

tion such as Vietnam, a war on poverty, programs for the cities, and so forth, what can you do to establish priorities among all programs and identify those that are not nearly as vital when related to these new needs that are urgent and must be met?

Mr. STEIN. Well, that is very hard. I do not think we are on the brink of any fiscal crisis. I think we are suffering, the Congress is suffering, the country is suffering from schizophrenia at one time recognizing new very important national needs which call for a readjustment of priorities and some new view of the size of the Federal Government relative to the economy we are willing to tolerate and, on the other hand, not quite having made up our minds to carry through with the implications of this and the cost that will be involved and dragging our heels and wanting to make the best of both worlds, as we always do. But I think the situation is more critical now because we have this combination of the Vietnam war and the sudden awareness of new national needs.

Probably as a realistic prediction this is something we are going to handle slowly, although I think that we will readjust our programs and our priorities gradually. And, of course, the end of the Vietnam war would be of great assistance.

I think you just have to try to elicit some more valid national discussion of this kind of thing than we have been having, to try to raise the level of the national discussion. Perhaps this committee could do something about it. I would hope that others can.

I do not see any parliamentary devices that are going to bring 19th century people into the 20th century.

Mr. CAPRON. Senator, I wonder if I could just add a comment referring back to the discussion you and I had a moment ago about the structure of the Congress.

At least based on the experience I had when I was part of the administration, I can say with a good deal of confidence that at least at the Presidential level there is a good deal of willingness to cut back or eliminate old programs which have served their purpose and no longer have the priority given the other newer and very urgent demands that we face. There is in the Congress, and partly because of the way Congress is structured—and I am saying this respectfully—the individual legislative substantive committee and the individual subcommittee on appropriations for any given program and these committees will view that program “internally,” as it were, and they will be, I think, convinced honestly that many purposes look important to them, which, if they took a larger perspective would look as if they have a pretty small claim to a major place in Federal spending. I think if something could be done in the Congress to focus more attention on this question of really making the trade offs and the comparisons across programs that we might be able to meet at least a part of this dilemma, this problem that you and Mr. Stein were just discussing.

It is very frustrating, I know, sitting in the Bureau of the Budget, to recognize that some of the things that you would like to cut back or even cut out are just not in the cards at all, and that a President either wastes his political capital if he recommends them or gets himself in real political hot water if he does because powerful interests will be affected, and this is a real dilemma.