

Congressional Calendar

Congressional votes aimed at Carter Administration

In a major blow to the Carter Administration, the House Democratic Caucus voted overwhelmingly against the President's planned decontrol in a test vote May 22 brought by Connecticut liberal and Kennedy ally Toby Moffett. Over the past two weeks, Carter has been stung by congressional liberals on a number of key issues, as liberals have teamed up with conservatives to defeat him on major policy initiatives. This coordinated activity of the Kennedy-allied congressional Democrats is speeding the unraveling of the Carter Administration and helping prepare the New York Council on Foreign Relations' planned Kennedy-Haig contest in the 1980 presidential balloting. Underscoring the fact that Carter is no longer able to secure the support of even his own party's Congressional leadership, Senator Daniel Moynihan (D-N.Y.) declared May 22 to reporters that the Carter Administration had lost its ability to govern.

The House vote against Carter's decontrol policy was touted as a major rejection of Carter by the Democrats. Congressman Edward Markey (D-Mass.), a co-sponsor of the Moffett bill, announced that the May 22 vote showed that Carter "was completely at odds with what his party stands for." Those opposing Carter included the Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill (D-Mass.), a close Kennedy ally, and Majority Whip John Brademas (D-Ind.). Moffett and several other "liberals" (including Congressmen John Dingell (D-Mich.) and Phil Burton (D-Calif.) in the House teamed up with conservatives to vote down Carter's gas rationing program on May 10 as well. Their opposition

was directed at the way Carter was handling negotiations with Congress on the bill, rather than against the bill itself. Shortly after the vote Moffett and Congressman John Dingell (D-Mich.) announced that they would draft their own gas rationing plan.

The same principle of "getting Carter" was behind the surprise vote of 75 to 19 in the Senate last week to lift sanctions against Rhodesia, which was orchestrated by the Senate Democratic leadership.

What do Jack Kemp and George McGovern have in common?

Sources close to Ralph Nader and Ted Kennedy are gloating over their new-found allies in conservative ranks. Nader allies in the U.S. Congress are playing upon the "states' rights" and "free enterprise" ideologies of right-wing Republicans to garner support for antinuclear legislation.

Cosponsoring legislation that would give states the right to determine where and if nuclear waste storage facilities should be sited in them are the odd couples of Senators George McGovern (D-S.D.) and Paul Laxalt (R-Nev.), and Representatives John Sieberling (D-Oh.) and Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.). When asked how Laxalt, Ronald Reagan's de facto campaign manager, and Kemp, a potential GOP presidential candidate, could cosponsor legislation (S. 594 and H.R. 2762) which would have the effect of creating anarchy in the nuclear energy industry, an aide to Sieberling declared: "There are very basic issues of states' rights involved here and that's why you

see so many cosponsors." Mississippi's first Republican Senator in a century, conservative Thad Cochran, has introduced S. 701, the Radioactive Waste Management Act of 1979, which is a version of the state veto-power legislation.

Similarly, conservative Texas Congressman Ron Paul (R), who along with Laxalt and Kemp still claims to be pronuclear, has called for the repeal of the Price-Anderson Act, a Federal law which limits overall insurance liability in the event of a nuclear accident. Says an aide to Paul: "Oh, the Congressman is pronuclear. He thought the Three Mile Island hullabaloo was an enormous media hoax, but feels that nuclear power should be able to stand on its own in the marketplace without government interference."

Carrying the Adam Smith disease to its logical conclusion, however, is Mississippi Republican Jon Hinson. Hinson makes no pretensions of being pronuclear, attacking it as a prime example of the evil influence of big government and too-big business. According to Capitol Hill sources Hinson is organizing covertly with Ralph Nader and the Union of Concerned Scientists to create an antinuclear conservative group, on the grounds that nuclear power is big, centralized and supported by the government. Hill observers wonder though how Hinson squares his antigovernment stance with his call for a massive government-supported push for solar and wind energy.

Antinuclear drive steamrolls timid opposition

Following actions by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and several Hill committees to freeze nuclear plant licensing and construction for periods of several months, the Kennedy-led antinuclear forces on Capitol Hill are now escalating their drive against nuclear energy. On May 22 Ted Kennedy introduced S. 1178, legislation to impose a two-year moratorium on new plant licensing and construction. Kennedy declared that the nation needs a decent interval in which to reassess the safety and viability of nuclear standards. Even more rabid was House Democrat Henry Gonzalez (Texas) whose H.R. 4066 legislation calls for an indefinite moratorium on new nuclear plants, and would put existing nuclear facilities under government operation. Gonzalez has declared in speeches that the aim of his legislation is to decommission all existing nuclear plants.

Congressional pronuclear forces have allowed themselves to be silenced by the antinuclear media scare. Their acquiescence went so far as to allow Congressman Morris Udall's antinuclear task force, which is investigating the Three Mile Island incident, to shut them out of the issue. On the task force field trip to Harrisburg two weeks ago, Republican staffers were denied access to the plant's control room, while Udall ensured that the media had no limitations on their activities. The Republicans were not even consulted on the Committee's final report. Issued May 21 by Task Force chairman James Weaver (D-Ore.), the report declared that the Three-Mile Island incident was the result not of hu-

man error but of inherent problems in the design and functioning of nuclear plants.

Kennedy's antitrust legislation on front burner

Senator Edward Kennedy's infamous Illinois Brick Bill has been endorsed by the Senate Judiciary Committee and will be formally reported out of the Committee onto the Senate floor by the end of May. The legislation would permit consumers to sue and collect treble damages from a corporation that had been convicted of price-fixing and other antitrust violations, even if they did not buy anything directly from that company. An example of the impact the bill would have is provided by the antitrust suit against IBM. If that company loses the 10-year old case the Justice Department is prosecuting against it, then it will be potentially liable under the Kennedy bill to pay treble damages to every individual who received services from a bank relying on IBM equipment. The bill was endorsed by the committee in a 9 to 8 vote, with Republican Senator Charles Mathias (Md.) casting the deciding vote. Mathias, the only Republican supporting the bill, amended it to make it slightly more difficult for foreign countries to bring suits against corporations by requiring them to have a reciprocal law for American companies. But in essence, the Illinois Brick bill is unchanged. An effort by Senator Cochran to limit the bill to allow only indirect purchasers, and not sellers, to sue for higher prices was defeated by the Committee. Republicans led by Senator Orin Hatch (R-Utah) are planning to lead a filibuster against the legislation. In

the House the Judiciary Committee will act on the bill in the next couple of weeks.

Kennedy's antitrust activity, following a day of hearings May 22, escalated this week with his introduction jointly with Senator Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio) of new legislation that would prohibit oil companies from merging or buying other companies with assets of more than \$100 million. The bill is expected out of the subcommittee in the second week of June.

Trade legislation to go to Hill in June

The much delayed submission of legislation by the Carter Administration to implement the Multilateral Trade Negotiations will finally be sent to Capitol Hill in June, according to Washington sources. Holding up submission of the legislation has been the demand by Russel Long's Senate Finance Committee that the legislation be followed within 30 days by an Administration proposal to create a Department of International Trade. The Administration wanted to give itself enough time to draft the legislation, especially in the wake of the Department of Natural Resources's stillbirth, and so had stalled the legislation.

—Barbara Dreyfuss and
Susan Kokinda