

Russell Long Holds All Carter's Chips

By Art Pine

By a Washington Post Staff Writer

President Carter seems likely to wind up his dealings with Congress later this year in an eleventh-hour gambling session that has seen more-experienced presidents go under—a legislative poker game in which Sen. Russell B. Long (D-La.) holds all the aces.

Although it's too early to tell precisely how things will turn out, most of the signs so far indicate the wily Senate Finance Committee chairman is apt to head virtually all the House-Senate conference committees that will handle Carter's major legislative proposals.

And with Congress adjourning early because of the November elections, it's likely that most of these bills will be in conference at the same time. As a result, Long will have even more opportunity than he's had before for under-the-table bargaining on key legislative issues.

"At the end, it's just going to be Russell Long, sitting there having the major say on most of Jimmy Carter's programs," says one longtime congressional observer who has tracked the Louisiana's dealings with previous presidents.

"If Carter thinks Congress has been difficult to deal with so far, he hasn't seen anything yet. Russell Long will be sitting there, saying what goes and doesn't go in all his key legislation. The president won't even know what hit him until it's all over," he said.

The ploy isn't a new one. Almost every year for the past decade or so, Long has been sitting in the catbird seat, trading in this or that chip for heat-of-the-finish compromises, and effectively reshaping entire presidential programs in a few afternoons.

But this year, lingering stalemates in the counterpart Ways and Means panel and the House-Senate energy conference committees have enlarged the end-of-session pot to include virtually all of Carter's big legislative proposals. Among those on the list:

- The big \$20 billion tax-reduction bill. Because of a fight over the "reform" provision—and a Republican bid to cut capital gains taxes—it'll be lucky to make it over to the Senate before autumn.

- The energy bill. Although the conferees are scheduled to meet on Thursday, there's no indication yet that they'll finish quickly. Final decisions on the energy package may come in September or October.

- Welfare reform. Ways and Means is only beginning work on Carter's big welfare package, and probably won't take it up in earnest until after members finish the president's tax package.

- Tuition tax credit legislation. The House in this case has passed a tuition credit measure, but the bill still is waiting for Senate action—in line with a slew of other bills.

- Hospital cost-containment. This measure, crucial to Carter's pledge for a national health insurance program, isn't exactly zipping through the House. Long favors a different approach.

- Miscellaneous measures. Add to this a series of other bills important to the administration: the tax portion of the aircraft noise-abatement measure, the tax treatment of Americans living abroad, a bill affecting income taxes paid by heirs, and oil-import fees or quotas.

Moreover, on many of these issues, Long has given only a hint of where his views lie—leaving his options open for last-minute trading later in the session. (On the tax bill, for example, he's said only he thinks \$25 billion is a good net figure. No word



University Independence at Issue

Gene-Splicing Debate Heats Up Again

By Philip J. Hiltz
Washington Post Staff Writer

The rush to commercialize gene-splicing techniques has created a financial dilemma for universities and stirred a bitter new debate in the academic community, researchers told the American Association for the Advancement of Science yesterday.

The debate comes on the now-cooled heels of a long argument over the safety and regulation of gene-splicing, they said.

Several researchers said that gene-splicing companies' financial deals with universities or with individual professors threaten the independence and quality of university research.

Otto Solbrig, a Harvard University botanist, listed several dangers that occur when universities ally themselves with companies in order to earn cash for their coffers.

Secrecy, common in industry because companies want to protect their product lines from imitation and competition, can also become

common in universities when they stand to profit from commercial use of their research.

Universities also may begin to favor researchers whose work is profitable rather than scientifically important.

The biggest danger, Solbrig said, is that professors and university departments with financial ties to companies can no longer play the important role of disinterested commentator on such important issues as nuclear energy and the ethics of new biology.

Solbrig and others recommended that university professors be prohibited from holding an interest in a company, or being a director or manager of a company. Some biologists now hold both professorships and financial interests in biotechnology companies, according to biologist Jonathan King of MIT.

Researchers also reviewed the six-year debate over the safety of the splicing technology through which genes are transferred from one organism to another.

Donald Frederickson, who was director of the National Institutes of Health when federal regulations governing gene-splicing experiments were enacted, admitted that there was a conflict of interest when the agency funded most of the research also was the regulating agency.

But he said experience proved that the regulation was well carried out and the public was well represented.

The debate over the safety of gene-splicing has now cooled, researchers said, but as the process becomes commercial, new issues will arise and the debate will go on in a different form.