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House debate and vote on stringent groundrules. "No Congressmen will be able to offer anything but a minor amendment from the floor," the Rules Committee decided. Once the rules are approved — and the expectation is that they will be approved in their entirety on July 29 — the entire legislative package will be sent to the House floor on Monday, August 1. So convinced that this legislation will be approved without major opposition, the House leaders have allocated only five days — and they are hoping the vote will come in much less.

Since the Senate has no constitutional power to initiate revenue bills, it must wait for House passage before acting on the legislation. So confident are Carter's Senate hatchetmen of pre-recess passage in the House, Senator Russell Long (D-La.) has scheduled Senate Finance Committee hearings during the recess and for right after Labor Day when Congress reconvenes. Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.) has made repeated public threats to the Senate that either they pass the legislation prior to the final Oct. 7 recess or the recess will be postponed until passage. Byrd has also predicted that the Senate will pass the package not giving Carter everything he wants but "more than he wants."

ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY NUCLEAR ENERGY BUDGET: On July 11-12 the Senate passed the Administration's nuclear energy budget with only minor modifications. After beating back an amendment to kill the Clinch River breeder reactor, the Senate then turned around and supported by voice vote a "compromise" amendment which limits funding to $75 million rather than the minimum of $150 needed for advancing to the commercialization stage. The end result is that the Senate approved a slow rather than a quick death for the breeder.

The Senate's retreat further intensified when, again by voice vote and with little discussion, it agreed to fund the Barnwell, N.C. plutonium reprocessing plant at $14 million but limit funding to a study to determine "alternate use" of the plant. The next day — with 10 minutes of debate — the Senate supported the President's crippling fusion power budget request.

The House has not yet considered these measures. Although initially scheduled for a House vote in mid-July, House leaders, again catering to the Administration's wishes, stalled on setting the date of the vote. Carter was worried, a House Science and Technology Committee source revealed, that he would lose the breeder vote.

In a joint House-Senate conference on July 20, Congressional leaders accepted a Carter-proposed deal to postpone the authorization vote until September in exchange for the continuation of nine water projects. While pro-nuclear energy Congressmen have rationalized this move as a "good deal," Schlesinger and Co. have already gone into full gear armtwisting Congressmen into supporting Carter on the breeder. The fact that the media has already erroneously reported the breeder as being killed by the conference action has put psychological dampers on previous forward motion.

ENERGY DEPARTMENT: On July 22, the same day that the Ad Hoc Energy Committee finished its review, another House-Senate conference worked out differences hanging up the Energy Department legislation. A final vote is expected on the bill which will set up an extra-constitutional dictatorial body, before the August recess. The Energy Department legislation had been adopted in both Houses of Congress earlier this year by a wide margin and with little discussion. At that time, not one Congressman condemned the role that Schlesinger, as Energy Secretary, will play and the wartime powers he will assume. His nomination will be considered, most definitely before the October recess, once final approval for the Department is obtained.

Curb Federal Election Commission

The St. Louis Globe Democrat printed this editorial in its July 25 edition.

The way the federal election campaign law is written, the Federal Election Commission can launch as many investigations of suspected violators of campaign laws as it chooses and it is not required to make public the details of these inquiries.

This came to light recently when a number of minor parties complained that the FEC was investigating them for reasons they considered invalid. They charge they are being harassed by he FEC.

When *The Globe-Democrat* called the FEC to ask about details of the investigations, it was told that none could be revealed due to a provision in the election laws that says "Any notification or investigation (of the Federal Election Commission) made under paragraph (2) shall not be made public by the Commission or by any person without the written consent of the person receiving such notification or the person with respect to whom such investigation is made."

Why is the FEC investigating the American Party? Why is the FEC seeking the records of the Libertarian Party? Why is the FEC demanding records and documents of the U.S. Labor Party and asking its contributors to furnish records?

The response of an FEC spokesman to all these questions is that under the above restriction in the law details of the investigations cannot be revealed.

There is another provision in the law that the FEC does not seem to be following. It says that "Any investigation under paragraph (2) shall be conducted expeditiously...."

It is known that the FEC investigations of the minor parties have been going on for many months. Can these lengthy probes be considered as expeditious? The longer they continue without any charges being filed, the more credence is given to the complaints by the organizations

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that they are being harassed by the FEC.

In the case of the U.S. Labor Party its spokesmen say the FEC launched its investigation because the party has not paid bills owed to corporations that were contracted during the campaign. Under an FEC regulation the commission can construe an unpaid debt to a corporation as an illegal campaign contribution if the corporation or the candidate, committee or persons has not undertaken "commercially reasonable" efforts to satisfy the debt.

Thus the FEC, at its discretion, can declare certain debts to corporations as illegal campaign contributions. This is not part of the law but it has the force of law because Congress gave the FEC the power to make such regulations.

It seems odd that the FEC chose the Labor Party as its target for this regulation when the Democratic National Committee has had millions of dollars in unpaid debts for years.

So while there is much talk about openness in government, Congress gives agencies a cloak behind which they can hide their operations. And it also gives them a blank check to write regulations of highly dubious value and then the power to enforce them as law.

Congress should keep tabs on the FEC to make sure that it does not abuse its tremendous powers. Under the present setup the FEC could become a Gestapo and almost no one but those being victimized would know about it.

The FEC should be required to report on its investigations and observe the mandate to conduct them expeditiously. Congress should suspend the right of the FEC and other agencies to make regulations ad infinitum. This undeserved privilege has allowed these agencies to act as a second unelected Congress, drafting regulations that have the power of law at the rate of more than 70,000 a year.

Carter Scandals Multiply... But Congress Becalmed

WASHINGTON WEEK

In an echo of the first exposés to hit Richard Nixon, Congressman Paul McCloskey released documents this week suggesting that Jimmy Carter was influenced by political campaign commitments in supporting protectionist shipping legislation. Passing over the advice of his economic advisers, who warned that such action would increase unemployment, Carter supported legislation to require a fixed percentage of U.S. oil imports to be shipped in American-flag ships. Carter took the advice of his domestic policy adviser, Stu Eizenstat, that such action was "politically necessary"...

Carter may soon get caught in the KCIA hullabaloo as well. Investigators have uncovered photographs of the President with Korean Mata Hari Suzi Park Thompson, an expert on Capitol Hill affairs. There is no indication the photographs show Carter to be in more than a compromised position...

Carter is already in such political trouble around the country that even the latest CBS-New York Times survey shows that the population gives him little support for his programs, and only somewhat more support for his style. As for Carter's intelligence — here's one story that is making the rounds:

There were four men in an airplane: a pilot, a priest, a hippie, and Jimmy Carter. Suddenly the plane experienced severe engine trouble. There were only three parachutes aboard. The pilot, saying he was of value to his country and deserved to live, grabbed a chute and bailed out. Jimmy Carter piped up "I'm the smartest man alive," and also bailed out. Then the priest told the hippie that, as a man of the cloth, he was ready for his maker and would stay. Replied the hippie, "You're outta sight Father, but we're both saved. The smartest man alive just bailed out with my knapsack..."

Despite the "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval" that Senator Lawton Chiles awarded Budget Director Bert Lance this week, "Carter's personal banker" is still in deep trouble over the millions of dollars in loans he received from First National Bank of Chicago and Manufacturers Hanover Trust. Comptroller of the Currency John Heimann is still conducting investigations into possible violations of the National Banking Act in connection with Lance's loans. Rumors are flying in Washington that Lance may suddenly resign. Carter is reportedly terrified the scandal may expand and embroil him, and is hoping to keep Lance at a distance. Apparently some angry words were spilled when Hamilton Jordan announced this week that Bert Lance was one of the President's closest friends.

David Smith, the Atlanta businessman, who has reportedly offered to relieve Lance of his embarassing bank stock at $5 above market value, is a man of many business skills. Several years ago Smith ran an overseas encyclopedia sales firm; unfortunately his credit lines were cut off and he was forced into liquidation.

Smith's new firm, International Horizons, produce biorythm