AN AMERICAN PLAN

"Countries all over the world, large and small—Great Britain, Venezuela, Uruguay, and our neighbors, Canada and Mexico—have improved their social security legislation, even during the war. Is the United States to lag behind other nations? We should have started long ago to expand, extend and improve our social security program. We must move forward now before it is too late.

With full employment and full production, we can have a complete and adequate social security system at a modest cost.

If we do not achieve full employment, it is all the more imperative that we have a complete and adequate social security program.

The plan embodied in this bill is an American plan—geared to the wage scales and standards of living of the individual families in various sections of the country. The plan provides for a practical program within our ability to pay.

The program is a practical one in a much higher sense. Our democracy could provide no better bulwark against the troubled times which may be ahead than to develop this dignified, all-embracing plan for social security upon which each family can build its own future by its own efforts."

—Senator Robert F. Wagner.

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IT HAPPENED IN PENNSYLVANIA!

MAYBE you saw the story in your local newspaper or heard about it on the radio recently—I mean the story of what happened in Force, Pennsylvania.

It's just a little mining town, like the neighboring Ferndale, or Hollywood, and you might not pause to notice it as you pass down the big concrete highway which cost about a million dollars to build.

But in that town, in August, 1945, a strange thing happened. A doctor named Elizabeth Hayes, 33 years old, organized the coal miners of the Shawmut Mining Co. . . . and they staged a stoppage for the sake of health.

Health, did you say? A strange thing to strike about. Not wages, not hours, not a contract either. Just health.

The miners of this village were sick and tired of the sewage overflowing the roadways, and seeping into the water wells of Force, Pennsylvania.

"We're living back in some other era, not 1945," said Tony Coccimigli, one of the miners' leaders. And the doctor in that town, pretty Elizabeth Hayes, agreed.

She's the only doctor in an area where 4,000 Americans live. And she knew that the people were just being poisoned slowly by bad water supplies. And the company, in its greed for profit, didn't want to lay pipes down to that mining village.

MEDICAL GAP IS NOT UNUSUAL

"An economic impossibility," said Frank Lambert, the general manager of the Shawmut mines. And he blamed it all on the doctor, "Betty" Hayes, as they call her in Force, Pennsylvania, and they love her, too, for what she's tried to do, a brave American woman who respects her 4,000 fellow human beings around Force, Pennsylvania.

Now maybe this is an unusual case, this business of a rotten water supply. But the issue of health in the industrial areas of our country is a very real one. And the case of one doctor for 4,000 Americans is also nothing unusual.
The fact is that this powerful United States of America is suffering from very bad health conditions. It's suffering from a lack of doctors, a lack of medical services. It's suffering from a lack of hospitals.

Before we were in the war, January 1, 1940, in urban Pennsylvania there was only one public health nurse for every area of 2000-4000 population; while in the rural districts, only one for areas of 5000-9000 population.

Since then the situation has not improved, in many places has become worse.

And every day, this powerful United States of America is losing money because a man stays home from his job on account of sickness, because diseases that could be prevented are not discovered in time, because Americans grow old before their time and still have to keep working until they drop. A terrible economic waste is going on—not a hundred years ago but in 1945 as Tony Coccimiglio says.

THE ANSWER IS S. 1050

Is there anything that can be done about it? you will ask.

Is it possible that this country which produces more munitions than the rest of the world put together, which turns out airplanes that go 500 miles an hour with ease, this country with its bridges, its steel mills, its electronic devices—can't lick the problems of American poor health?

Two Senators from New York and Montana and a Congressman from Michigan have the answer. Robert F. Wagner, that great veteran of labor legislation; James E. Murray, who's also fighting for full employment and John D. Dingell have written a bill which is now before the Senate and the House. And it's the answer which American workingmen have been waiting for.

It's the Wagner-Murray-Dingell Social Security Bill, S. 1050, and it's got the backing of the CIO, the AFL, the leading social service workers, the best and most progressive doctors—and many organizations like the International Workers Order, are going down the line for it.
expenditures by combining earnings and taking boarders. As a result of such conditions, war bond redemptions are 26 per cent as against the 21 per cent national average. There are hundreds of Braddocks in Pennsylvania.

Mining and motor vehicle injuries and fatalities are high in Pennsylvania. In the Portage mine disaster of 1940, 63 were killed, while in 1928 in Mather, 195 miners paid toll with their lives. Studies establish the fact that in Pennsylvania “in the great majority of instances . . . a serious work accident deprives a necessitous family of its sole or chief support.”

As one of the results of deplorable economic and social conditions due to low income, high taxes and inadequate medical and health care, in 1943 only four other states had a greater number of prison inmates. Poor health and inadequate health facilities, widespread in Pennsylvania, are typical of the American scene.

The shocking fact is that 40 per cent of all the counties in the powerful and prosperous United States of America have no registered hospitals in them. And there are 15 million Americans living in such counties.

A similar number don’t have a public health service.

The greatest number of our doctors are concentrated in the big cities where they are all hanging out their shingles to attract the money which the middle and upper classes have to spend on medical care.

In New York City, there is one doctor for every 700 people. But in Mississippi three times that many people have to share the services of a single doctor.

In New York City there is one general hospital bed for 196 people. But in Mississippi 667 people have to use that single hospital bed. . . . And it should be remembered that today there are 60,000 doctors in the Army and they will be the last ones to be discharged when the war is over.

**A PLAN FOR THE WORKERS**

Well, the Senators have a plan. It's a simple plan to provide medical, dental and general health care for the American people.
cause equally important are its proposals to extend and improve the entire social security system.

Before we examine its new feature—which is the health plan—we should get a good idea of all the other proposals.

First, the bill proposes to extend the coverage of the social security act to include at least 15,000,000 of the large body of American people now excluded from its benefits. Excepting railroad and government workers for whom Federal provision has already been made, "the bill covers all gainfully employed persons," as Senator Murray has noted. "This means that... the total program would be extended to salary and wage workers in agriculture, domestic service and non-profit organizations and to people in business for themselves on farms, in small business and in the professions..."

Second, the idea is to lower the retirement age for women under the existing plan from 65 to 60. And to provide pensions from $20 to a maximum of $120 per month for aged men and women.

Third, to develop, provide a system of disability insurance. When a man or a woman can't work for awhile, but doesn't have to go to a hospital or lie in bed, he or she can get from $5 to $30 a week up to 26 weeks for themselves and their dependents, based on their wages while working.

Fourth, to improve the present system of unemployment insurance allowing benefits from $5 to $30 a week for 26 weeks to any worker who's out of a job through no fault of his own—including lockouts. And if the fund can stand it, these benefits will last 52 weeks.

Fifth, to give to the soldier or sailor in the armed forces a credit of $160 for each month of service. That is to create his status as a worker and thus bring him under the social insurance plan. He and his wife and kids are not deprived of the benefits of the social security act just because he happened to be working for Uncle Sam these last years.

Sixth, to continue and strengthen the United States Employment Service and put it on a full federal basis. So that a man can go to the public employment office when he's out of a job... or a boss can go to this same office when he needs a worker.

Seventh, the Wagner-Murray-Dingell plan offers grants to the
you could not obtain the sick, disability, old age and other benefits provided in the bill.

REACTIONARIES OPPOSE BILL

Every miner knows the importance of such social insurance. Every miner remembers that the United Mine Workers proposed a deduction of ten cents a ton in the 1944 negotiations to provide for social security to be administered by the union. John L. Lewis dropped that demand very early in the negotiations. But under the Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill—Uncle Sam would provide for these very things which the workers of Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia and Kentucky know they need.

But, of course, you never can satisfy everybody. There are powerful forces who oppose this bill. They are spending millions of dollars to defeat it. The reactionary leadership of the American Medical Association is opposed to it. And these leaders have gotten together with all sorts of pro-fascists like the Republican leader, Frank Gannett, to lobby the country against the bill.

PHONEY ARGUMENTS ANSWERED

Let's examine the most important arguments of the opposition. Some people say that such a social insurance plan would place the average doctor in a position where the government would tell him how to run his profession, whom to visit and how much to charge. "Socialized medicine," they call it.

That's the bunk, BECAUSE—

Doctors would be free to register with the medical plan, or not to register, just like with the Workmen's Compensation. Doctors could refuse a patient if they wanted to, and a patient could refuse a doctor, and go to whichever doctor he chose. The plan would in no way lower professional standards. It would only provide the poor people with a way of paying for medical services which they cannot now afford. As a matter of fact, the average doctor is getting about $3000 a year right now; it's only the $15,000 class which are putting up a squawk. With the 60,000 doctors coming out of the Army, this plan would encourage many doctors to settle in the various states to provide maternity care for women. They don't have to work until the last possible minute before giving birth and so they don't have to go back to a job—or to house work right after a baby is born. Six weeks before and six weeks after childbirth.

Eighth, the bill increases federal contributions for aid to needy persons, such as the blind, the crippled and young children, without any parents.

WHAT IT COSTS

And the whole thing can be done by boosting the present contributions from workers and employers to 4 per cent on wages up to $3600 a year. That's quite a boost from the present figure, but you will agree that it's worth it. Yet, when you remember that the present social security system is supposed to go up to 2½ per cent anyway, by January 1, 1946, it will be seen that 1½ per cent more can do wonders for the great majority of our working people.

The Fund would be administered by the Social Security Board with a National Advisory Council appointed by the Surgeon-General to help it. And all funds would be invested in United States Government Bonds, the safest investment that can possibly be made today.

Well, that's the plan. If you are a steel worker in the Mahoning Valley, a coal miner in eastern Ohio, or western Pennsylvania, you can see at a glance what this plan would mean to you. It would give you more than the present system of unemployment insurance. It would take a load off your mind in case of an accident in the mill or mine, and that is happening every day of the week.

It would save you the money you are spending on patent medicines, and give you a chance to have a doctor for yourself, your wife or children in case of need.

It would give your son or brother in the armed forces a break in addition to what the GI Bill of Rights provides.

Unless you were a member of a fraternal society like the International Workers Order which economically provides life insurance protection and sick benefits, and unless you happened to be in the group of American people who earn annual incomes over $5000,
smaller towns and the countryside, instead of crowding together and competing with each other in the big cities.

Some people say that a “political bureaucracy” would run this plan, and make everybody responsible to the government.

That's the bunk, BECAUSE—

The Social Security Board, which is now running unemployment insurance would continue to run this plan. And that's a non-partisan body which has never been accused of bureaucracy. No government agency would determine which doctor you go to, and which doctor would serve you. That's up to you and the doctor. The only thing is that a government agency would pay the bill, from the funds collected in the same way that the unemployment insurance is collected now. There would be no more red tape.

Some people say that social insurance should be handled by the states and private agencies, and raise the cry of “states rights.”

That's the bunk, BECAUSE—

The Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill idea is to use the state machinery wherever possible, and to use all the existing insurance plans of private organizations, also, if they so desire. All that the bill will do is to INTEGRATE existing plans into one national plan. The federal government will aid the states to build hospitals and improve their public health systems. The poorer states need such help. Only the government can give it.

Some people will tell you that a man can get more under the unemployment plan by not working than by working.

That's the bunk, BECAUSE—

Such people have not read the bill. It provides that a man should take a job where a job—meeting his standards and previous pay rates—is available. The compensation will never amount to what a worker can make while working. It will simply tide him over until he gets a job.

Some people will tell you that the Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill costs too much money.

That's the bunk, BECAUSE—

The average cost of medical care today is about four billion dollars per year. The Senators' plan would cost about three billion. But instead of a small number of people getting adequate care for
ORGANIZED ACTION

Individual action for prompt passage of the Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill is an important phase of the whole struggle for adequate social security which cannot be achieved fully by adoption of this single measure.

American postwar economy, to cushion the shocks of the reconversion period and of increasing unemployment, must be reinforced by the provision of jobs for all, and especially for the demobilized veterans of this war. This requires, also, swift passage of the Murray-Patman Full Employment Bill, the Senate Benefit Bill (S. 1274) for unemployed benefits up to $25 a week for 26 weeks, the 65¢ Floor Wage amendment to the Fair Labor Standard Act, Permanent FEPC Bill, S. 101, and other related legislation.

Unless powerful mass organized action is rapidly developed, the fight for postwar security and stability will be weakened. The International Workers Order is a fraternal insurance society, combining 15 nationality group organizations, general lodges and lodges in the Negro communities. Its 180,000 members represent a substantial factor in the fight for social security. While providing its own members with life insurance protection, and sick benefit, including insurance at cost rates against disability and tuberculosis, the IWO since its establishment in 1930, has been a leading force in the organized struggle for unemployment insurance. This is especially so because the membership of the IWO is rooted in the trade union movement and the nationality group communities of America.

The IWO, along with other fraternal societies, the CIO, AFL, Railroad Brotherhoods, patriotic and veteran organizations, progressive medical societies and groups, have endorsed and support the Wagner-Murray-Dingell Social Security Bill, S. 1050, as one of the essential measures leading toward greater security for the American people.