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Congressmen Are Wondering

Watchdog Plan on Research Seen

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Congressmen are wondering how they can investigate overlapping in Government - supported science projects without engaging in a lot of overlapping themselves.

The House Rules Committee is considering several bills to set up a special five-man committee to check how Government money is spent for research. But even the bills' sponsors admit such a body would tread on grounds already reserved and, to some extent, occupied by established committees.

These committees include Armed Services, Science and Astronautics, Agriculture, Appropriations, Government Operations and Atomic Energy.

TOO VAST

Rep. Chet Holifield (D., Calif.), chairman of the Military Operations sub-committee and vice chairman of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, thinks the job of overseeing research projects should be left to the committees originally charged with the job.

Overseeing \$14.4 billion in research grants is too vast and complex a task for any five congressmen and a hastily organized staff, Rep. Holifield said. The bills would require the special committee to report "any deficiencies" in research before September, 1964.

Rep. Carl Elliott (D., Ala.), a Rules Committee member who sponsored one of the bills, said someone must start co-ordinating research projects, since Government outlays for them have been increasing at the rate of a billion dollars a year for the past 10 years.

At the opening of hearings on the bill, Rules Committee chairman Howard W. Smith (D., Va.) engaged in a popular sport among some congressmen—poking fun at the titles of research projects backed by the National Science Foundation.

He mentioned "fishing trips" to study Venezuelan shellfish and Pacific crabs,

and studies of the evolution of box turtles, the protein structure in birds, and the biology of birds and butterflies. He also pointed out that \$64,000 had been granted for studying "resistance to persuasion."

QUIP

"I thought Adam and Eve settled that question long ago," Smith Rep. quipped.

"Many of us scoff at the things in science, because we don't understand them," countered chairman George P. Miller (D., Calif.) of the Science and Astronautics Committee, a strong opponent of the bills.

"Often things that seem trivial to us are the very things scientists use to relieve human pain and prolong human life."