

## Congressional Calendar

### **O**mnibus crime bill pushed by Kennedy

The criminal code reform bill of Senator Edward Kennedy is again before Congress, and Kennedy's intent is to see it rapidly through both houses. The bill would rewrite the criminal laws to allow for increased prosecution of both labor unions and corporations on various grounds and establish sentencing guidelines judges must adhere to. One provision of the bill is that any violence in labor disputes may open a union to federal prosecution for extortion. However, drug-abuse would be decriminalized by a provision that calls for possession of small amounts of marijuana to carry a maximum penalty of only \$500 and 5 days in jail.

The bill passed the Senate last year but was stalled in the House where the conservative-leaning Judiciary subcommittee handling it refused to deal with any omnibus bill. This year, however, the House subcommittee's membership has been changed. It is now headed by a Massachusetts collaborator of Ted Kennedy, Congressman Robert Drinan. On Sept. 7, Kennedy introduced his S.1437, or Omnibus Crime Bill, as well as a slightly different version similar to the House bill. His co-sponsors were the key Republican conservatives on the Judiciary Committee, Senators Thurmond, Hatch, DeConcini and Simpson. Congressman Drinan in-

roduced the legislation last week into the House.

Hearings on the bill began in the Senate Judiciary Committee headed by Kennedy last week. According to a staffer for the House Judiciary subcommittee, "We expect to have it out of subcommittee by early October and the chairman wants to have it out of committee by the end of the session in December. We are moving as fast as we can."

### **S**ubcommittee takes on drugs

The Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Criminal Justice held two days of hearings Sept. 11 and 13 to review the international narcotics trafficking problem and the U.S. government's response to it. Pressure for action against drugs has been building in the country, in connection with the founding of the National Anti-Drug Coalition in Detroit this coming Sept. 29.

Subcommittee chairman Joe Biden (D-Del.) announced that he and Senator Sam Nunn who chairs the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, under Nunn's direction engaging in quiet but extensive probes of organized crime and drug-running, will be coordinating the activities of their subcommit-

tees in an effort to tighten up Congressional oversight and investigations in this area.

Testifying on Sept. 11, Nunn said, "The permanent subcommittee intends to work extensively in the field of narcotics, primarily because drug trafficking is a hotbed of organized criminal activity... Organized crime is no longer limited to any one ethnic group. Today, it is a well-orchestrated, highly sophisticated, businesslike design incorporating many individuals, groups and associations. It no longer is confined to the streets, waterfronts, and back alleys... A large part of this cost can be traced to the organizations which smuggle narcotics into America and distribute it. Not only are we paying overseas producers of illicit drugs, we are seeing an economic drain through large sums of money—most of it profits from drug sales—being laundered through foreign banks and never returned to the U.S."

Also testifying were Peter Bensing, Drug Enforcement Administration chief, Lee Dogoloff, White House Drug Abuse Advisor, and House Select Narcotics Committee Chairman Lester Wolfe (D-NY) who strongly attacked former HEW Secretary Joe Califano and the Carter administration in general for its cut-off of aid to Latin America for the use of paraquat to destroy marijuana.

Capitol Hill sources do not expect much from Biden. His close relationship to Sen. Frank Church, whose connections to the Zionist lobby include connections to drug-runners, will probably preclude a serious effort, they say. But Sam Nunn's subcommittee, operating without publicity, may engage in some serious investigative work.

### **E**nvironmentalists squashed on snail darter

The environmentalists who have stalled a \$100 million Tennessee Valley Authority project on grounds that it would wipe out the "snail darter" and violate the Endangered Species Act were handed a defeat Sept. 10 when the Senate voted 48 to 44 to order completion of the project. Last year a review committee of Congress created to look into the matter recommended the project be halted.

Twice this year the House, which had approved the proposed Tellico Dam which was the part of the project specifically blocked, had sent the matter to the Senate,

where Senator John Culver (Iowa), a close ally and former roommate of Ted Kennedy's at Harvard, spearheaded opposition to the project. This week, the House threatened to veto the entire \$10.8 billion energy and water projects' appropriations bill, which funds projects in every state, unless the TVA program were OK'd. This forced the Senate action.

Interior Secretary Andrus has said that he would recommend that President Carter veto the bill if it contained funding for the Tellico Dam.

### **C**arter synfuels program suffers setback

The month-long Congressional recess has substantially cooled Congressional enthusiasm for President Carter's synthetic fuel program. Recognizing the loss of support, the administration accepted a compromise proposal Sept. 11, which cuts his proposed 80 to 90 plants down to 20 or 30 in the initial stages. After mark-up hearings in both the Senate Energy and Finance committees, during which aspects of the original proposal

were torn to shreds, two things became clear: Senate Finance Committee Chairman Russell Long is not going to approve a crude oil windfall-profits tax which would yield revenues as large as that demanded by Carter, nor will Long turn such revenues over solely for the financing of synfuels. Also, the Senate Energy Committee is balking at the magnitude and speed with which Carter wants to construct his plants.

By cutting the initial size of the project by one-third, Carter hopes to avoid a direct confrontation with Long, which he would lose, and to garner support from the Energy Committee. Whether his compromise fares any better than the original remains to be seen.

### **E**lection laws shift

The House by a voice vote on Sept. 10 passed legislation changing the 1971 Federal Election Campaign Act to simplify reporting by Congressional candidates. Under new regulations, the candidates would only have to file 9 reports over a two-year time span. Those candidates spending less than \$5,000 would not have to file. At the same time, state and local political committees were given the authority for unlimited purchases of campaign materials for volunteer activities such as buttons and signs.