

GENERAL SCIENCE

Science on Capitol Hill

► A POTPOURRI of science is being dished up daily to the legislators on Capitol Hill this 87th session of Congress.

Members of both Houses are considering—from a political and, occasionally partisan view—scientific problems ranging from getting a man on the moon in the next decade to improving his lot on earth before the next election.

Congressional reaction to the glowing report from the White House on space progress made last year and the Administration's plans for manned lunar exploration by 1970 was mixed. Rep. James G. Fulton (R.-Pa.), senior Republican member of the House Science and Astronautics Committee, said that the United States would be lucky to get a man on the moon by 1980. "There's no doubt our overall space program is slipping despite the high words and fine praise coming from the White House," Rep. Fulton declared.

The recent setback to United States plans to orbit a man in space due to trouble in the Atlas booster spread some of this pessimism across party lines. And to counteract possible public reaction to the delay, the Air Force gave public assurances that the problem with the Atlas as a booster for a manned orbit in no way affects its operational capability as part of our defense.

Strategic material stockpiling, which President John F. Kennedy announced would be investigated by an Armed Service Subcommittee headed by Sen. Stuart Symington (D.-Mo.), has attracted a great deal of bi-partisan attention. Congressional leaders from both parties agree there should be an investigation; but Republicans favor an investigation by the House-Senate Joint Committee on Non-Essential Federal Ex-

penditures headed by Sen. Harry F. Byrd (D.-Va.), who has been openly critical of Administration fiscal policies.

According to Sen. Byrd, the Nation's stockpile of strategic materials and farm commodities totaled more than \$14 billion as of the end of last November rather than the \$7.7 billion which the President termed "astonishing." A partial listing arranged alphabetically include such items as aluminum, beryllium, cobalt, diamond dies, molybdenum, nickel, opium, platinum, plutonium, quinine, rubber, talc, uranium, vanadium and zirconium.

Stockpiling started immediately after World War II and some observers suspect that evidence of waste and over-buying may be found in both parties. For example, Sen. John J. Williams (R.-Del.) said that when President Kennedy served in the Senate he supported mineral subsidies in eight out of nine roll calls.

The Senate debated and approved the Administration's \$2.67 billion college aid bill which would provide \$1.5 billion in Federal loans for construction of college classrooms and up to \$250,000,000 in matching grants for aid to community junior colleges. It also carries a \$924,000,000 scholarship program to provide 212,500 four-year scholarships to qualified students who otherwise could not afford a higher education.

The Senate bill now goes to the House-Senate Conference Committee to work out some adjustment with the more limited House bill. The House version does not include scholarships or assistance to junior colleges. Administration leaders in both Houses are confident that both Houses will agree on legislation that will include most of the provisions of the Senate bill.

Hearings on the Administration's welfare bill began Feb. 7. The President has emphasized, in his proposals, rehabilitation and training to make relief clients self-supporting, and urges more care and support for dependent children. Since Sen. Byrd of the Senate Finance Committee favors many of the proposals, it looks as though welfare legislation will pass this session of Congress.

However, the President's medical care for the aged bill is in for rough sledding, and a showdown on the Senate floor is being planned by Democratic supporters sometime in April. Sen. George A. Smathers (D.-Fla.) has announced that his Subcommittee on the Problems of Aging will hold hearings in two Florida cities in February.

Hearings are under way now in the House Labor Subcommittee to provide legislation for Federal compensation for injury to workers exposed to damaging radiation in atomic plants. Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg and other Administration officials told the committee that such legislation is needed but did not endorse any of the bills before the subcommittee.

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PSYCHIATRY

Psychiatrists Support Mental Health Programs

► UNITED STATES psychiatrists are solidly backing the nationwide mental health program placed before Congress last year by the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health. The backing was contained in a statement issued by the Council of the American Psychiatric Association, Washington, D. C., which includes virtually all of the nation's psychiatrists.

The program recommended steps to expand research in mental illness, reduce personnel shortages and harness community resources to treating and rehabilitating the mentally ill.

One of the most talked-about and controversial of the recommendations of the Joint Commission's program on "Action for Mental Health" is the suggestion that huge mental hospitals with more than 1,000 beds be converted into hospitals for the treatment of chronic diseases, whether mental or physical, and that smaller mental hospitals be converted into intensive treatment centers for the mentally ill.

These recommendations were approved by the psychiatrists with a caution note stating that the limit of 1,000 beds should not be taken too literally. What is important, they indicated, is the quantity and quality of available personnel.

A program for revitalizing the care of the mentally ill which implements the recommendations on a state scale has been laid before the New York State legislature by Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller.

A chief feature of Mr. Rockefeller's plan is the provision for decentralizing larger hospital complexes into smaller units that would be therapeutically self-contained. Common services, such as maintenance, would still be provided from a central unit.

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SPACE

Sum Up U.S. Space Goals

► UNITY AND PEACE now may be said to sum up this country's space goals. Apparently the Administration has called a halt to the internal race for space between the civilian and military agencies of Government which, in the past, has prompted both criticism and investigation by Congress.

In his report to the Congress on the national effort in aeronautics and space, President John F. Kennedy has made it clear that while the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Department of Defense are separate agencies working in space, they now are operating under a single program coordinated and directed by the Administration. The report also emphasizes that there is no longer a division between peaceful and non-peaceful objectives in United States space efforts since all space missions are either to "help keep the peace" or "missions to improve our ability to live well in peace."

It was to achieve this desired unity in

operation and goal that the National Aeronautics and Space Council was reactivated by the President last April and the National Aeronautics and Space act amended to make the Vice-President a member and chairman of the Council.

Since then daily contact by the Council staff has been maintained between the various departments and agencies involved in space work.

Among the space accomplishments credited to the unified effort were the successful firing of the first stage of Saturn, in which a thrust of almost 1,300,000 pounds was generated at lift-off; the operation of nuclear power sources aboard earth satellites for the first time; and establishment of world speed and altitude records by the rocket-powered X-15.

The United States placed more than 30 satellites in orbit during 1961, to bring our total to above 60.

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