

behavioral sciences

POLITICS

Hunger probe cut

The McGovern committee, which has been studying hunger in America (SN: 2/15, p. 160), may have to tighten its own belt. The Senate Rules Committee has reduced McGovern's budget from the requested \$250,000 to \$150,000. McGovern called the action "a sad day for hungry people."

There are two courses of action now open to the committee. It can take the Rules Committee's decision to the floor of the Senate and hope to regain the lost \$100,000.

The other course would be to try to pry the \$100,000 out of the Senate at a later date as a supplemental appropriation.

It was before the McGovern committee that nutrition experts recently documented the connection between hunger and a wide array of serious afflictions, including nerve and muscle disorders, digestive upsets and mental retardation.

PSYCHIATRY

Bureaucracy defended

Bureaucracy may be considered a dirty word in some quarters. But it has certain political strengths not generally realized, particularly in terms of psychosis in a bureaucrat.

Prof. Arnold A. Rogow of the City University of New York notes one of these in the February *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHIATRY*.

"One of the most important built-in safeguards in a hierarchical, bureaucratic form of government is that most key policy decisions are distributed over a number of persons and a variety of agencies." If one person breaks down, the vacuum tends to be less critical.

Prof. Rogow makes the point in connection with his studies of the mental illnesses which affected former Defense Secretary James Forrestal and former ambassador to Britain John G. Winant.

Both men committed suicide. Forrestal was 57 when he jumped from the Bethesda Naval Hospital in 1949. Winant was 58 when he shot himself in 1947.

CITY PLANNING

Cure for sick transit

"We ought to learn from biology and go underground," a leading city planner has told Congress.

Constantinos A. Doxiadis, who has tried to bring order to modern Athens, gave this advice to the House Science and Astronautics Committee at its 10th Annual Science and Technology panel.

This year the panel was concerned with the urban plight.

"In biology, the circulation systems are all on the inside," Doxiadis said. "The idea in our cities is to take all things that have to do with machines and put them underground. This would leave the area above the ground to the walking people.

"All our communications and transportation systems start out above the ground and wind up underground," he said. "Think of electrical or telephone lines, for ex-

ample. Eventually, all the urban transit systems must follow this law no matter how much it appears the cost will be."

Various other panelists nodded agreement, and mention was made of such cities as Tokyo, where almost a whole underground sub-city has been built around a core of transportation lines.

SOCIOLOGY

The 20-year fracture

The "20-year fracture" is a term sociologists use to denote the break-up of a marriage after the couple's children become independent.

This time in a marriage, ideally, ought to be one of fulfilling youthful hopes, but statistics for 1963 reveal that 24 percent of the marriages that broke up in the United States had lasted more than 15 years.

The problem is growing, according to Dr. Alfred A. Messer, professor of psychiatry at Emory University Medical School in Atlanta. Writing in the January *MENTAL HYGIENE*, he lists as some of the reasons for these figures the increasing acceptance of divorce by society, the liberalizing of formerly ironclad divorce laws, and greater affluence which permits women to be financially independent rather than tied economically to their husbands.

Dr. Messer believes that another contributing factor is the haste in which many of these marriages began. He also criticizes American social patterns, which he feels no longer provide supports to hold up the institution of marriage.

In the old days, he notes, couples lived near enough to their families to lean on them during times of marital stress. Now, they are so separated that they must turn either to outside sources or to their children. And the modern, child-centered society makes this only too easy, thus often shutting out one or the other spouse, widening the gap between them.

URBAN ILLS

Tax incentives inadequate

Tax incentives alone will not cure the nation's urban ills, according to former Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare John W. Gardner. Gardner is now head of the Urban Coalition, an organization of influential private citizens worried about the decline of the cities.

He told the 10th Annual Science and Technology panel sponsored by the House Science and Astronautics Committee that conventional government subsidies must also be employed if urban problems are to be solved.

"Tax incentives should run for a reasonable but limited time period," he said. "At the end of this period, Congress should review the incentives thoroughly to see that they are accomplishing their end at a reasonable cost."

Gardner urged Congress to settle for no less than 600,000 new housing units a year for low- and middle-income families. He saw the construction of new housing as the paramount urban need.

Gardner insists that Congress must take the lead in this field if it expects private industry to do its share in building new housing units.