

Congressional Reapportionment

Demography

Permanent peace, or at least a temporary armistice in the "war of quotients" is believed to have been brought about through congressional recess efforts of Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, Republican, of Michigan, who will shortly introduce in the Senate a new congressional reapportionment bill, which, he says, "has the endorsement of many mathematical experts who heretofore have been split wide in rival camps."

The new bill, which the Senator says he will explain in detail when he introduces it, is to follow closely the "Fenn bill" which the House passed last January, but which failed of action in the Senate. It will differ from the Fenn bill, however, in that it will not specify any mathematical method to be followed in an automatic reapportionment, but will simply provide that the automatic reapportionment be made after each decennial

census "according to the method used in the last apportionment" whenever congress fails to act independently.

This will make for permanence but will still give congressmen the chance to wrangle over a method to be used in any particular year.

It is believed that there may be considerable debate and discussion over the mathematical method to be used in connection with the 1930 census, but if congress does not decide definitely on the method to be used in 1930, the passage of the Vandenberg bill means that the major-fractions method would be used, as this was the method used in 1910, the last time an apportionment was made.

The advisory committee of the Census Bureau in a recent meeting, Senator Vandenberg says, unanimously voted approval of the formula in the new bill. In addition, surviving members of the old advisory committee as

it existed in 1921 subscribe to it. Likewise Director William Steuart of the Census Bureau and his scientific assistant, Dr. Joseph A. Hill, approve.

"The importance of exhibits which will be submitted to the Senate in detail when the bill is introduced," stated Senator Vandenberg, "cannot be overestimated, because external division among scientific experts has been one of the main barriers to previous action. The exhibits will show the endorsement of Prof. Walter F. Wilcox of Cornell, Prof. Robert E. Chaddock of Columbia, Prof. W. I. King of New York University, Prof. George Barnett of Johns Hopkins, Prof. George F. Warren of Cornell, Prof. Edwin R. Seligman of Columbia, Prof. Carroll W. Doten of Massachusetts Technology, and Wesley C. Mitchell of Columbia.

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Faces for Front Doors

Zoology

A toad that uses its face as a door or stopper for its burrow is the interesting animal that was dug up—in the most literal sense of the word—in Cuba by Dr. Thomas Barbour, curator of reptiles and amphibians in the museum of comparative zoology of Harvard College, whose courtesy supplies the cover picture for this week's SCIENCE NEWS-LETTER.

The creature was well known to Cubans as *sapo de concha*, or shell-headed toad, because of the exceedingly hard, tough covering of the front part of its head, but it had never been found at home, and no one had any notion of the possible uses of its indurated countenance. Then one day Dr. Barbour found a field with many tube-like burrows from seven to ten inches deep. At the bottom of each burrow was one of these shell-headed toads, its head so tilted that the hardened skin fitted the hole exactly and formed a perfect defensive stopper.

Prof. William Morton Wheeler has found a number of somewhat similar adaptations, scattered at random through the animal kingdom, where the possessor of such a lid-like surface will use it as a door for its burrow. Sometimes the head, sometimes the opposite end of the body, is thus hardened against the buffets of an adverse world. Prof. Wheeler has transliterated the Greek word for barricade into a name for this phenomenon; he calls it "phragmosis".

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