

Congressional Calendar by Barbara Dreyfuss and Susan Kokinda

Nunn opens organized crime hearings

The Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations opened up a three-year-long series of hearings on organized crime and its connection to labor racketeering and narcotics trafficking on April 28 with a first round series of hearings on organized crime and its use of violence.

The first day of hearings saw FBI director William Webster and Drug Enforcement Administration director Peter Bensinger discuss the kind of legislative remedies needed for the federal government to fight "organized crime" more effectively. Among the legislative changes they suggested were: amending the tax reform act so that law enforcement agencies can use tax information and work more closely with the IRS in tracking illegal activities; making murder for hire a federal crime; giving judges greater flexibility in their ability to make sentence reduction offers to criminals in exchange for turning government witness.

But those legislative proposals provide a kind of cover for the Investigations Subcommittee to launch another McClellan-style investigation of "organized crime." The second day of the hearings focused on the Justice Department's Organized Crime Division's "definition" of organized crime as largely equivalent to "La Cosa Nostra," or the Italian mafia.

Capitol Hill observers have noted that since the beginning of Nunn's chairmanship of the sub-

committee and his reorganization of the staff, direction of the subcommittee has been toward emphasis on the Italian mafia, so-called, and cover-up of the Zionist elements who sit above them such as Max Fisher of Detroit, and the Jacobs family of Buffalo, and the London-linked financial elements who sit above them. Committee sources have made no secret of the fact that their ultimate target behind the organized crime investigation is labor unions such as the longshoremen, the teamsters, and the constituency-based politicians who support them.

Pressler calls for reduced U.S. support of NATO

Fresh from a trip to London for the Ditchley Foundation's meeting on NATO, South Dakota Senator Larry Pressler introduced a Senate resolution calling on the United States to reduce its commitment to NATO and to Japanese defense by two percent. Introduced on April 25, Republican Pressler's resolution is couched in budget-cutting rhetoric about American taxpayers bearing a higher per capita burden for NATO support than the European members of NATO. Capitol Hill observers pointed out that Pressler's action came on the heels of U.S. envoy Robert Komer's thinly veiled threats to the Europeans to back the U.S. on the questions of Iran and Afghanistan or face a reduction of U.S. support to NATO.

Pressler, a former Rhodes

Scholar trained at Oxford, attended the Interparliamentary Union meeting in Oslo over the congressional spring recess and was one of a select group of congressmen to be invited to Ditchley's annual gathering on NATO. While avoiding attributing a direct linkage between his proposal and his attendance at the Ditchley meeting, Pressler did say that Europe will not voluntarily offer to increase their support of NATO, "if they can get it for free. We may have to force them over the course of gradual talks."

Bank takeovers supported

On April 16 Citibank President Walter Wriston proposed to a closed meeting of congressmen at the Congressional Clearinghouse that the McFadden Act be abolished. The act prevents the New York banking giants from branching across state lines. Under Wriston's proposals, which also called for deregulation of all U.S. banking, the 14,500 regional banks which now serve local U.S. industry and agriculture would be gobbled up if they run into economic trouble, a very live possibility thanks to the monetary policies of the Federal Reserve Board. "We are trying to help along the birth of the brave new world," declared Wriston to the *Journal of Commerce* a day later. Wriston's congressional audience included the members of the House Banking Committee, who had been invited by chairman Henry Reuss (D-Wisc.), a leading member of the Clearinghouse.

The day after Wriston spoke, Senator William Proxmire (D-Wisc.) chairman of the Senate Banking Committee introduced legislation that would allow for exactly this process to occur. According to Proxmire, his bill, S.2575 would "allow a large bank, savings and loan association or mutual savings bank in receivership to be acquired by another financial institution across state lines." The bill, which was also introduced in the House Banking Committee, was introduced at the request of the bank regulatory agencies, particularly the Federal Reserve. The Senate Banking Committee is waiting until their hearings May 21 on the condition of the banking system before they act on the legislation. They will have the heads of all the regulatory agencies, including Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker, testify and make the case for why such legislation is needed.

Trucking deregulation scheduled for House mark-up

Trucking industry sources report that legislation to largely deregulate the industry is scheduled to go into mark-up on May 8 and 9 in the transportation subcommittee of the House Public Works Committee. President Carter met with committee chairman "Bizz" Johnson (D-Cal.) and subcommittee chairman James Howard (D-N.J.) on April 30 in an apparent attempt to ensure congressional passage of deregulation legislation by June 1, as congressional leaders have

promised. Mark-up of a House version of the Senate bill was expected to occur quickly after the April 8 passage of the Senate bill.

Conference committee completes work on Energy Mobilization Board

The House-Senate Conference Committee, working on the Energy Mobilization Board, has just about concluded their work, with only a few remaining technical difficulties to be ironed out.

The Energy Mobilization Board as envisioned would speed up construction of energy projects targeted by the administration, especially synthetic fuel plants and coal programs. The major difference between the House and Senate had been whether the board would be allowed to waive federal laws that held up projects. The conferees agreed that the board could waive such laws. The conference committee will now issue a final report on their work and send the legislation to both houses for final passage.

Shipping bill passes Senate

The Senate unanimously passed the Ocean Shipping Act of 1980 S.2585 on April 24, a bill which was largely the work of Senator Inouye (D-Ha.). The bill is vastly different from the omnibus shipping bill now being reviewed by the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. The Senate bill is considered a regulatory bill and does not deal with subsidies for ship-building nor

the essential trade routes. The Senate bill legalizes shipping councils and makes the right of independent action by the conference members optional, while the House bill moves toward closed conferences.

The Senate bill also speeds up the regulatory processes of the Federal Maritime Commission. The main focus of the Senate bill is to detail policy for regulating the industry and the bill specifies nine policy objectives to serve as the standards for the Federal Maritime Commission's evaluation of shipping agreements, clarifies and affirms the exemption of concerted activities in ocean shipping from antitrust laws, sets procedures and time limits for FMC approval of agreements and allows greater flexibility in the type of patronage, dual rate contracts offered by carriers and conferences.

The House bill would reopen the essential trade routes, allowing them all to be renegotiated. This has sparked concern that major ports would be closed and shipping seriously disrupted. The House bill also allows for the Secretary of Commerce to review collective bargaining contracts to ascertain if they contribute to the "efficient use" of vessels. The bill also allows shipbuilding abroad to be eligible for subsidies. The House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee is receiving much opposition from ship owners, ship-builders and unions. Rep. McCloskey (R-Cal.) one of the prime sponsors of the bill noted it had one chance in five of being enacted in the drastic form it is now in.