

Washington Digest

Public Health Bill Faces Tough Battle in Congress

By BAUKHAGE
News Analyst and Commentator.

WASHINGTON.—The dim roar of an approaching battle in congress is being heard over the horizon. The struggle will concern S.1320, the national health insurance and public health bill.

This measure was opposed in the last session by an organization formed by the American Medical association which turned out to be, in terms of dollars spent, the biggest lobby in Washington, and that is a record.

Why does the medical association oppose the bill? Supporters of the legislation say because the majority of the doctors, like the majority of the people in the country don't understand it.



BAUKHAGE

Many doctors think it would foul up their practice of medicine with politics. Many also say it would destroy normal patient-physician relations because the patient would have to take what medical treatment he could get on an assembly-line basis. This latter assumption is based on a misapprehension of what is actually in the bill which I'll mention later.

The former charge is a prediction and can't be answered categorically. I can understand it. When I was in college, I got a summer job on the Chautauqua daily. Chautauqua is a pretty big summer community, and health is important. A young medical student friend of mine whose father had a pull got the job of inspecting cowbarns of farmers supplying milk to Chautauqua. I made the rounds with him once. He examined the bovine living conditions thoroughly and some were pretty vile. He made notes and put them in a report recommending that purchases from a particular farmer be suspended until the barns were cleaned up.

What happened? He got a sharp call-down from his superior. After that, inspection consisted in opening cow-barn doors, holding the nose, and looking the other way.

That happened many years ago, and I have heard that Chautauqua county is noted for its model dairies. But there is always a lurking suspicion that when a politician puts his finger in the pie it turns sour.

The only specific answer to this charge of politics that I have discovered is one offered in a pamphlet gotten out by the Federation of Women's Clubs which says: "the plan allows for the representation of the people paying for it."

Perhaps a better answer lies in the fact that the American Federation of Labor and the CIO, both of whose leaders know just about as much about how politically-controlled institutions operate as any organization heads in the country, favor the bill. It has been supported by many individual doctors and by the Physicians Forum, and the Committee of Physicians for the Improvement of Medical Care.

But what is "it," this national health insurance bill? Are you familiar with its purpose, what it proposes to do and how it proposes to do it?

Let's go back. What was the most shocking revelation in the World War II draft statistics? I'd be willing to bet the thing that most painfully surprised the whole country was that one-third of our youth of military age was unhealthy.

Out of fifteen million registrants, five million were rejected for physical or mental disabilities. Rural residents as a group were even less healthy. Forty-one out of each 100 rural registrants were turned down as 4-Fs. It had been just the opposite in World War I when farmers outdistanced city folk in good health.

From these figures, we suddenly discovered that the American youth wasn't such a hale and hearty individual as we had thought. Later, as you may not know, we learned that 325,000 Americans die every year who could be saved with proper medical care.

About twenty per cent of our people can afford all the medical care they need.

Half our families—those with an income of \$3,000 a year or less—find it hard, if not impossible—to pay for even routine medical care.

Thirty per cent of our families in the \$3,000 to \$5,000-a-year bracket would have to go into debt or make other sacrifices to meet the cost of severe or chronic illness.

So you can see why America is twenty-three per cent unhealthy.

From the beginning Americans have believed that sound minds are the responsibility of the state, hence the public school system. A sound mind isn't much good in an unsound body. So, say the supporters of the national health insurance bill, it is logical and thoroughly in keeping with American principles to tax everybody so that everybody can get medical care. They argue that freedom from persecution by germs is

as much the business of the whole people as freedom from persecution, censorship, or any of the other restrictions our ancestors came to America to avoid.

I won't go into the history of the bill. It was written after years of study, six years of public hearings before congressional committees. Those who have opposed the measure have made their chief argument a contention that it would be another step toward a socialized state, that it would indeed socialize the medical profession. On point one, the supporters say truthfully "that argument was once raised against the public schools, city water-works, municipal sewage systems, electric light and power plants, which are now accepted as a matter of course."

Under the national health insurance bill, the federal government would collect the money and manage it along with the social security fund which it does now, disburse it to the states for the services rendered by the doctors and approve of the various state set-ups.

The actual arrangements for the services of the doctors who would go right on with their private practices as well if they wanted to, would be made between doctor and patient. The patient, unless his family doctor refused to join up, would have his services just the same, only they would be free. The doctor wouldn't have to accept any patient he didn't want.

Part of the money would go to the states for research, medical education and various preventive services. How much would it cost? One and one-half per cent of your earnings up to \$3,600 which your employer would match. If you are self-employed, you would pay three per cent up to \$3,600 of your own earnings. And that, say the bill's proponents is no more than you pay now (on the average) to a voluntary group health agency if you belong to one and it's less than you would pay to a private physician.

Physicians' rates and mode of payment will be established by the vote of the majority of the physicians in the given area or locality.

Since the worst shortage of doctors is in rural areas, it is expected that with assurance of adequate pay through the national insurance fund, more physicians will be attracted to those areas. Also the fund will help to expand local public health services, rural hospital and ambulance service.

Aside from the poorer health in farm communities, maternal mortality is higher and, as every farmer knows, accidents are high. There are 54 deaths per 100,000 population on farms, only 20 per 100,000 in industry.

In the controversy over this measure both sides point to the experience of other countries. They claim the national insurance system was inaugurated in Germany in 1883. One American Medical association member says medical care declined under it. He probably knows more about it than I, but the statement was certainly a surprise.

Similar complaints have been made against a similar plan which has just been inaugurated in Britain. But a recent poll taken in England says 91 per cent of the physicians have joined up which would seem to show they approved of the way it works even if they opposed it in the beginning. And the people voted it the most popular measure passed by the present government. The British Medical association did not oppose the bill as a whole but fought against certain portions, particularly those which they thought might make them "servants of the state."

These facts I have checked as nearly as I can and I do not believe they will be disputed. As to the opinions, they remain as such. And you can't look into the future. From what I can learn, the supporters of the bill believe that it will be one of the first introduced in the new congress, that it will reach the floor by February and that the chances for its passage are good.

Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogoch is said by the National Geographic Society to be the longest place-name in the world. But it's no good for a cross-word puzzle.

Coconut chips are now available in five-ounce tins. They may be used as snacks for bridge parties, but the red, white and blue ones still will be preferred for poker.

You'll never find a sandpiper and a fiddler crab playing in the same orchestra.



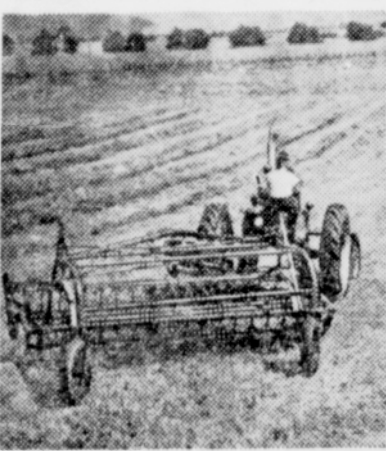
Company Improves Side Delivery Rake Completely Engineered For Power Operations

A new side-delivery rake, engineered from the ground up for power take-off raking and tedding, and completely designed for mechanized farming is now in production.

Manufacturers declare that a "history of the side-delivery rake, which is the machine you see piling up long rows of hay, straw and other crops for baling, shows that there has been little or no change in the machine since the advent of the tractor. It is the first all-new rake in 50 years."

Exclusive features of the rake are the floating reel and basket which permits use of the full length of the 64 pairs of raking teeth at all times and a positive chain pitch control which changes the angle of the teeth for different raking conditions.

Two speeds forward and one speed for tedding, or reverse raking, permit the operation of the



First change in the mechanized side-delivery farm rake since the advent of the tractor is shown here. It has been engineered anew from the ground up and has floating reel and basket.

rake at high tractor speeds. The four-bar reel is V-belt powered from the chain-driven power take-off.

The rake is this manufacturer's third contribution toward complete mechanization of haymaking. A first one-man, twine-tying pick-up baler produced commercially, and the new field bale loader already have cut huge chunks from the farmer's haymaking schedule.

Support for Bossy



This scantily-clad bovine beauty attracted wolf whistles at the second annual National Farm show in Chicago by appearing in a newly designed under support. The novel "unmentionable" is said by the manufacturer to increase a cow's milk yield by 35 per cent.

New Animal Repellent Will Lessen Free Meals

Animal wildlife will find free lunches fewer and farther between next year. A new product developed by the B. F. Goodrich chemical company and tested by the state of Maine fish and game department at its Swan Island wildlife refuge, may be just what farmers have been seeking.

At Swan Island, the new material has been sprayed on leafy crops by biologists who observe that it will not wash off and that a deer, after nipping at the treated leaves, will turn up his nose at future free meals. Certain types of insects also are discouraged by the action of the repellent, researchers revealed.

Crop damage by raiding wild deer runs in excess of \$150,000 annually in some districts of Maine and amounts to millions nationally. The search for satisfactory repellents has been a major project.

Beef Cattle Reported Liking Citrus Molasses

Beef cattle really go for citrus molasses. Cattle having access to this feed not only have shown no hesitation about lapping it up from troughs, but have seemed to prefer it.

Cattlemen feeding the molasses are using a combination of trough and drum molasses for making the material available to their animals. The trough used is 30 inches wide and about 12 feet long.



Second Time Around

THE MOST important spot in any baseball player's career is the second time around. It is the sophomore year, not the freshman year, that counts.

Naturally a ballplayer likes to look good that first season to get his chance, but too many of them have suddenly hit the soapy chute after a fine initial campaign, much to the sorrow of some optimistic manager.

Among those who will be closely watched next season will be: Al Dark, the Braves' shortstop; Richie Ashburn, the fleet-footed Phillip outfielder; Billy Goodman, the Red Sox first baseman; Larry Doby, the Indian outfielder, and Hank Sauer, and Virgil Stallcup of the Reds.

Some of the pitchers under scrutiny will be: Gene Bearden of the Cleveland club; Robin Roberts and Curt Simmons of the Phillies; Bob Porterfield of the Yankees; Pittsburgh's Bob Cheshnes; Ralph Hamner of the Cubs and Erv Palica and a few other Dodger entries.

The three prize rookies who can play leading roles next season are Dark, Ashburn and Bearden. Ashburn will have no pennant-winning act to unroll, but Dark and Bearden might. Both are fine young ballplayers on teams that won pennants last fall, largely or partly because these two rookies were around. The Braves couldn't have won without Dark and the Indians couldn't have won without Bearden.

I can almost hear Billy Southworth singing: "Honey dear, listen here—I'm afraid to go home without Dark."

Dark, a great football player—almost another Van Buren, a fine golfer—a star all-around athlete, can be the top entry of 1949.

So can Gene Bearden of the Indians. If Dark is as good as he was last year, and Bearden is just as effective, we might see a replay of 1948 this next season.

Raschi and Porterfield can mean a lot to the Yankees. You may recall the able job Frank Shea did for the Yankees in 1947. He was a different Shea in 1948, where he had exchanged his streamlined form for a blimp. If Shea reports at 190 or 193 pounds, he has a chance. He has plenty in the way of stuff and heart.

Doby, like Raschi, is hardly a sophomore. He was around in 1947. But not too much in evidence. His first big year was 1948 and he has the equipment needed to have a bigger year in 1949.

Looking to 1949
We are now looking through winter's snowstorms, mists and fogs into the campaign of 1949 from late April to October. Who will be the star rookie of 1949 to make good on his "second trip around?"

You already have the leaders—Dark, Bearden, Ashburn and Goodman. Doby can be rated, if you figure him a 1948 freshman or a 1949 sophomore.

Doby is as good an all-around outfielder as I've seen besides Musial, Williams, and DiMaggio. And Bearden is the best young pitcher I've seen in some time. He was the pennant and the world's series savior of 1948. But there are always pitfalls ahead. Who can tell where they are?

In 1947, Ewell Blackwell looked to be one of the star pitchers of many years. The 6-foot 6-inch star from California won 22 games and lost eight with the drooping Reds. With other teams he would have passed the 30 mark. Here was one of the great young pitchers from baseball history to reach the game.

But it was a different story in 1948. The tall and willowy Blackwell came along with a sore arm. He was never right through the 1948 season, where the year before he had pitched 17 consecutive no-hit innings.

You can't pitch with a sore arm. Blackwell couldn't. You can't pitch with too much fat. Shea couldn't. You can only pitch when you are in shape.

You can only play baseball when you are in shape, and yet last spring I'd say that about 70 per cent of the players who reported were not in nearly as good condition as Ducky Medwick was, and Medwick has been around for more years than most of us can remember.

Medwick has always reported in shape. And then gotten in better shape. Most ballplayers report in soggy shape and spend most of their time trying to work off fat. At least too many do.

I don't believe this will happen to Dark, Ashburn, Bearden, Doby, Goodman, Cheshnes and one or two others who can be vital cogs in various pennant machines of 1949. I look to see both Raschi and Porterfield of the Yankees ready to go.



COLLEGE AND BIG BUSINESS

A congressional committee reports that American colleges are partners in real estate projects, chain restaurants, mail order houses, department stores, gas stations and many other enterprises. One practically owns and operates a spaghetti plant and piston ring factory. Another has money invested in a Limoges china and leather industry. One of the biggest universities has apartment house, office building and Radio City Center projects running into millions.

Our colleges have to invest their endowment funds some way and it is perfectly legitimate to do what they have been doing, but the charge is made that, since the income of educational institutions is exempt from taxes, the colleges are in unfair competition with business men and cost Uncle Sam millions in taxes every year.

About that we wouldn't know too much, but it is disconcerting to a man to find that the little lady he has been so tenderly calling Alma Mater is an industrial tycoon, a member of a dozen boards of directors and maybe a top distributor of potato chips, catsup, auto tires and lubricating oils.

Can it be that Alma, instead of being the dignified and handsome girl carved in marble on the lovely campus, should be pictured with a prematurely bald head, a counting-room twitch and a strictly business look? Instead of a sweet and airt lady interested mostly in the arts and sciences, is she a holding corporation, an inner tube manufacturer and a promoter of chain lunch-rooms?

Don't tell us that Dean Dumpin and Professor Highford have in truth been responsible for the kid's education but that the spaghetti, mustard, orange drink and real estate businesses have been a big help, too.

Down there on the gridiron it is possible that the lads have been giving their all for dear old Sch'otz, Brown, Hallock & Whiffle, Inc., the Cronkrite Doughnut Machine corporation and the Grand Union Radio Ornament Industry? Is it possible that the old grads should sing it "For Sivanikosh, for Country and for Whoozis' Refrigerators"?

These are disillusioning times. We like to think of the faculty worrying only over a student's progress in philosophy, literature, Greek and mathematics, and never in an all-day conference over whether to put a few hundred grand into a department store, a row of de luxe apartment houses or a new tooth-powder idea.

Of course it costs money to run universities. All those funds have to be invested where the return will be good. But we hope the paper isn't delivered the night the news comes out that Little Lester has had to be withdrawn from college because his old man couldn't keep him in and at the same time pay the rent, food and clothing bills sent in by the college's business affiliations.

The Nationalized Pub

England is considering nationalization of the pubs (bars and taverns to you). Government operation of hangovers is something new. But it is a further indication of how far the idea of state control of everything, up to and including the dark brown taste and the morning after, is going.

For generations, it would have been thought far below the dignity of any government to run a saloon and put itself in the position of replying to unceasing orders of "make mine the same, Joe." But today a proposal that the state operate poolrooms, bowling alleys and men's smokers would hardly astonish anybody.

Just the same, we hate to think of any sovereign state becoming a combination saloon-keeper, bartender and bouncer. It isn't going to be nice when the folks take to blaming bad Mickey Finns on bureaucracy or demanding a change of administration on account of what seems to be a government imposed headache.

Vanishing Americanisms

"Let's all chip in 50 cents and make the present something good."

"The gentleman wants everybody in the place to have a drink on him."

"You can't do that, it's against the law."

We are all for the two-million-dollar fund for musicians' welfare, but hope it won't offer too much encouragement to the guy upstairs who is taking saxophone lessons.

Sex Hormones May Reduce Swine Production Problems

Skilled use of sex hormones in hogs offers a possibility of bringing more pork to American dinner tables and of easing the multiple problems of swine production at the same time, according to a report in a national veterinary journal.

Dr. L. M. Hutchings of Purdue university, writing in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, said this hormone technique was developed by Professors H. H. Cole and E. H. Hughes of the University of California.

Injection of the hormone, equine gonadotropin, into sows after the fortieth day of lactation shortened as much as two to four weeks the period between successive farrowings, Dr. Hutchings stated.

In addition to shortening the farrowing season, use of the hormone would allow greater lifetime production per breeding animal—at least one extra litter per sow—provided farmers could adjust their feeding and management schedules to meet the stepped-up production program.

Effectiveness of the hormone is attributed to its marked stimulating action on the ovaries. In the hands of experts, it was over 95 per cent efficient in bringing about desired results, the writer said.

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