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News Letter

Vol. 2, No. 10, - May 15, 1949

A.D.A. OFFICIALS TO TESTIFY ON HEALTH BILLS BEFORE HOUSE COMMITTEE MAY 25; WILL APPEAR BEFORE SENATE GROUP JUNE 2.

Representatives of the American Dental Association will present testimony on proposed compulsory health insurance legislation before committees of both houses of Congress at Washington within the next three weeks. A.D.A. witnesses will appear before the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce on Wednesday, May 25, and before the sub-committee on health of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare on Thursday, June 2. The hearing before the House committee, will be on H. R. 4312, introduced by Rep. Dingell (D., Mich.), and H. R. 4313, introduced by Rep. Biemiller (D., Wisc.). Both of these bills are identical to the administration-sponsored omnibus bill, S. 1679, which includes compulsory health insurance and a number of other proposals such as increased federal aid for dental and medical education, hospital construction, research and operation of local health facilities (A.D.A. NEWS LETTER, May 1, 1949). The Senate sub-committee will hear testimony on S. 1679, sponsored by Sen. Thomas (D., Utah), and three other pending bills: S. 1581, the Taft-Smith bill, which proposes federal aid to the states for dental, medical and hospital care; S. 1106, the Lodge bill, which proposes federal aid to states for the medically indigent; and S. 1456, the Hill bill, which proposes federal subsidies for voluntary health insurance programs. Dr. Carl O. Flagstad, of Minneapolis, chairman of the A.D.A. Council on Legislation, is expected to head the A.D.A. delegation at both hearings. According to the Washington Report of the Medical Sciences, a group of liberal Republicans of the House and Senate are rushing preparation of a new national health bill which they hope to introduce in Congress in time for next week's hearings. The new bill, it was said, would offer federal aid to states for the support of voluntary health insurance plans which agree to have a sliding scale of premiums in direct proportion to the earnings of policy holders. Under such a formula, low income subscribers would pay less for the same services than individuals in higher income brackets. Sponsors believe this new plan would permit expansion of voluntary plans to cover low income groups without any element of compulsion.

HEARINGS WILL OPEN NEXT MONDAY AT THE CAPITOL

Both the House and the Senate committees will begin hearings on compulsory health insurance legislation next Monday morning, May 23. The

simultaneous hearings will mark the opening of the official consideration by Congress of the health insurance program which has been repeatedly advocated by President Truman. Sen. Murray (D., Mont.), is chairman of the health sub-committee which will conduct the hearing for the Senate. Other members are: Senators Pepper (D., Fla.), Neeley (D., W. Va.), Humphrey (D., Minn.), Taft (R., Ohio), Smith (R., N.J.) and Donnell (R., Mo.). Rep. Priest (D., Tenn.) is chairman of the sub-committee which will conduct the hearings for the House. Other members are: Representatives Sadowski (D., Mich.), Stanley (D., Va.), Granaham (D., Penna.), Biemiller (D., Wisc.), O'Hara (R., Minn.), Gillette (R., Penna.), Scott (R., Penna.) and Bennett (R., Mich.).

MEDICAL SERVICES DIVISION CREATED FOR ARMED FORCES -- NEW UNIT WILL ASSUME OVER-ALL CONTROL OF HEALTH CORPS

In a move designed to unify administration and operation of the health services of the armed forces, Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson last week established a new Medical Services Division which will have over-all control of the health corps of the three service branches. The new division will be headed by a director with responsibility and authority

to establish and control general policies, standards and programs for the medical services for the three military departments and related agencies. The new director may be either a commissioned officer or a civilian, Mr. Johnson said. Unofficial advices from Washington indicated that Mr. Johnson was leaning heavily toward the selection of a civilian for the job. Simultaneously, the defense secretary issued another directive creating an autonomous medical department for the Air Force which previously has been served by personnel of the Army Medical Department. Maj. Gen. Malcolm C. Grow, the air surgeon, was named head of the new department. Two hundred officers from the Army and Navy were transferred to help meet current shortages of health personnel in the Air Corps. No official comment was available on how the new Medical Services Division will affect operation of the three medical departments. For the present, the three departments will continue operation in much the same manner as heretofore, one official pointed out.

ARMY ASKS FOR PART-TIME SERVICE BY RESERVISTS

In an effort to meet continuing shortages of health personnel in the Army, Maj. Gen. Raymond W. Bliss, the army surgeon general, last week asked dentists, physicians and veterinarians who hold reserve officer commissions to volunteer to serve part-time on active duty. The Army will accept services of from one to 29 days each month, Gen. Bliss said. Questionnaires are being sent to 14,300 physicians, 5,548 dentists and 1,372 veterinarians in an effort to determine what degree of help can be expected from the reservists. Meanwhile, new moves were made in Congress regarding the current personnel shortages. The Armed Services Committee of the House approved a bill, H. R. 4384, which would authorize the granting of Army commissions to women dentists and physicians. A new bill, H. R. 4516, was introduced in the House which would permit an increase in the number of medical and dental corps captains on active duty. The bill would cancel the present limitation which allows only 22 medical and 12 dental captains who are not on the promotion list for rear admiral to be continued on the active list. Late reports reveal that the "moral suasion" campaign to induce V-12's and A.S.T.P.'s to volunteer for service in the dental and medical corps is running far below expectations. To date, only about 300, or about 3.6 per cent of the young dentists and physicians who received professional training during World War II have volunteered for active duty. Last week, Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson received in his office two physicians and a dentist who were described as the first volunteers in the current campaign. Those honored by Mr. Johnson included 1st Lieut. Edward T. Brown III, of New Orleans, the first dentist to volunteer for duty with the Air Force.

ADDITIONAL COPIES OF SPECIAL JOURNAL SUPPLEMENT ON COMPULSORY HEALTH INSURANCE ARE NOW AVAILABLE

Extra copies of the A.D.A. Journal supplement entitled, "Compulsory Health Insurance Is Not The Answer," are available at the A.D.A. Central Office and may be obtained by request to the Order Department, American Dental Association, 222 East Superior Street, Chicago 11, Illinois. Several thousand copies of the supplement, which contains an exhaustive analysis of compulsory health insurance proposals, have already been distributed by state and component societies to schools, to public libraries and to interested individuals. The supplement is particularly recommended for use in waiting rooms. Extra copies are available at a special price of 10 cents each, including suitable envelopes for remailing. A limited number of copies of the administration's new compulsory health insurance bill, S. 1679, are also available. Individual copies may be obtained without charge upon request to the A.D.A. Bureau of Public Information.

GEN. WALTER LOVE NOMINATED FOR PROMOTION

Brig. Gen. Walter D. Love, Deputy chief of the Army Dental Corps, has been nominated by President Truman for promotion to the grade of permanent major general, dental corps. If the nomination is approved by the U. S. Senate, the Army Dental Corps will have two major generals. Gen. Thomas L. Smith, chief of the corps, was promoted to the rank of major general some time ago. General Love was graduated in 1915 from the University of Pittsburgh Dental School and has been in military service since 1918. During World War II, Gen. Love served at Fort Knox, Ky., and in the India-Burma theater. He has been on duty at the dental division, office of the army surgeon general, since March, 1946.

TOP A.D.A. OFFICIALS TO HONOR DR. MINGES

Senator Lester C. Hunt, (D., Wyo.), Mayor Edwin F. Duke, of Rocky Mount, N. C., and several top A.D.A. officials will participate in a testimonial banquet in honor of Dr. Clyde E. Minges, A.D.A. president, to be held Friday evening (May 20) at the Carolina Hotel, Pinehurst, N. C. The banquet is being sponsored by the North Carolina Dental Society headed by Dr. C. W. Sanders of Benson. Dr. Wilbert Jackson, a member of the A.D.A. Council on Dental Education, will be the toastmaster. Dr. Walter T. McFall, of Ashville, president-elect of the North Carolina Dental Society, will give the invocation and Dr. H. O. Lineberger, of Raleigh, will present the president's emblem. Among those who will give brief talks at the banquet are Dr. Philip E. Blackerby, director, division of dentistry, W. K. Kellogg Foundation; Mr. Frank P. Meadows, of Rocky Mount, Kiwanis Club lieutenant governor; Dr. S. Robert Horton, of Raleigh, and Dr. C. C. Poindexter, of Greensboro, past presidents of the North Carolina Society; State Senator Paul E. Jones; Dr. Harry Lyons, of Richmond, Va., chairman of the A.D.A. Committee on National Emergency Dental Service; Dr. LeRoy M. Ennis, of Philadelphia, A.D.A. trustee, and Dr. Harold Hillenbrand, of Chicago, A.D.A. secretary. Special presentations will be made by Dr. Guy R. Harrison, of Richmond, Va., and Dr. R. Fred Hunt, of Rocky Mount, N. C., secretary-treasurer of the North Carolina Society.

CONNECTICUT GOVERNOR VETOES BILLS DESIGNED TO CURB UNPRESCRIBED WORK BY DENTAL LABORATORIES

Three bills passed by the Connecticut legislature which would have prohibited dental laboratories from making, fitting or repairing artificial dentures except on the written prescription of a licensed dentist were vetoed by Gov. Chester Bowles last Tuesday (May 10). In a lengthy veto message -- his first since becoming governor -- he said that he was opposed to the bills in their present form because they would require a prescription for the repair of dentures already fitted by a dentist. This, he said, would be a hardship on low-income groups. He also charged that the bills tended to give the dental profession a monopoly. Governor Bowles asked the legislature to pass new bills tightening regulations requiring that all original dentures be fitted by dentists. He also asked that the legislature grant the dental commission increased powers to ban from practice any dentist who "lacks high professional standards of ability or integrity." Governor Bowles also recommended that a dental technicians' commission be established to set up strict standards for all dental technicians. The veto message condemned "shabby practices" by advertising technicians and pointed out that if the legislature did not act such practices are likely to grow. In the concluding part of the message, Governor Bowles said: "I am hopeful that the controversy which has raged over this subject for so many weeks will serve to bring the facts home to the people of our state. I also hope that it will help us clean up some of the advertising technicians' industry and induce the dental profession to reexamine its conscience as to ways it may better serve the low-income groups."

ILLINOIS DENTISTS SPONSOR BILL TO TAX REFINED SUGAR FOR DENTAL RESEARCH FUND

A bill which proposes that all refined sugar consumed in Illinois be taxed at the rate of one mill per pound to provide funds for research in the field of dental caries is slated to be introduced in the Illinois legislature this week. The bill is being sponsored by the Illinois State Dental Society through its public policy committee headed by Dr. James Donelan of Springfield. It is estimated that if enacted by the legislature, the bill would produce somewhere between \$650,000 and \$700,000 in taxes annually. The bill directs that all funds over and above the costs of collection be paid into the dental welfare fund of the state treasury. This fund would be allocated through the Illinois State Department of Public Health for "research into the origins, effects, treatment and prevention of dental caries and the publication and dissemination of information and knowledge derived from such research." Dr. Robert Kesel, faculty member of the University of Illinois School of Dentistry, and a past president of the Illinois State Dental Society, originally proposed the tax measure as a means of combating dental decay in the state.

ESTIMATE 15 MILLION PERSONS HEARD SPECIAL RADIO BROADCAST SPONSORED BY THE CINCINNATI DENTAL SOCIETY

An estimated 15 million persons heard a special broadcast on compulsory health insurance which was presented over the Mutual network from Cincinnati on Sunday evening, May 8. Network officials reported an unusually high listening audience in spite of the fact that the program was not carried by some of the larger Mutual stations. The program was sponsored by the Cincinnati Dental Society and the Cincinnati Post. Participating in the debate were Dr. Harold Oppice, of Chicago, A.D.A. Trustee; Dr. Paul Hawley, of Chicago, chief executive officer, Blue Cross and Blue Shield; Congressman Andrew Biemiller, Milwaukee; and Lester Velie, New York, associate editor of Collier's magazine. Only the first half hour of the debate was broadcast over the network. A second half hour period in which the participants answered questions from the audience was broadcast in Cincinnati. Indicative of the widespread public interest in the program was a total of more than 700 questions telephoned to the Cincinnati radio station by listeners during the program. During the debate, Dr. Oppice described compulsory health insurance as an illogical and needlessly dangerous program. He said, in part: "Compulsory health insurance is not the solution to our American health problem any more than it is proving a solution in Great Britain or any other country that has embraced it. It still remains a fantastical and costly method of providing an inferior health service. It will not serve the best interests of the American people and should not be adopted here."

STATE SOCIETIES ARRANGE SPECIAL TRAINS FOR ANNUAL SESSION

Three constituent societies, Illinois, Ohio and New Jersey, are making arrangements for special trains for A.D.A. members and their families who will attend the 90th A.D.A. annual session in San Francisco, Oct. 17-20. The trains will follow scenic routes both going and returning and will include special stops in some of the national parks. Special post-convention trips to Hawaii also are being arranged. The A.D.A. Housing Bureau in San Francisco has begun to accept reservation forms for hotel accommodations. Mr. John Hollister, A.D.A. business manager, has announced that those members who did not get application forms from the May issue of THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION may obtain copies from his office, 222 E. Superior Street, Chicago 11, Illinois. Ample housing facilities for all members and their families have been assured by the San Francisco Tourist Bureau.

BRIEFS IN THE NEWS

Two health bills, one for compulsory health insurance and the other for compulsory hospital insurance, have failed to win committee approval in the California State Legislature. Both bills were strongly supported by Governor Warren....Seventy dental societies in 30 states have already said they are interested in participating in a postgraduate telephone extension course to be sponsored by the University of Illinois College of Dentistry. The course, entitled "Current Advances in Dentistry," will be given this fall....No employees in the hospital and medical services are included among the 8,000 Veterans Administrations employees throughout the country who were dismissed last week, according to Veterans Administrator Carl R. Gray, Jr....The Main legislature has finally made it legal for dentists practicing in that state to use the title "Doctor" before their names. A law in force since 1895 had given only physicians this privilege....The District of Columbia Dental Society has begun publication of a regular monthly news letter for its membership....The Blue Cross Commission has announced the formation of an Inter-Plan Service Benefit Bank which will make it possible for persons hospitalized away from home to be eligible for full service benefits from the plan in the area in which they receive care. The preliminary program for the A.D.A. Annual Session in San Francisco will be published in the September issue of THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION....The president of one of America's largest optical companies pointed out recently that the cost of eye care -- including professional fee and eyeglasses -- is 60 per cent higher under the British National Health Service than it is in the United States....The New York Times reports that from now on the British Ministry of Health will be less lenient towards "those trying to cash in on the Government's generosity." The report said that something of a crisis had arisen because of the rush for spectacles, artificial limbs, corsets, false teeth, wigs and surgical appliances of all kinds.