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Florence P. Dwyer

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REPORT TO THE PEOPLE

by CONGRESSWOMAN

FLORENCE P. DWYER



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The Administration's Civil Rights legislation, which I was privileged to introduce in the House in cooperation with Rep. Kenneth B. Keating of New York, is presently facing its greatest hurdle.

That hurdle is the House Rules Committee, which recently received the Civil Rights bill from the Judiciary Committee. The Rules Committee is headed by Re. Howard W. Smith of Virginia - an outspoken opponent of Civil Rights legislation.

This is a crucial step in the progress of any legislation, for - after a bill is cleared by its originating committee - it is the Rules Committee which determines when, if ever, it will come up for action by the House. In other words, the Rules Committee holds the power of life or death over all legislation.

Talk in the House cloakrooms is that the Civil Rights bill, faced with Rep. Smith's opposition, may be blocked in the Rules Committee for a month or longer. But supporters of the legislation say they will have enough votes in a showdown to ultimately clear the bill from committee.

Incidentally, although the bill was weakened somewhat in committee through minor modifications, it still retains important provisions of the President's four-point Civil Rights program, including the "right-to-vote" measure and the

establishment of a subpoena-empowered bipartisan Commission on Civil Rights.

POLIO VACCINE HEARINGS BEGIN

There are few committees in the Congress which have the power to sit while Congress is in session. The House Government Operations Committee, of which I am a member, is one of these.

The Committee's Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee, on which I am serving as ranking minority member, currently is engaged in important hearings which necessitate the absence of its members from the floor of the House for at least a portion of the time Congress is in session each day.

The subcommittee is holding the hearings to determine the answers to two questions:

1. Why is there a shortage in the nation's Salk polio vaccine at this time?
2. Why did the demand for polio vaccine drop off so sharply last summer that it became necessary for the five pharmaceutical companies manufacturing the vaccine to curtail their production?

So far, we have been hearing testimony by officials of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, including Dr. Leroy E. Burney, the nation's Surgeon General.

These hearings should be of particular interest to New Jersey, for our State is one of 15 in the nation that have expended all of their vaccine fund allotments under the Poliomyelitis Vaccination Assistance Act. New Jersey's allotment was \$1,151,303. As of March 17, the State's supply of vaccine totaled 115,000 cc's.

The 100 per cent expenditure of funds indicates that New Jersey has utilized the Federal vaccine program to the fullest extent. However, the state's present

backlog of vaccine will be far from adequate if the present shortage should continue through the polio season.

A CONGRESSWOMAN'S "MAIDEN SPEECH"

Traditionally, one of the big events in the life of a freshman member of Congress is the "maiden speech" - the delivery of a member's first speech from the floor of the House.

One of the first things I was asked by the press corps in Washington after I was sworn in as a member of the 85th Congress was:

"When will you make your maiden speech?"

Veteran members of the House also waited for we "freshmen" to make our first speeches, wondering how capable we would be in voicing our opinions.

Recently, I had the opportunity to make my "maiden speech". I was given permission by House Speaker Rayburn to address the House for 10 minutes in support of legislation I had introduced that day for establishment of a Foreign Service Academy.

Everything went smoothly, and I was particularly heartened when Minority Leader Martin and several other of the Congressional veterans congratulated me.

MORE ACTION ON ECONOMY

President Eisenhower's request to Administration officials to explore all possibilities for curtailing spending on non-essential projects is producing encouraging results, I am happy to report.

The Housing and Home Finance Agency has now cut its 1958 budget estimates by \$200 million, and Secretary of Agriculture Benson has indicated he will cooperate with Congress in making reductions in his Department's \$5.3 billion budget.

Meanwhile, in the House we are continuing to make a determined effort to effect sound economies. Last week, for example, we voted for a \$517 million cut in funds requested in the proposed 1958 budget by 18 governmental agencies.

Members of the House Appropriations Committee have told me that House action on the first four major 1958 appropriation bills has resulted in a 6.4 per cent savings.