzyme detergent laundry product in normal use by consumers has not produced more primary irritation of the skin than have similar products that contain no enzymes". Commissioned by the Food and Drug Administration, the study bases its conclusion on the fact that only six cases in which there is unequivocal evidence of allergic reactions associated with use of enzyme detergents came to the committee's attention during the course of its extensive investigations.

The committee found, however, that some workers in plants that manufacture detergent products who have been exposed to relatively high concentrations of dust containing enzyme materials have suffered respiratory tract and skin injuries. The symptoms range from irritation and coughing to breathlessness, sometimes lasting for several hours. But the committee suggests that the average consumer would be exposed to such low doses of the enzyme materials that he or she would not be affected. The study has found immediate acceptance in at least one quarter—the day after the study was published, Procter and Gamble issued a press release saying that "we hope these findings by the nation's most respected scientific body will serve as the ultimate reassurance to housewives and will finally put to rest the unfounded

charges which have been made against the consumer safety of enzymes". The report was one of the first of the NRC publications to bear the new label to the effect that responsibility for all aspects of the report rests with the study committee.

Technology and Foreign Policy

THE National Science Foundation has awarded the Brookings Institution a grant of \$125,000 to study "the impact of technological change on American foreign policy and prospects for world order". The study, which will be directed by two members of the Brookings foreign policy staff, will be concerned with a broad range of questions such as new ways for exploiting seabed resources, telecommunications, and weather prediction and modification. Environmental pollution and the depletion of scarce resources are two other areas which will come under study. The chief object of the exercise will be to determine for each area studied what new forms of international organization and regulation will be required.

New Man at OST

EDWARD E. DAVID jun, the President's Science Adviser, has a new special assistant for national security matters. The first incumbent of the newly created post will be John B. Walsh, a former member of the Secretary of the Air Force's research and development staff, and a specialist in missile systems. Walsh will work directly with David and with Dr Henry Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.