

## WASHINGTON REPORT

Congressman Edwin D. Eshleman

16th District—Pennsylvania



Very recently, the Education and Labor Committee on which I serve reported its first piece of major legislation — The Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Having cleared the committee, the bill becomes a matter for consideration by the entire House of Representatives. Obviously, this is an important legislative issue to the field of education, but it is important, I think, for some other reasons too. Primarily,

this bill represents the first skirmish in the 91st Congress over the shape of existing social legislation.

There is some contention in Washington that the Democrats in the Congress are determined to buck any attempts by the Nixon Administration to revise or eliminate "Great Society" programs. As the only House Committee overwhelmingly dominated by Great Society advocates, the Education and Labor panel is sure to become the Congressional breeding ground for Democratic alternatives to Nixon Administration proposals. The committee passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was the first hint that the Democrats intend to use E&L as custodian of a major share of the social legislation enacted in the Johnson Administration.

Over the objections of the Republican members of the committee, the Act was reported with substantially the same contents as formulated during the past four years, and more importantly, was extended to include the next five years. This means that the Nixon Administration could have no opportunity to secure passage of its own ideas in an area as vital as aid

to schools. The Administration may have no chance, for instance, to seek better and more efficient ways of financing this massive program.

How can such a situation arise? Democrats control House committees, as well as the House itself, by varying margins. But in the House, and in all the committees except Education and Labor, the Republican minority frequently has the opportunity to put together a working majority. Alone among the committees, all 20 of E&L's Democrats are primarily committed to furthering the kinds of social legislation generally associated with the Great Society.

I don't want this to sound like sour grapes, because I am all too familiar with the frustrations of the legislative process. But I am concerned that the pattern that seems to be developing in my committee could stalemate even the most responsible attempts to change the course of domestic policies. Such a Democratic stranglehold will be a blockade to any efforts to revamp a large portion of

Federal-aid programs including the controversial war on poverty. It seems pretty clear that the American people desire some new approaches to our national problems and I find real cause for wondering whether the Education and Labor Committee will answer that desire. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act

### Barnacle Goose

In medieval times the fact that no eggs or goslings of the species were ever found gave rise to the legend that the barnacle goose emerged, fully developed, from barnacles, hence its name.

maneuverings were not a particularly hopeful sign.

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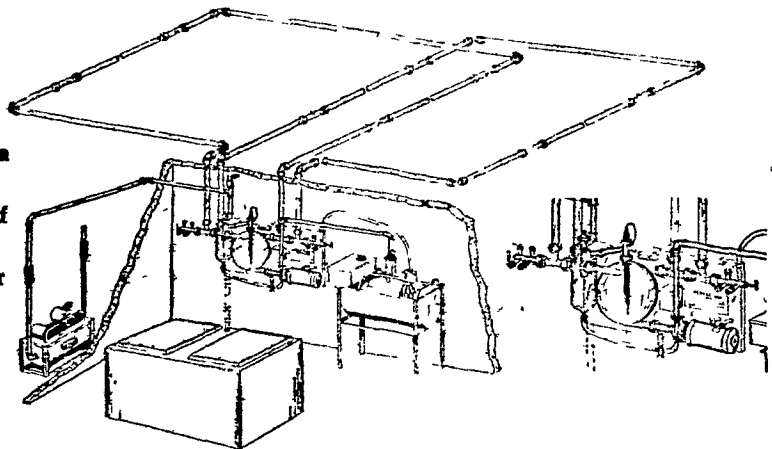
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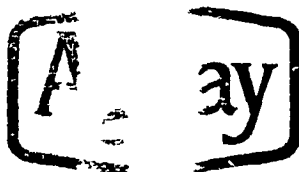
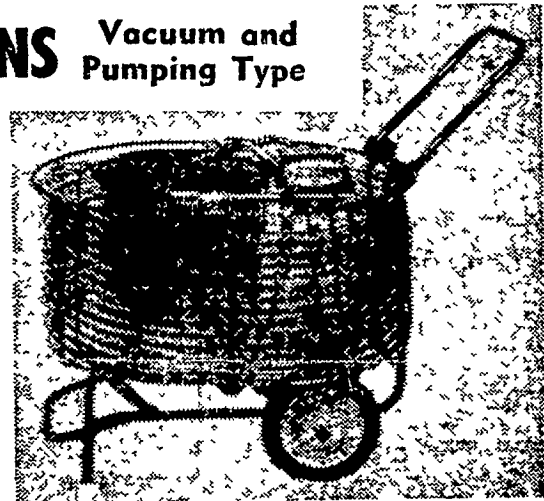
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