

highly respected throughout the country as a certification of ability; many medical schools give the exams to their students as an evaluation of the success of their teaching.)

When it comes to protecting the layman against "bad medicine" one of the best devices that exists today is not the licensing and regulating of government, but the close, careful watch which reputable hospitals keep over the work of their staffs. They keep that watch in order to maintain the good name of their institution. That reputation is something they must work hard and constantly to maintain.

So the free market not only offers the most and best alternatives, it also offers consumer protection. However, it is true that whether we have a free market or a governmental system of medical care, there will always be some low quality medicine and outright fraud being practiced. Here is the sphere where government can legitimately take action — when an individual's rights have been infringed and there is a need for the redressing of injustice. Hopefully we and the government will soon recognize that it is just as much an infringement of an individual's rights when the government prevents him from going to the

practitioner of his choice (whether M.D., naturopath, witchdoctor, or other variety of medical practitioner) as when a quack fraudulently sells metal rings as a cure against terminal cancer.

So part of the solution to the problem with which we are currently faced is the freeing of the medical field from government control. However, the reduction of the price for treating sickness and disability will not alone solve the problem completely. It has been estimated that our hospitals could be emptied today by as much as 50 percent of their patients (thus lowering the cost for medical care by millions of dollars per year) if individuals protected their own health by:

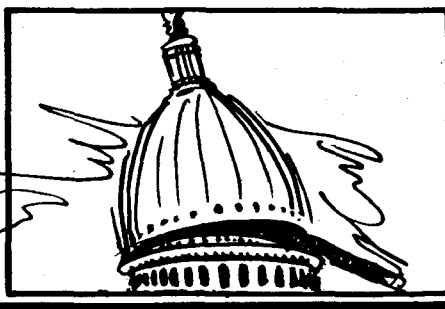
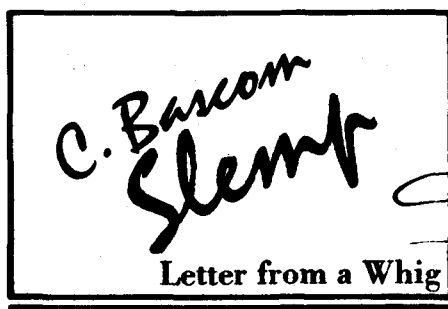
1. wearing seat belts in their automobiles;
 2. eating nutritiously;
 3. exercising sufficiently;
 4. stopping smoking;
 5. stopping abuse of drugs and alcohol.
- In order to make fast strides toward improving health, we don't need more doctors, medical research, or fairy godmothers to pay the bills, we need to refocus on what we are trying to accomplish — *maintenance* of good health.

The ultimate responsibility for the maintenance of any individual's health under any system of medical care will

always rest squarely on that individual's own shoulders, not on the state's or the physician's. The physician makes recommendations to the patient, but has no power to enforce them; it is the individual who must decide "Yes" or "No," "I will take this pill," "I will stop smoking," "I will have this doctor perform this operation."

The more we encourage individuals to evade realization of this responsibility, the farther we will be from our goal of reaching each individual's potential optimum health level. That goal will be reached by the individual's own efforts, and by health education (although not of the ineffective kind on which the government is currently spending millions of dollars), as much as (maybe more than) by better, less-expensive medical care.

Especially in today's complex society, government cannot be our watchdog; we have progressed beyond government's ability to cope. So let us remove these arbitrary, damaging governmental restrictions and allow new institutions and personnel to develop. Let us encourage men to be responsible for themselves and their own lives, not chain them to the past while saddling them with the ever increasing burden of paying other people's medical bills.



The Battle of the Budget

"Money," said a recent congressional newsletter, "is what the war in Washington is all about today." And indeed, the battle of the budget between Congress and President rages on. The Nixon Administration plans to use the parliamentary whip on its Republican troops for what it considers some fifteen "budget busters": i.e., appropriations bills which the Administration claims would cause a tax increase and fuel inflation.

The confrontation over the Federal budget has quickly become (with only rare exceptions) a hotly debated partisan issue; Senate Republican leader Hugh Scott's somewhat cynical statement serves to illustrate the point: "Asking the Democrats to control government spending is like having an alcoholic for your bartender."

The Impoundment of Funds

The Administration's congressional critics are particularly sensitive to what they charge is the President's usurpation of their power, (the "impoundment of

funds"). But in a statement by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget before the House Committee on Rules, Mr. Roy Ash argued that the impoundment of Federal funds by the Chief Executive is one of the oldest traditions in American history. In fact, during the Kennedy Administration, Ash pointed out, the impoundment of funds averaged 6 percent of the total unified budget between 1961 and 1963. Under President Johnson the figure fell to 5.4 percent and President Nixon brought the level even lower, to 5 percent between 1969 and 1972. Ash further claimed that as of January 1973 Nixon's impoundment average was at one of the lowest levels in the last fifteen years, 3.5 percent. The Administration, in short, is taking the position that there is no "constitutional" or "impoundment" crisis; the White House believes that the debate over the impoundment of Federal funds has been turned into a rhetorical bandwagon for would-be (and not-so-would-be) presidential aspirants.

The present debate over the impoundment of funds is all the more

remarkable when one considers that 37 percent of all impoundments come from the highway trust fund, 25 percent from the budget of the Defense Department, 6 percent from miscellaneous areas such as space, research, and technology. These figures represent 70 percent of all the impounded funds, and it means that only 30 percent comes from human resources.

Since 1973 is not even a political year it can be expected that the political demagoguery coming out of the nation's capital from Democrats and Republicans alike will yet reach even greater proportions. But inflation clearly remains the nation's number one problem. Thus with a Federal budget that is over 70 percent uncontrollable and with prospects of even higher taxes it would seem that the Nixon Administration has all the ammunition it needs to win this battle.

Misplaced National Priorities?

The steam to the engine of inflation, as economists of all creeds recognize, is and always will be irresponsible Federal government spending. During the last decade Federal spending on domestic programs alone has increased 220 percent. Waste was added to inefficiency because Congress lacked the means for a constant and systematic review of existing programs. Although various legislative proposals are currently being considered which would ameliorate the current budgetary process, recognition has not always been the father of reform and there is, unfortunately, no reason to believe that the Ninety-third Congress will be able

to counter this problem any better than its predecessors.

There are, of course, many critics who argue that there is no fiscal crisis; they charge that our national priorities are misplaced and that if the Federal budget has to be cut at all it should be cut in the area of defense. And indeed, because of the purpose of defense spending, conservatives have been inclined to overlook the cumbersome bureaucratic failures of the Defense Department. But this is no longer true. (Although the "top-heavy" structure of our armed services still remains alarming, e.g., the army only has 4,500 combat spaces for its 50,000 active captains. Our Air Force has two majors for every airplane. And today, with only 2.5 million men under arms — as compared to 12 million during World War II — we now have seven more four-star generals and admirals than we did during the war.)

Under the Nixon Administration, budget priorities for human resources will have grown at an estimated average of 15 percent, from 1970 to 1974. By Fiscal Year 1974 the budget for the Defense Department will drop to \$79 billion or 28.4 percent of the total budget at a time when spending on human resources will rise to 47 percent of the total budget. In constant 1974 dollars the total figures for the defense budget are less than they were in 1964, before the Vietnam

build-up. The FY 1974 outlays for the Department of Defense is at the lowest level since 1940, when outlays represented 16.6 percent of the total budget. In terms of Gross National Product, defense spending is also at its lowest level since 1950: the figures are ('74) 6 percent and ('50) 4.9 percent respectively.

These figures are particularly startling when it is pointed out that a whopping 56 percent of the current defense budget now goes for manpower costs and it is estimated that 67 percent of the Department of Defense budget could go for manpower costs by 1975. The United States is thus spending substantially less on the research and development of weapons systems than it has been in recent years.

However, given the reorganization of national priorities, congressional critics covering a broad political spectrum have come to realize that the military, like the other sectors of our society, can no longer support lavish programs of dubious merit. Senator Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) has pointed to the "godawful waste" and "total inadequacy" of U.S. weapons procurement procedures. An equally strong proponent of the Department of Defense, Senator John Stennis (D-Miss.), who is also the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, has promised to weigh the re-

quests of the Department of Defense "as we have never weighed them before."

"The Time To Act Is Now"

The importance and far-reaching consequences of the current debate over the Federal budget should not be underestimated. During a special order which was held by the freshman class of the Ninety-third Congress, a number of the congressmen used the special order as a vehicle to indicate their concern over our ever-growing fiscal problems. One freshman congressman undoubtedly spoke for many when he said: "I suggest, Mr. Speaker, (the Speaker of the House of Representatives) that unless we do something to reduce that \$25 billion which goes down the drain every year in interest on the Federal debt; unless we act to reduce the 43 percent of every taxpayer's earnings which are confiscated by government at all levels; unless we stop debauching our currency long enough to restore international confidence in the dollar, we will have a moral, constitutional, and economic crisis on our hands which will dwarf any of the other problems and evils to which we now address ourselves."

"Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the responsibility for action is ours; and that the time to act is now."

Needless to say, this is one assertion that will not go unchallenged. □

Book Review

The Best and the Brightest

by David Halberstam
Random House, \$10.00

The Best and the Brightest is the product of David Halberstam's quest "to find out the full reasons why it (the Vietnam war) had all happened." Although the book is largely based on "some five hundred interviews" and contains not a single footnote, the credulous reader is expected to excuse the author's failure to document his account because "the political climate is somewhat sensitive these days, and the relationship of reporter to source is very much under attack." Under normal circumstances, the author's omission to substantiate his work, coupled with his almost extrasensory capacity to know the innermost thoughts of his subjects, would lead the reviewer to dismiss the book as another lamentable example of declining historiographical standards.

No work by David Halberstam, however, is so lightly dismissed, for as the publisher's puffery points out, when sociologists "polled 150 American intellectuals on the most important influences on their thinking on Vietnam, they responded by naming the late Bernard Fall and Mr. Halberstam." Nor is the author's influence these days simply limited to the

academy: *The Best and the Brightest* is flooding suburbia as a Book-of-the-Month Club selection and rivals Dr. Atkins' *Diet Revolution* on the best seller lists. Concern for a responsible understanding of American foreign policy, rather than the intrinsic merits of the book as history, compels us to take *The Best and the Brightest* seriously, for in it Halberstam is attempting to shape public opinion by supplanting old and inescapable realities with new myths and wishful thinking.

The author's thesis, disjointed and scattered throughout 665 pages of text, can be stated as follows. The forces of Ho Chi Minh drove the French out of Vietnam, thereby capturing the nationalism of the country, and becoming a "genuine revolutionary force." American policy-makers, influenced by "the fall of China, the rise of McCarthy, and the Korean War" had become slavish adherents to a belief in monolithic communism and were therefore incapable of seeing "the shades of difference — the fact that Ho, although a communist, might also be primarily Vietnamese." Consequently, when the 1954 Geneva Agreements partitioned Vietnam and established Ho in the North, John Foster Dulles "decided that the rest of the country" would be "a Western

bastion against Communists," and Ngo Dinh Diem was "installed" in the South "by foreigners." Diem, "an American creation which fit American needs, not Vietnamese ones, "lacked the support of the peasants. As Viet Cong strength (feeding upon local grievances against the Diem government) grew, Diem "turned to White foreigners for help, for more aid, for air power, for a new treaty with the Americans." The Kennedy Administration, seeing "South Viet Nam as a real country, with a real flag," laboring under the Cold War delusion that force justifies force, and still treating communism as a monolith, responded with advisers and increased aid. Fatally misconceiving the war as primarily military rather than political, the United States by 1964 "found itself face to face with failure." As frustrations mounted in the South, the United States more and more blamed the North, coming to believe that Hanoi was the villain and the source of the war. Assuming that we could affect the outcome of the war, American leaders escalated by pouring in more troops and bombing the North. And above all, "there was a refusal to consider what the alternatives to escalation really were. A question that was almost never raised was whether the Vietnamese might not be better off under Ho, and to what degree the success of the Viet Cong was a measure of this."

Readers of *The Best and the Brightest*, lured by inducements "to