

Congress Adjourns After One Of Longest Sessions in History

(From Senator Gruening's Newsletter)

WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 22—In a last-minute rush to adjournment after one of the longest sessions in history, the Senate on December 15 passed and cleared for the President's signature four major pieces of legislation.

Included in the last day's action were a supplemental appropriations bill, which

included operating funds for the Office of Economic Opportunity, the elementary and secondary education amendments of 1967, foreign aid appropriations for fiscal year 1968, and the controversial social security amendments of 1967.

Adjournment for the House of Representatives came at 6:36 p.m., and when the Senate adjourned 14 minutes later, the first session of the 90th Congress became history.

The 90th Congress had met in January in the midst of a feeling that President Johnson's programs would meet stiff congressional opposition because of increased Republican representation in the House of Representatives and because of a growing concern that the country would be hard-pressed to afford both the war in Vietnam and the far-reaching domestic programs which had been authorized by the 89th Congress.

As a matter of fact, Congress dealt roughly with many of the President's requests. For example, the Office of Economic Opportunity had to fight for survival. The foreign aid appropriation was the smallest in the history of the program. The President's request for funds for the model cities program was cut almost in half.

Initially, a good part of

the Senate's time was spent in putting its own house in order. Debate on a legislative reorganization bill consumed several of the opening weeks of the session.

As passed by the Senate the bill, S. 355, would provide for major changes in committee procedures and would strengthen fiscal control and information sources to permit Congress to function more efficiently. However, the House took no action on the bill.

Both houses of Congress faced the problem of judging the conduct of their members. The House denied Adam Clayton Powell his seat because of his alleged misuse of funds as chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee.

The Senate censured Sen. Thomas Dodd, whom the Senate Select Committee on Ethics and Standards had found to have used campaign funds for personal purposes.

Any Congress would suffer in comparison with the monumental accomplishments of the 89th Congress. However, the first session of the 90th Congress did amass a number of significant legislative achievements.