

Today & Tomorrow

By Walter Lippmann

MEDICAL CARE FOR THE AGED

Almost everyone realizes that a great mass of the old people do not have the savings, and cannot depend upon their children, to pay for the doctors, hospitals, nursing homes, and drugs which, because they are aged, they need more than do younger people.

There are a few conservatives, who think that in a truly rugged individualism these aging old people would do without medical care if they can't pay for it, or would make their children mortgage the future to pay the medical bills. But the country is not that ruggedly obstinate to the facts of life, and accordingly both the Administration and the Democratic opposition are agreed that the need, which is obvious and urgent, must be met by government measures.

Thus, the Administration has prepared a program which the Director of the Budget, Mr. Stans, says will cost 1.5 billions by 1964 and 2.5 billions by 1970. For Democrats, Sen. McNamara and some nineteen Senators, including Kennedy, Symington, and Humphrey, have introduced a bill that would add medical insurance to the existing old age insurance. After the first year, the cost of this program would be 1.5 billions. Thus the two programs are approximately of the same size.

BUT between the two programs there is a basic issue of principle. On one side are the President and his advisers. On the other side are the preponderant mass of the Democrats and also a considerable minority of the Republicans led by Gov. Rockefeller. They differ essentially on how the program shall be financed.

Shall it be financed by compulsory insurance, which means that throughout a person's working life he and his employer will be taxed to provide an insurance fund for his medical needs when he is retired and is no longer earning an income? This is the principle of the McNamara bill in the Senate, as it was of the Forand Bill in the House, and it has the support of the leading Democrats and of Gov. Rockefeller.

OR shall the program be financed, as the Administration proposes, by charitable doles to the very poor, paid for out of compulsory taxes collected by the national and state governments?

FOR reasons which he has never explained, the President regards compulsory social security taxes as "unsound, socialistic, and rather un-American; on the other hand he regards compulsory taxes to pay for doles based on a

means test as somehow more "voluntary," sounder, more worthy of a free society and more American.

Under the McNamara Bill medical insurance would be added to the existing old age insurance system. During his working life, each person covered by the Social Security system would contribute an additional amount, as would also his employer, to supplement his retirement income to include medical services. It is true that during the first few years benefits would be received by persons who had not contributed because the system did not exist when they were earning their living. These benefits would be paid for by the younger people. But as the younger people would be buying their own insurance, there is little inequity in this. Nobody will lose anything, although those who are already too old to have been contributors to an insurance plan will benefit. In a few years everyone receiving the benefits will have paid his share.

WHY does the President feel so strongly opposed to the principle of compulsory insurance for medical care to supplement the insurance, which already exists, for old age? What is wrong about its being compulsory that a man should insure himself against the needs of his old age? What is so wonderful about a voluntary system under which a man who does not have his old age has to save for his old age by his children or public welfare funds? There is nothing un-American in the principle that the imprudent shall be compelled to provide so that they do not become a burden to their families and the local charities, so that they can meet the needs of their old age with the self-respect which comes from being entitled to the benefits because they have paid the cost out of their own earnings.

THE President has been led to think, he says, that compulsory insurance is "a very definite step in socialized medicine." Why? In a system of compulsory insurance the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, which would administer the program, could and should use as its agents private organizations like the National Blue Cross Association in negotiating with hospitals and nursing homes and in dealing with claims and complaints. The system would be financed as insurance. But it would be worked not by a new government agency, but by the kind of private voluntary association which the President otherwise believes in.

In this connection it is interesting to remember that in the early 1930's when voluntary health insurance plans were inaugurated, our old friend, the American Medical Association, was declaring that they were communism

Rockefeller's Alternatives Have Become Crystal Clear

By LYLE C. WILSON



It is reasonable to believe that Rockefeller will wait if, for no other reason, than that he must. Circumstances must be just right for the kind of blitz tactics which won the 1940 Republican presidential nomination for the late Wendell L. Willkie.

Willkie's managers packed the galleries of the 1940 Republican convention. They arranged floods of telephone calls and letters to delegates. It was alleged in anger that some of those communications were from bankers who hinted that loans might be called or other sanctions imposed on delegates who balked at Willkie.

Unable To Turn Party leaders were unable to turn the stampeding herd. Their curses in frustrated protest would have enlightened even a sailor. They swore solo and in concert against the background of the gallery chant: "We want Willkie!"

The weakness of the party leaders in 1940 was that they were divided. There were Taft men, Stassen men, Dewey men and lesser men, Dewey men and lesser men, Dewey men and lesser men, Dewey men and lesser men.

AMONG the opponents of a medical insurance there seems to be a vague and uncomfortable feeling that it is a new-fangled theory, alien to the American way of life and imported, presumably, from Soviet Russia. The Founding Fathers were not subject to such theoretical hodgepods. In 1798 Congress set up the first medical insurance scheme under the United States Marine Hospital Service. The scheme was financed by deducting from seamen's wages contributions to pay for their hospital expenses. If that was "socialized medicine," the generation of the Founding Fathers was blandly unaware of it.

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year are agreed. They want to nominate Vice President Richard M. Nixon. That seems to be that, so far as Rockefeller's 1960 chances are concerned. The governor might organize a Rockefeller blitz but without much assurance that it would function.

Chance For Nomination Rockefeller's big chance for the presidential nomination is likely to come in 1964, and a very good chance it may be, or, maybe in 1968. That will depend, of course, on what happens to Nixon if he is nominated this year. If Nixon then were elected in November he surely would be renominated in 1964 if he lived.

If Rockefeller is to have any chance to be nominated in 1964, Nixon must be defeated in 1960. Rockefeller's first term as governor of New York ends Jan. 1, 1963. It must be assumed that he will run in 1962 for reelection.

The perfect situation for Rockefeller would be to come up to 1964 as a second term governor in New York with a Democrat in the White House.

In Manila, President Eisenhower says that new weapons make war a complete absurdity and for that reason there must be no retreat in efforts to negotiate for a peaceful world.

He's eternally right, of course. The last best hope of earth is that war will become so fantastically terrible that human beings will have the plain common sense to renounce it.

IN WASHINGTON, a member of congress comes up with a statement to the effect that newspaper stories about a use of congressional expense accounts have played into the hands of the communists, who use them as propaganda to support the communist contention that America is rotten to the core.

But how about the expense account scandals themselves? I suppose the congressman's idea is that if the noisy newspapers had't blabbed the story to the public, everything would be hunky-dory. Which is to say: If you don't get caught and exposed no harm has been done.

A RADCLIFFE FRESHMAN read that one could absorb knowledge from a book by trying it under the pillow and sleeping on it all night. She put it and was asked by her roommate in the morning, "Well, did you get anything out of sleeping on that book?"

"I sure did," admitted the frosh. "A stiff neck!"

The biggest howl heard west of Chicago in many months came from a justifiably enraged Montana housewife who discovered that the "swimming pool" she won in a TV contest was nothing more than a 69-cent fish bowl! She's talking the sponsor-owner of a furniture emporium to court—and if there's any justice she should collect plenty!

A farmer collared a veterinarian at the corner store and tried to snag a bit of free advice. "I've got a funny kind of horse," he explained. "Sometimes he walks normal, other times he has a bad limp. What should I do?" The vet snapped, "The next time he walks normal, sell him!"

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In the Day's News

By FRANK JENKINS

WORLD of the future note: A research team of scientists working at the University of Oregon has come up with a finding that it would be possible to raise food fish ABOARD SPACE SHIPS, feeding them on materials produced with the aid of algae from body wastes of the space passengers.

The fish would grow in water already being used to grow algae (for oxygen; there's no AIR out in space, you know) and so no great increase in volume or weight would be involved. The algae also produce a type of protein, which would feed the fish. Light, of which there is plenty out in space, would provide the energy for making the algae grow. It would be a sort of perpetual motion machine.

The particular type of fish to be used hatches from the egg in about ten days and grows to sardine size in about three months. They would be eaten by the space passengers. The whole project would work as a sort of perpetual motion machine.

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Try and Stop Me

By BENNETT CERF

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