

Washington Report

by Congressman Walter B. Jones
 Recently, I have commented on the lack of House action on the part of Congress. This past week was quite different inasmuch as all authorization bills were supposed to be enacted prior to May 15. I have previously explained the process of authorizations and appropriations; the committee which has jurisdiction, whether it be the Agriculture Committee, Merchant Marine Committee or whatever, presents legislation calling for a certain amount of money for funding. If the House approves, then this amount is submitted to the Appropriations Committee at a later date which may agree to the funding or may reduce the funding, but under the rules of the House, cannot increase the funding beyond that which has been authorized. So, this past week two major agencies were authorized, both of which involved lengthy debate and a wide variety of opinion as to what the total amount should be.

The first was the National Science Foundation. Much was said about the decline in our number of students who are pursuing science and technology careers. The amount authorized was \$1,342,700,000. This is \$50-million above what the Administration had requested, which was designated to support new initiatives in research instrumentation. Referring to the lack of interest in mathematics and physical science training, of the amount mentioned above, \$358,600,000 is designated to assist in this program.

The other authorization was the Department of Energy Civilian Research and Development. The total authorization for this Department was presented at a level of \$3,288,271,000. Of this amount, \$310,430,000 was included for research on fossil energy, and \$142,180,000 for energy conservation, R&D.

Both these authorizations are directed towards improving our knowledge and research in scientific technology, as many contend that we are falling far behind in these fields.

In another very close vote, the House approved a bill to provide \$760 million for homeowners' aid, with the economy being as it is, many homeowners, through no fault of their own, are having their mortgages foreclosed and losing their homes. The bill will provide that if one can prove that he is unable to make his payments, due to no fault of his own, he can obtain loans for as long as 36 months to cover mortgage payments. If the transaction is completed between the Department of Housing and Urban Development, then the homeowner must agree to contribute 38% of his income for repayment purposes to the government; HUD will advance the rest of the mortgage payments. As the economy improves, and the individual again become gainfully employed at a decent salary, he will be required to repay the government for this loan. The program will be limited to homeowners with incomes of \$20,000 or less, and other assets, not including the home, not exceeding \$10,000. This is the third major anti-recession measure passed this year by the House; the other being legislation dealing with jobs, and another bill which supposedly provides additional aid to farmers through the Farmers Home Administration.

On a more personal note, the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee had two full-day sessions, passing smaller authorization bills, reporting out six bills on the first day and five on the second day.



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