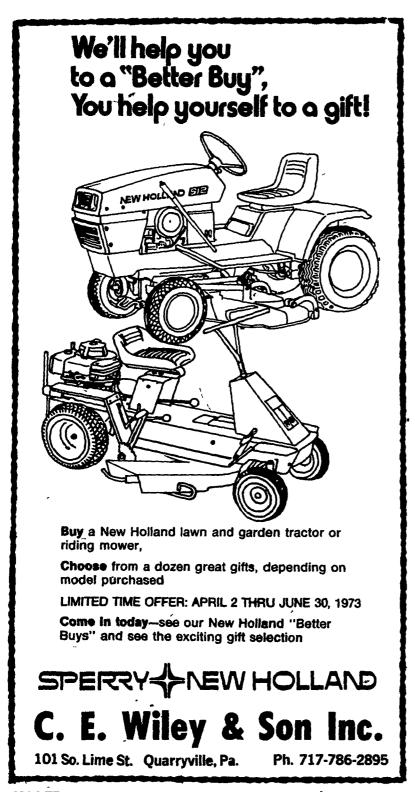
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ED ESHLE Scan any Congressman's Representatives acts on a piece

voting record and you will find instances where it seems to be inconsistent. Those inconsistencies puzzle many people and cause some to question whether their Representative has any firm opinions.

The confusion results from the legislative process that often requires two, three or as many as five different votes on the same bill. That is, several votes on a bill that has the same number and title, but not necessarily the same language.

Why so many votes and why would the bill change between votes? The first time the House of

of legislation is as it emerges from the committee which considered it. The language adopted by the committee is debated on the House floor and amendments may be added. Then we either vote the legislation up or down.

If the bill clears the House, it goes to the Senate for consideration. More than likely, the Senate will make some changes in the language, and may even change the entire intent and thrust of the bill as originally approved by the House.

Any differences between House and Senate versions of the legislation must be resolved by a

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conference committee, and then we vote on the conference committee's report.

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Depending on which version of the bill dominates the conference committee's compromise proposal, a Congressman's vote can change. If the Senate version is at odds with the original House bill, and the conference committee has adopted most of the Senate language, a Representative may find himself opposed to a bill he originally favored. This is true even though the bill carries its original title and number.

Still another vote can come if the legislation is sent to the White House and vetoed there. At this point, the priorities that a Congressman has previously used in determining his vote may have to be revised to reflect the national priorities outlined by the President.

For example, a vote on legislation the first time through and even the second time through can be based on a Representative's evaluation of his District's priorities. He can vote for spending money to do things that his District feels are most important.

But, a Presidential veto often causes a Representative to evaluate those District needs and desires more in light of the national interest. Congress has a habit of spending money for a little of everything and thereby causing deficits, inflation and increasing the possibility of new taxes. If the President is right that the spending in a bill favored by a Representative could break the budget and cause national economic problems, a vote against the bill after the veto may be in order. In other words, new circumstances require new thinking.

The role of a legislator requires that he be flexible and realistic. Too often, it is those two things that make the legislative process seem indecisive or wishy-washy. But, in fact, it is flexibility and realism that result in the compromises needed in developing any piece of legislation.



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