

U. S. Welfare Bill Tiny Compared to Other Items

By DOUGLAS LARSEN

WASHINGTON (NEA)—A congressional report just completed attempts to give an objective, non-political analysis of just how much of a "welfare state" America does have.

It's a study of what is being done by government directly to aid the unemployed and low-income families. The authors, members of the Joint Committee on the Economic Report, avoid any comment on what is good or bad about the various programs. But certain evaluations are obvious.

Comparison
Most apparent is the modest cost of this country's direct "welfare" efforts in comparison to the staggering expenditures on such things as foreign aid and national defense. For instance, last year the total bill for old-age assistance, aid to dependent children, aid to the blind and general assistance was \$1,700,000,000. That includes costs to federal, state and local governments. Per U. S. inhabitant the cost was \$11.86. That's close to less than one-tenth of what was spent for military purposes.

Under a new public low-rent housing program annual contributions of about \$238,000,000 have been authorized for the whole country. That's just about the same sum appropriated for military housing.

Not Covered
There are about 17,200,000 workers who are not covered by any kind of old-age or unemployment insurance. They include agricultural workers, domestic help and others. There are 5,200,000 persons who work for federal, state and local governmental agencies. Only a tiny fraction are covered by any kind of unemployment insurance.

The report states:
"Inability to engage in gainful work because of illness or injury ranks high among the economic hazards of workers in the U. S. But only the states of Rhode Island, California and New Jersey now administer temporary disability programs providing cash benefits in case of nonoccupational disability."

Weak
Those examples show how little co-ordination that there has been in the long-time development of overall welfare programs. The money is not going to satisfy greatest needs first. Nevertheless, the report furnishes an imposing list of activities that are being carried on in this field.

By August of this year there were over 2,800,000 persons getting old-age assistance and 1,400,000 dependent children receiving help. The federal government does not give direct cash help to needy persons except in those two categories, and in the case of a few persons who come under a "general assistance" program.

Under the office of vocational rehabilitation, which works with the state agencies, 58,000 handicapped persons a year get rehabilitation training which enables them to become self-supporting. There are federal grants to the states totaling

\$22,000,000 a year for health and welfare services for mothers and children and crippled children. And about one-quarter of all U. S. kids in public schools benefit from the national school-lunch program administered by the department of agriculture.

Veterans

The report says:
"Although most of the veterans' programs are designed for the benefit of all veterans and their dependents, others are specifically intended to meet the needs of the low-income veterans and their surviving dependents. Such programs show a great increase in participation during periods of general unemployment."

The authors admit that several other important federal programs, which they don't consider in detail, contribute indirectly to helping low-income families. They say:
"Perhaps the most important of these are the agricultural price-support program, although not specifically directed to that end, has reduced sharply the number of low-income farm families. Neither does this report cover such broad general programs as education or public health, which provide services that are of great significance to low-income families but which are also available to the community as a whole."

It is in this latter area where the "welfare state" becomes a strictly political issue.

BACKFIRE
PORTLAND, Nov. 22 (AP)—When a young man stopped police and asked "Did you see which way the stickup man ran?"—the officers nabbed him. Detective Lt. Carl Crisp said James F. Smith, 23, had \$301 from robbing a dry cleaning firm stuffed in his pockets. He was seized when police threw a cordon of officers around the area.

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South Dakota's Bad Lands are 5200 square miles in area.

Who Took Who For A Ride?

BALSTON SPA, N. Y., Nov. 22 (AP)—Dr. Harry E. Hansen, a veterinarian, got a call from a downtown drugstore. A farmer there wanted him to look at a sick cow.
Dr. Hansen picked up the farmer and drove him through winding, country roads.
As the pair pulled up to the farmer's house, the farmer opened the car door and said:
"You can let me out here, Doc. I haven't got a sick cow. You see, you charge only \$3 for a visit while a taxi would have cost me \$5."

Water Jug, Fire Bug Threat

PERCY, Ill. (AP)—Roy Meyerhoff theorizes that many farm haystack fires can be traced to the old water

jug. He got the idea while trying to find out what caused his jacket to burn on his farm near here one sunny day.

He figured he had the answer when he moved his hand past his water jug near the jacket. The sun's rays focused by the jug—like

a magnifying glass—burned his hand.

He believes many haystack fires probably can be traced to the common practice of farmers leaving their jugs on haystacks while they work.

WOMEN BARRED

VATICAN CITY, Nov. 22 (AP)—A Vatican informant said Russian satellite countries will not permit their women Catholic citizens to visit Rome during the 1950 holy year, which begins Christmas Eve.

TOWNSEND HEAD

SALEM, Nov. 22 (AP)—E. J. James, Portland, was reelected Sunday as president of the district Townsend club.

More than 70 per cent of Austria is classified as mountainous.

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