

Observations on Congress From an Inside Viewpoint

By Harris Ellsworth, M.C.,
4th District of Oregon

In spite of the fact that the entire committee structure of the House of Representatives was torn up and put back together again by the Congressional Reorganization Act, organization of all of the committees of the House has already been completed. The House now has only nineteen committees, eighteen of which are legislative. One, the Rules Committee, determines the order in which bills come to the floor of the House, and does not act on any legislation. Four of the eighteen are minor, and members of these may also serve on one major committee. Otherwise, members of the House have but one committee each. The committees generally have 25 or 27 members. Those having 27 members, have 16 Republicans and 11 Democrats. Those having 25 members, have 15 Republicans and 10 Democrats. The majority party always has a substantial majority on all committees.

Each bill is referred to a committee when it is introduced. There, all of the detailed work on it is done, so that, when the bill is brought to the floor, it is usually in such shape that it is passed or rejected by the House. The committees of Congress are, therefore, extremely important. Service on a committee is a very important part of the work of a member.

Oregon Men Fare Well
Seniority—the length of consecutive service of a member—has the greatest effect on his opportunity to choose his com-

mittee. Fortunately, all four members of the House from the State of Oregon have sufficient seniority in the 80th Congress to permit them to obtain excellent committee assignments. In fact, all four of us were given the assignments we requested. Homer Angell of Portland is ranking member on the Public Works Committee, which handles rivers and harbors, flood control, public works and buildings of all sorts, and roads. Lowell Stockman, who represents the eastern Oregon district, was made a member of the Appropriations Committee. Walter Norblad, representing the northwestern portion of the state, is on the Armed Services Committee, which is the consolidation of the Military Affairs and Naval Affairs Committee.

I was appointed to the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, which I have always considered one of the most important committees in Congress. This committee handles legislation dealing with interstate and foreign commerce generally, regulation of the interstate and foreign transportation, regulation of interstate and foreign communications, civil aeronautics, weather bureau, interstate oil and gas compact, securities and exchanges, regulation of interstate transmission of power, railroad labor and railroad retirement and unemployment, public health and quarantine, inland waterways and the Bureau of Standards. You can readily see, from the above list, that the jurisdiction of my

committee covers a wide range of important subjects. I feel certain that my membership on this committee will give me greater opportunity for constructive service to my district and the State of Oregon than I have had previously.

Marcantonio Left Out

Committee assignments on the Republican side of the aisle are worked out by a Committee on Committees, which is made up of one member from each of the forty-eight states. On the Democratic side of the aisle, the assignments are made by the Democratic members of the Ways & Means Committee. Apparently, 434 members of the House of Representatives are fairly well satisfied with their assignments, but one member, Vito Marcantonio of New York, is not. He is a member of the American Labor Party, and does not claim affiliation with either of the major parties. When the Republicans made their committee assignments, they took the position that, since Marcantonio had received both the Democratic and American Labor Party nominations in his district, he should be taken care of by the Democrats. When the Democrats made their committee assignments, they took the position that it had long been customary for the majority party of the House (which has far more committee seats to assign) to take care of assignments for members of minor parties. The result is that, as this is written, Marcantonio has no committee assignment.

The three major problems which will be considered during this session of Congress are reduction of federal spending, taxation and labor legislation. As usual, numerous minor bills will be introduced, but the concentration of the leadership will be on those three subjects.

Sawyer Fatally Hurt

SALEM, Ore., Jan. 23.—(AP)—Albert Seay, 40, died last night in a hospital of injuries received when pinned against a wall by a

log at the Charles K. Spaulding sawmill. Mill officials said the sawyer was caught where he stood operating the saw when a log jumped from the carrier.

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By JOHN REESE



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