

CONGRESS

Limiting Terms on Capitol Hill

Efforts inch ahead to cut interests by capping service; one senator says he'll retire voluntarily

By John Dillin

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Another reformer, Rep. Craig James (R) of Florida, complains that "career politicians" have taken over Capitol Hill in place of

that may be what we are witnessing."

Humphrey observes that lifetime politicians are now common

often," Mr. Keating says. "The special interests would go broke trying to buy off Congress if terms were limited. They couldn't keep

Soviet Union Faces Information-Age Hurdles

By Simson L. Garfinkel

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

NEW ORLEANS

‘THERE are more than 50 million personal computers in the United States. There are less than a million in the Soviet Union,’ said Yuri Gulyaev, director of the Institute of Radio Engineering and Electronics of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

“As the director of the biggest institute in the academy of sciences, I have no fax yet,” Dr. Gulyaev continued, explaining that the disparity in the number of computers between the two countries is a symptom, rather than the cause, of the Soviet Union’s tremendous lag behind

the US in information sciences.

“If we were given more computers, we would not use them,” Gulyaev said. Before Soviet society can make widespread use of computers, fax machines, and the other trappings of the modern world, it must undergo a process of “informatization,” a word which that country has coined to describe its process of changing society to allow and promote the exchange of information, both internally and with foreign countries.

Gulyaev’s comments were the unexpected conclusion of a panel on informatization of Soviet society at the American Association for the Advancement of Science’s annual meeting in New Orleans. The panel, made up of a team of American specialists who visited the Soviet Union last year for two

weeks, discussed the current level of computer technology in the Soviet Union, as well as the expected impacts of the information age on Soviet cities, libraries, and society at large. Gulyaev happened to be at the conference.

BEFORE the Soviet Union can reap the benefits of informatization, it must change its laws regulating the ownership of private property and private means of production, Gulyaev said, or there will be no economic incentive to make effective use of information. If changes are not adopted, improved communications and data-processing capabilities might even be harmful, as it would allow for greater control and micro-management of Soviet factories by higher levels of government.

“Informatization will be needed and financed automatically, if proper laws will be accepted by the Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR and put into life,” he said, predicting that any attempts to computerize the Soviet economy without reforms would result in chaos. He estimated that it might take 20 years before the Soviet Union has a similar number of computers, fax machines, and telephones as the West.

“The problem is not producing enough equipment but producing the economic environment so that the people have a need for it,” elaborated James Beniger, a professor at the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School of Communications and a member of the panel.