

bined service for efficiency and for the furtherance and protection of their own practice—both of these afford convincing evidence of what we can accomplish by the regular payment method both for efficiency and for avoiding hardship. Yet here the same doubt arises as in the case of corporation service. Where does the general interest come in? What of those who may be left outside the breastworks if financial or professional interest conflicts with adequately supplying their needs or happens to see no profit therefrom? Things if left alone to those who work for profit are bent towards profit, and the medical profession has not yet shown adequate ability to control its small but dangerous minority of unscrupulous and mercenary members.

The reaction, as described, of the medical profession to all these things brings up the thought, is it necessary to do away with the best thing that American medicine has given us in its

two and a half centuries of development,—namely, responsible, personal, family practice that knows the individual family; deals with the whole human system, and can handle the individual case, through the specialist if necessary, with general knowledge of the whole problem? We have yet to be shown that there is anything in a *properly* organized modern American medical system incompatible with this most valuable thing that American medicine has given us.

In order to coordinate and get the best out of all these factors there is need of a type of group organization, not governmental, that will have what few of these examples possess in full measure, *the interest of the patient and his family as its primary object*. With that as a starting point, if there is an awakened civic interest we can surely establish a general system capable of insuring adequate service without financial hardship throughout the entire community.

The Crisis in Local Government

By HOWARD P. JONES

Public Relations Secretary, National Municipal League

A FEW years ago an endeavor was made to interest a prominent business man in a small city in cleaning up the rotten political situation in the community. "It's costing us thousands of dollars a year in taxes," he was told.

"I'm too busy to bother," he replied. "I could be making a thousand dollars while I saved ten for the city. I'm willing to pay a few hundred dollars too much in taxes to be let alone."

That was three and a half years ago. Today he follows the budget with eagle eyes and demands that it be cut.

It seems as stereotyped as commenting on the weather to point out that the income of state and local governments throughout the country is falling rapidly at the same time that the burden of public-welfare work is forcing governmental costs upward. Yet all too frequently is the essential conflict in the situation completely overlooked in discussion. One half of our population is crying "Taxes must come down" while the other half is demanding food.

There are really two crises in local government. The first involves the difficult task of finding money to keep the work of government going when apparently there is no money. But find it we must—or people perish. There is another crisis less obvious than the one of dollars and cents because primarily psychological but containing even greater potentialities for good or ill. This is the clash in citizen point of view on the problem of effecting economy in government.

Vividly was this illustrated last month in Washington at the National Conference on Government comprising the joint annual meetings of the following organizations: National Municipal League, American Civic Association, American Institute of Park Executives, American Legislators' Association, National Association of Civic Secretaries, National Council for Protection of Roadside Beauty and Proportional Representation League.

The typical taxpayer's point of view—that protection of life and property are the fundamental functions of government and that such services as public health and welfare are mere frosting on the cake—contrasted sharply at the conference with the realization of the professional groups that the social services of government must be vigorously

defended if the next generation is to forge ahead as it should.

There are at the present time, according to conservative estimates, at least twelve million men out of work in the country. Multiply that figure by four to find forty-eight million persons whose sources of livelihood have been cut off. Up to this time, the burden of feeding, housing and occupying the time of these people has rested on the shoulders of state and local governments and the private charities.

The public clamor for tax reduction and economy in government in some sections of the country has risen to the point of hysteria. "Business can no longer stand the burden of government." So goes the popular refrain all too frequently, the singers forgetting that the reason governmental expenditures have been forced upward in the past two years is that industry has laid its burden upon the doorstep of government. Cities, towns, villages, counties assumed the responsibility for feeding the hungry whom industry would no longer feed.

If that were all there were to the problem, we could fold our hands and heave a sigh of relief. Unfortunately those who are crying for economy in government are sounding a trumpet-call that cannot be silenced or ignored. In one of the larger states of the Middle West, upwards of a third of the area of the state is delinquent in payments of the general property tax. There are cities and towns throughout the country which are collecting but a quarter to one third of the taxes levied. And yet, what are we going to do—with the demands upon local government increasing with every day of the depression?

There are, after all, once payrolls have been shrunk, only two ways in which to cut the cost of government. The first is to eliminate some of the services government is rendering. What are these services? Police protection, fire protection, education, health and welfare, recreation, libraries, paving of streets and roads, building of sewers—to mention a few. How much can be saved from elimination of services? Listen to the replies of those who ought to know as given at the meeting of the National Municipal League.

Education.—"Must the schools be sacrificed?" . . . In some communities *the schools have already been sacrificed* and public-school systems are almost everywhere on the defensive. School terms

are being shortened. Summer schools are being discontinued. Night schools are being closed. Children are being sent home from kindergartens. Special educational opportunities for the crippled and other unfortunate children are being denied. School districts are refusing to purchase the supplies and textbooks needed for instruction. School nurses are being discharged and other health services of the schools are being discontinued. Playgrounds and other community activities are being closed. Social work and individual counseling in the schools are being so limited that they can no longer function effectively in the guidance of boys and girls.—**WILLIAM G. CARR**, *director, Research Division National Education Association*.

Recreation.—Nowhere in our country have recreational expenditures provided the essentials of public-recreation service for all of our citizens. To suggest reductions in our present inadequate service therefore is like suggesting a further amputation for a one-legged man. For our present recreation service is indeed thoroughly inadequate.—**ROY SMITH WALLACE**, *National Recreation Association*.

Public Welfare.—It is possible to reduce the public cost of hospital care for the mental and physically sick by merely refusing to accept additional patients. . . . The cost of care and detention of the criminal can be reduced by turning him out. . . . Welfare costs can be reduced by refusing or neglecting to provide necessary relief for the destitute.—**FRANK BANE**, *director, American Public Welfare Association*.

Public Health.—I fear disaster from any curtailment of essential public-health services.—**C. E. McCOMBS**, *Institute of Public Administration*.

Fire Protection.—Of course none of us would contemplate for an instant elimination of fire-department service; nor would we care to consider cutting the cost of this service to the point where safety to life and reasonable protection to property are seriously open to question.—**GEORGE W. BOOTH**, *chief engineer, National Board of Fire Underwriters*.

But we said there were two ways of cutting governmental costs. What is the other? By increasing the efficiency with which the services rendered by government are administered. Cut out the political patronage, run local government for service, not for the profit of privileged groups. There is no way of measuring the waste in local government due to antiquated forms and methods, areas too small to be administered efficiently, and the spoils system. Certainly it runs into millions and millions of dollars. In most communities probably 30 percent of the tax dollar is wasted.

There was general recognition at the National Conference on Government of this fact. The experts quoted above, while emphasizing the impracticability of eliminating most of the services now being rendered, were the first to admit that improvement in administrative methods and reorganization of the structure and area of local government would cut costs without impairing service and with excellent chances of improving it.

Thus Mr. Bane pointed out that "the cost of care and treatment of the mental and physically ill can be curtailed by the inauguration of sound mental-hygiene and public-health programs." The establishment of an efficient system of probation and parole, he declared, would save hundreds of thousands of dollars in prison work. As he phrased it, "Constructive economy in this field is going to require constructive thinking. Throw the rascal in jail is extremely simple; it is also extremely expensive."

While essential public-health services must not be curtailed, substantial reduction in the cost of health administration is possible of accomplishment in the opinion of Dr. McCombs. This possibility he summarized as follows:

Cutting the cost of community health work without curtailment of essential public-health services depends, I believe, in each com-

munity upon scientific study of its own peculiar conditions, and the adoption of an economy program necessarily directed toward the reduction of personnel service costs which represents commonly over 80 percent of health expenditures. The only way that expenditures for health personnel can be reduced without serious loss is by reduction of numbers of health personnel and *not* by salary reductions. Three opportunities for economizing health personnel are suggested:

1. The reorganization of public-health departments and other departments of the general government as far as that may be necessary, to permit the complete integration of public-health forces and other forces of government capable of using public-health services and being used by them. The reorganization of local governments with this as a major purpose should permit material savings in personal service costs.

2. The coordination of official and unofficial health services under single-headed competent central direction so that duplication and overlapping of functions can be generally eliminated and specialized health-nursing activities replaced by a generalized health-nursing service. Competent evidence is already available to prove that such coordinated effort reduces personnel service costs and increases efficiency.

3. The readjustment of local areas of health jurisdiction so that the health needs of a given population may be met in accordance with approved standards at a cost within the means of the people serviced, without overdependence upon state aid. Fewer units of local health jurisdiction will permit elimination of much local political patronage, improve standards of health personnel, and reduce numbers of special employes. In the determination of such larger areas of health jurisdiction, sound principles of economy dictate ignoring existing local government subdivisions except where these subdivisions represent units socially and economically suited to the community-health purse and purpose.

Similar possibilities for cutting costs through increased efficiency of operation were recognized in practically all the various fields of local governmental activity. Aside from the opportunity of tightening up the bolts on a particular administrative machine, the conference visioned even greater economies from the elimination of huge wastes that shoot through the entire municipal plant. Five phases of this waste were discussed: how to increase efficiency through (1) unloading the politician, spoilsman and racketeer; (2) change in the area and functions of government; (3) changes in the structure of government; (4) improvement in personnel; and (5) changes in the incidence of taxation. Perhaps the most encouraging note to those interested in the ultimate professionalization of the local governmental service came in the answer of City Manager Dykstra of Cincinnati to the query, can a city government be run like an efficient private business? His reply was not merely a simple affirmative—there was a distinct inference that standards of governmental practice must of necessity be superior to those of ordinary private business and that local government falls down in proportion to the extent to which individuals seek public places in the "spirit of private business and for the purpose of profit."

American local government must somehow steer a course between financial bankruptcy on the one hand and social bankruptcy on the other. Children have to be educated, the unemployed have to be fed, clothed and housed, police and fire protection are still necessary, the prevention of disease is unquestionably more important in these times than in any other, since people suffering from malnutrition lack resistance. The signpost points down the road to greater governmental responsibility rather than less. Such responsibility can only be assumed by governments adequately financed and adequate financing is impossible these days without efficient operation.

Mountain Nurse

By MADELINE V. KELLEY, R.N.

Visiting Nurse, Brattleboro, Vermont

JUNE 20. Visited today in Miss Rose's school district. There are eleven children in two families, all cousins, and all below standard physically, and I suspect, mentally. We worked all last year trying to teach them the elementary ideas of cleanliness, without making much headway. The father of one family just died this spring, and they haven't a thing in the world but what a fifteen-year-old boy can earn, in a town where there is very little work of any sort even in the summer. After much talk I persuaded the mother that the smallest boy, Walter, could have his tonsils removed safely. Now I must see the Red Cross about the money.

July 7. Went to Green's Corners to find the family known at present as Billings. The last forty-five minutes of the trip was hard going, uphill, over roads that have not been honed since March. Going down the other side of the mountain, the heavy rain last night had made the road a strip of mud, with great boulders at intervals that threatened springs and battery boxes. Arrived at the Corners I made inquiries only to learn that the family I wanted lived three miles farther on, "back of the mountain." With such encouragement I proceeded, on and up, along an overgrown pasture road, that made me wonder whether I could finish the trip. Once there I found it to be a fine old Colonial house, much in need of paint, clapboards and window-glass. The view was wonderful, but I do not see how anyone had the courage to clear a farm in such a place. The land is fit for growing timber but not for raising crops. Mr. Billings is a lazy chap who couldn't make a living from a fertile farm, so I was not surprised when I was told that they hadn't any money to spend for health work.

Mrs. Billings received me at the door, barefooted, dirty, her hair in a tangle. Suddenly I understood why the children were so seldom clean. While we were talking the three youngest children stuck their heads out of the window and occasionally offered a comment.

I inquired for the name of their doctor and was told they hadn't any. The nearest is twenty miles away, by the road that I traveled that morning. Although there are six children in the family, only the first was delivered by a doctor.

Minnie may have her tonsils cared for if I can raise the money. There isn't any Red Cross branch in the town.

July 16. Spent the day in Stafford. About noon I went up on the hill to visit little Joanna, who had impetigo so badly last winter. Her teacher did a good job of cleaning her up, when it became apparent that the parents couldn't or wouldn't follow the doctor's orders. There are three children at home of pre-school age. One of them, a girl, sings and plays normally, but does not talk. I can't make out whether there is a physical defect or not, and they won't let me take her to a doctor. The boy, a year older, is epileptic and a sorry case. They can't do anything with him in the house and so have built a little cell for him out of doors. It works all right this summer but I wonder what will happen when winter comes.

He's on the waiting list for institutional care, but in the meantime. . . .

July 20. Made eight home calls this morning in Porter. This afternoon I went up along the north valley and onto the hill to the Harris place. Years ago the family lived up there and the children were left alone in the house while the parents were out in the field. They set the house on fire and it burned to the ground, children and all. The parents moved away, raised another family and now they are back again at the same place.

The new cabin stands nearly on the site of the old one. It's clean, at present, that is more than could be said for the last place. There is one big room for the seven of them, a stove in one end and beds in the other. I think there was one chair. While I was there, a thunder shower burst, and the wind drove the rain through the cracks in the side walls, wetting the clothing that hung on nails driven into the timbers. Last winter there were four feet of snow up on that hill.

The oldest girl, who entered school three years ago, is a little, undernourished, anemic mortal, with great wistful eyes, and a wealth of affection for anyone who smiles at her. I've been trying for a year to get her to a doctor, but her father wouldn't consent so long as she isn't actually in pain. At last he has given in and I'm to make the appointment for tomorrow.

July 24. Have made the arrangements for Minnie Billings to have her tonsils out. Clinic next week.

July 28. Kent is a mountain community over beyond Green's Corners. It's a long hour of hard driving. Today I visited the Jones boy. After leaving the "main" road I climbed and climbed the mountain side, until I came to the fork. Both branches were knee high with grass and the one I took seemed a little the worse of the two. As I went on, branches whacked and scraped at the sides of the car and I finally decided to walk the mile.

Just as I left the car, the rain began to fall. I always go prepared, so donned my raincoat and went merrily on. Crawled through a set of pasture bars and was greeted on the other side by a big collie. He escorted me all the way to the house, barking the whole time. I'm glad I like dogs!

Mrs. Jones appeared from the barn and we stood on the step in the rain while I told my errand. The door was open and I made a survey of the kitchen; sink piled high with dirty dishes, floor dirty, one chair piled with cast-off sweaters and coats, an old cot in one corner, on which slept a six-months-old baby, dirty as the rest of the room. Young Jimmy stuck his head around the door, and I captured him and demonstrated to his mother the presence of pediculi, whose reality she seemed inclined to doubt. Having laid down the law about removing them before school begins, I took my departure. She has had such visits a number of times, and always starts off, apparently with the best of good intentions, after a month or so her diligence wears out, and the whole thing is repeated. What next to try?