

Re-Reorganization

CONGRESSIONAL eyes bulged last January when President Roosevelt handed Congress his plan to streamline the executive branch of the Government. He asked (1) six special assistants at \$10,000 per year to act as contact men between the White House and the various departments, (2) two new cabinet offices to handle social welfare and public works, (3) a reshuffling and consolidation of boards and bureaus, (4) extension of civil service "upward, outward, and downward," (5) an "auditor general" to supplant the all-powerful Controller General.

A special committee under Louis Brownlow had taken ten months to draft this big blueprint for the President. House and Senate promptly appointed committees of their own to study it. But by last week this mountain of labor had produced a legislative mouse.

The Senate committee headed by James F. Byrnes, South Carolina Democrat, began public hearings on executive reorganization—merely to fulfill a promise made to the late Joe Robinson. On the other side of the Capitol, the House had done hardly more. After two hours of wisecracking, it had empowered the President to appoint the six suggested secretaries. The debate was studded with sarcasm.

With sly reference to the Roosevelt Supreme Court measures, Harold Knutson, Minnesota Republican, tried to amend the bill so that "no person appointed to any of these positions shall be over 70 years of age." Dewey Short, Missouri Republican, asked whether the President can "secure quicker and more accurate information from these satellites and sycophants, these theoretical, intellectual, professorial nincompoops who could not be elected dog catcher in any jurisdiction in the United States, than he could from the true leaders of his own party, the chairmen of congressional committees, and members of his own Cabinet."

Because "these six administrative assistants will be nothing more than flunkies or errand boys," he demanded that to two of the posts the President appoint his grandchildren "Sistie" and "Buzzie" Dall.