

Congressional Calendar by Barbara Dreyfuss and Susan Kokinda

Senate loosens trucking regulation; will House go all the way?

As the Senate Commerce Committee approved controversial legislation lifting many of the federal rules that now protect the trucking industry, a key member of the house indicated that he is considering sweeping aside *all* federal regulation of the trucking industry.

Rep. James J. Howard (D-N.J.) chairman of the House Surface Transportation Subcommittee said on March 11 that he is considering legislation which would consist of three written lines—repealing all sections of the 1935 Interstate Commerce Act which relate to motor carrier transportation. Earlier this year, Howard introduced legislation which proposed only minor reforms in trucking regulation.

One Capital Hill observer said: "I wonder whether Howard might have been 'abscammed' Just as Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Howard Cannon (D-Nev) had been 'brilabbed'," referring to the fact that Cannon changed from an antideregulation position to just the opposite, just as it was becoming known that the FBI was investigating whether Cannon was illegally and financially beholden to the Teamsters union for his antideregulation position. While Rep. Howard has not been implicated in the Abscam scandals, other members of his state delegation, such as Senator Harrison Williams and Representative Frank Thompson have, and the Democratic Party as a whole in New Jersey is said to be in turmoil because of the ongoing investigations. Observers note that

it is too much to believe that both Cannon and Howard would become parallel "born again deregulators" without some kind of outside pressure.

Cannon's newly found pro-deregulation position prevailed on March 12, as the Senate Commerce Committee passed, by a vote of 13 to 4, the bill before it. Several at-

ting many small towns off from truck shipments.

Bennett C. Whitlock, president of the American Trucking Association, Inc., said he felt "the only winners are inflation and increased fuel use. Provision after provision erodes the traffick base" of the regulated truckers and will "force them to cut back service and charge higher prices."

While Rep. Howard says that he will not decide definitely whether to introduce his radical deregulation bill on the House side for several weeks, both sides still remain comitted to having trucking reform legislation before the President by April.

Rep. James J. Howard (D-N.J.)



Sen. Howard Cannon (D-Nev)

tempts to gut the more radical "re-regulating" provisions were defeated by one vote several times. The bill, which will be moved on for quick floor action, contains several key provisions which make it easier for new firms to enter the business and would bar truckers from setting rates jointly for all goods hauled entirely by one firm—70 percent of all shipments. As an EIR special report published in November 1979 showed, such moves will gut the capital intensive base of the U.S. trucking industry, raising the price of truck shipments and cut-

Criminal code reform passes House subcommittee

After months of debate, the House Subcommittee on Criminal Laws passed the Criminal Code Reform Bill, known by its earlier Senate version "S.1," by a vote of 7 to 1. The bill now goes to the full House Judiciary Committee where the debate is expected to begin anew. House Judiciary Committee chairman Peter Rodino (D-N.J.) stalled the bill in the last session of Congress, thereby killing it even though it had passed the Senate. Whether Rodino wants to or can repeat that ploy this year remains to be seen.

The bill, authored in large part by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Edward Kennedy, passed that committee last November and is expected to reach the floor of the Senate next month.

Both versions would establish a commission which would develop sentencing guidelines which could be used for appeal by a defendant if the court imposed sentence exceeded the guidelines. But the Senate version would also allow the government to appeal if the sentence was more lenient than the guidelines. The Senate version also abolishes parole.

Capitol Hill observers noted that many of the tougher provisions in the Senate bill were "in exchange" for getting Republican support for de facto marijuana decriminalization in Kennedy's version. That provision may face a Senate floor fight to take it out of the bill.

Carter draft bill getting nowhere

A "strange bedfellow" coalition of liberals and conservatives has so far been able to stop President Carter's proposed draft registration legislation in the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. After suffering one defeat in the House Appropriations Committee's Independent Agencies Subcommittee on a tie vote of 6 to 6, the full House Appropriations Committee indefinitely postponed a crucial vote on the proposal on March 5. "It's in limbo," said a spokesman for Rep. Jamie Whitten (D-Miss.) chairman of the committee. Members of the parallel Senate Appropriations Subcommittee heavily attacked the proposal, citing a Selective Service report that said registration could be accom-

plished quickly enough after the President so orders.

Liberals, led in particular by Rep. Pat Schroeder (D-Co.), attack the proposal because they see it as a first step to war. Conservatives have attacked it as without substance, a rhetorical response to a collapsing U.S. military capability.

The proposals before the Appropriations Committees only cover the funds necessary for the President to use his existing power to register men. His proposal to also register women is before the Armed Services Committee where it is receiving a cool reception.

IMF quota increase before Senate

Treasury Secretary William Miller testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on March 10 and called on Congress to enact S.2271, legislation to increase the United States quota to the International Monetary Fund by \$6 billion. Reflecting increased attacks on the IMF's policy of conditionality (the imposition of economic adjustments on a national economy as a precondition for an IMF loan), Miller went out of his way to defend the policy: "in most cases the sooner needed adjustments can be initiated the better since the longer the adjustment is delayed, the more difficult and painful it will be...but sometimes a country will not approach the fund until the situation is desperate. This is a key point to remember. The Fund does not cause the lack of

foreign exchange that interrupts vitally needed imports."

Attacks on conditionality began to pick up steam after the Brandt Commission attacked the economic stabilization programs of the IMF. The Commission, headed by former West German chancellor Willy Brandt, calls for greater consideration in the formulation of conditionalities on "basic human needs," a euphemism which accepts the enforced backwardness of the Third World under the IMF, but advocates minimal forms of life sustenance and "appropriate technologies."

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Frank Church is reportedly considering offering amendments which would conform to Brandt Commission concerns. Rep. James Cavanaugh, a liberal Democrat from Nebraska, has been running a series of articles on IMF conditionality in the *Congressional Record* and attacking it.

Opposition is expected to arise from conservative Republicans in both the House and the Senate who view U.S. participation in the IMF as a further ceding of U.S. interests to supranational institutions. The open question remains whether those conservatives will begin to couple their traditional opposition to the IMF with the growing calls for a return to a gold-based monetary system coming from such individuals as GOP presidential candidate Ronald Reagan, and Rep. Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.). Capitol Hill observers note that if that occurs, the debate on the IMF quota could take on an entirely different character.