

The Common Welfare

Mr. Secretary Hopkins

FOR once rumor was ratified and Harry L. Hopkins, for six years top relief and WPA administrator of the federal program, was appointed Secretary of Commerce. At the same time President Roosevelt promoted Aubrey Williams from executive director to administrator of the National Youth Administration and made it a full time assignment; and appointed Col. F. C. Harrington to Mr. Hopkins' post of WPA administrator. Mr. Hopkins' appointment requires Senate confirmation which, say competent Washington observers, undoubtedly will be given though not without preliminary sound and fury with Mr. Hopkins used as a whipping boy by opponents of the President's policies.

Mr. Hopkins probably knows more of the problems of unemployment than anyone in this country. As Secretary of Commerce he will have the opportunity to turn that knowledge around, and direct it into an affirmative attack on the problems of employment. To that opportunity he will bring imagination, administrative competence and drive.

Up to the Courts

INDICTED by a District of Columbia grand jury under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act as participants in an unlawful combination in restraint of trade, are the American Medical Association, the Medical Society of the District of Columbia, the Washington Academy of Surgery, the Harris County Medical Society of Houston, Tex., and twenty-one physicians of Chicago and Washington, including the executive staff of the AMA and officers and former officers of the other organizations. Named in the twenty-seven page indictment, but not made defendants in the action, are twelve Washington hospitals.

In brief the indictment holds that, prompted by the AMA, the local medical bodies instituted an active boycott against the Group Health Association of Washington; that hospitals were closed to its staff; that members of the GHA staff were forced to resign their paid positions on penalty of expulsion from the professional societies; that specialists were forbidden to consult with GHA physicians and that the name of the GHA was omitted from a "white list" of approved medical institutions. The indicted organizations and individuals have not, at this writing, filed answers to the charges.

The indictment grew out of the bitter opposition of the medical organizations to the GHA which has been commented on frequently in this publication. [See particularly, *Medicine and Monopoly* by William Hard, *Survey Graphic* December 1938 and page 19 of this issue.] Although various rulings by the District of Columbia courts upheld the legal validity of the GHA as an organization of physicians and potential patients, complaints continued to be made to the Department of Justice that organized medicine was obstructing the group enterprise. These were referred to the department's anti-trust division under Assistant Attorney General Thurman Arnold. On August 1, it was announced that a grand jury investigation would be made. This has been under way since October 17, with the indictment, returned on December 20, as a result.

The AMA, through Dr. Morris Fishbein, editor of the *Journal of the AMA* and one of the indicted executives, has declared that the association would defend its position "to the utmost with every means in its power." Dr. Irvin Abell, AMA president, who is not named in the indictment, has declined thus far to comment, saying only "I have no personal knowledge of those things."

Let There Be Light

ONE spectacular accomplishment of the past three or four decades has been the almost complete banishment of ophthalmia neonatorum—babies' sore eyes—formerly estimated to be the cause of 25 percent of the nation's blindness. This was accomplished through the use of two mutually dependent weapons; the medical discovery of the effectiveness of a drop of silver nitrate in the eyes of newborn infants, and the educational program to advance the use of the discovery.

Largely responsible for thus bringing together knowledge and practice was the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness which last month celebrated its thirtieth birthday. Having witnessed through its own work the force of an educational program in banishing human misery, the society has broadened its scope from the original purpose of wiping out ophthalmia neonatorum to an endeavor to prevent all kinds of blindness through education.

The path is a rough one. The greatest obstacle is the expense of ophthalmological training, resulting in expensive services in the cities and practically none in rural communities. The problem now is how to make eye examinations and early treatment—the recognized factor in sightsaving—generally available throughout the country. The federal government through the Social Security Act recognizes the need of the blind but makes no specific provision to prevent blindness. One task in which the society now is receiving the support of its many friends is the attempt to discover whether the act can be interpreted or even amended to permit federal-state funds, now dedicated to the maintenance of blind persons, to be used to keep others from going blind.

The "Chest Year"

NEW YEAR'S bells strike a slightly sour note when they herald the necessity of budget cutting. The note is flat this year in the ears of members of community chest budget committees faced with campaign results. Chests that staged early fall campaigns were caught in the intense fog of the Munich days and the worst epidemic of war jitters in two decades. The result was a drop of about 6 percent in pledges below those of the fall campaigns of 1937. Later campaigns showed progressive improvement, stemming perhaps not only from calmed nerves but also from better business conditions. The total of \$45,171,469 pledged to the 261 chests reporting thus far from fall campaigns indicates that by the end of the "chest year" on June 1 the decrease from the contributions of the previous year will not be more than 3 percent. A minus 3 percent in a year which lopped off individual incomes 7 percent in eight months is almost a plus when viewed from an angle of expectancy—slight comfort to a below-average chest.

While agency belts must be tightened, drastic program revisions probably will be unnecessary. Some chests already have found the cloud's silver lining, seeing in the decrease an opportunity for stiffening standards of re-appraisal. Although dropping substandard agencies will not effect 1939 finances, it is a part of community integration that is difficult to effect when there is plenty of money to go around.

Seventy-two fortunate communities reported increased pledges. In one, Louisville, Ky., the good fortune is doubled by the transfer of relief cases and well-baby conferences from private to public auspices, thus bringing about what most cities would consider a millennium—enlarged budgets for all chest agencies.

But such scattered cheery notes cannot drown out the fact that if this year's total of community chest contributions shows the expected 3 percent decrease from last year's \$83,871,576 there will be a loss of \$3 million all told—a cold figure on paper, more poignant when converted into loss of services to individuals.

The Gaines Case

THE recent ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court that Lloyd L. Gaines, young Missouri Negro, has a constitutional right to a legal education equal to that provided by the state for white students, may have far-reaching influence on Negro education throughout the South. In 1935, Mr. Gaines, a graduate of Lincoln University at Jefferson, Mo., was refused admission to the law school of the state university because of his race. Missouri has no law school for Negroes, but offered to pay the student's tuition at the university of any one of four adjacent states—Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois—where non-resident Negroes are admitted. Mr. Gaines refused this offer, and, backed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, carried his case to the courts. The decision handed down by Chief Justice Hughes holds that the question is "not of a duty of the state to supply legal training, or of the quality of the training which it does supply, but of its duty when it provides such training to furnish it to the residents of the state upon the basis of an equality of right." The implications of this decision reach far beyond the case of one Missouri citizen and his right to a legal education.

Some southern states provide higher education for Negroes leading to a bachelor's degree in art or science, but opportunities for publicly supported graduate or professional study for Negroes in the South are practically non-existent. In several southern states there are no public colleges for Negroes. Some of these states are already canvassing the effects of the Supreme Court decision.

The N.A.A.C.P. has several cases pending which raise the further question of discrimination against Negroes in southern public schools in respect to teachers' salaries, curriculum and equipment.

Carnegie Report

IN addition to its always impressive account of undertakings completed, in process, and newly launched, the current report of the Carnegie Corporation of New York is notable for a discussion by its president, Frederick P. Keppel, of funds for philanthropy. Dr. Keppel disagrees with the current view that the flow of funds for educational, scientific and cultural purposes is steadily and permanently diminishing. Admitting that such funds today are largely derived "from fortunes made under conditions which no longer exist and which will never return," he finds that

provisions from public funds and contributions from industry and commerce are more than compensating for the current decrease in "new large contributions from private sources."

Dr. Keppel marshals convincing evidence. His summary indicates that the sources of philanthropic funds, and the forms in which they are made available are changing, keeping pace with other changes of the day. But it clearly suggests that the future of philanthropy is less gloomy than many recent viewers-with-alarm would have us suppose.

Happy Birthday

A BALANCE sheet of the much maligned year 1938 would reveal on the right side of the ledger the lowest incidence of infantile paralysis on record. For the first ten months, only 1800 cases were reported to the U. S. Public Health Service. But those who have in the past observed the cyclic nature of poliomyelitis epidemics see in this fact only a warning and anticipate warily the 1939 "season" when the curve is due to ascend. For this reason, the Committee for the Celebration of the President's Birthday of the newly formed National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis is bending double efforts to make this year's fund raising campaign successful enough to finance the completion of a nation-wide organization against the disease. Crux of the plan is to fight the disease where it occurs, so that early treatment—vital for regaining muscular use—may be possible everywhere. The battles will be fought through local chapters in the country's 3071 counties, always with the help of knowledge and methods made available through the research of the National Foundation. These chapters, which are to be set up immediately following the culmination of the campaign on January 30, will receive half the money raised by their counties. The other half will go to the National Foundation. Thus this year the President's birthday will mark the declaration of the first organized war against a disease which always stages its most ravaging epidemics in this country. Like every war, it will need money.

Changes in the Board

MARY W. DEWSON, whose health forced her to resign as a member of the Social Security Board just before Christmas, has spent most of her crowded adult years in working for the common welfare. Miss Dewson's first job after graduating from Wellesley in 1897 was to do economic research for the Women's Educational and Industrial Union in Boston. Successively she was superintendent of the Massachusetts Girls Parole Department, secretary of the State Commission for Minimum Wage Legislation, zone chief of the Red Cross Bureau of Refugees in France, co-worker with Mrs. Florence Kelley in the National Consumers' League. For the past ten years she has played an active part in the political scene, collaborating closely with Franklin D. Roosevelt in his study of social questions both as governor of New York and as President. With her keen insight and social awareness, she has made notable contribution to the important early stages of administering the Security Act.

Ellen S. Woodward, assistant administrator of WPA, was appointed by the President to fill Miss Dewson's place on the board. Mrs. Woodward, long a leader in her native Mississippi, came to Washington in 1933 as head of the women's division of the CWA. Since July 1936, she has been responsible not only for women's projects under WPA, but also for a number of professional programs.

The Social Front

The AASW

LIKE the shoemaker's child who went barefoot, the American Association of Social Workers, alert to the organizational functioning of other agencies, particularly in relation to personnel practices, has been faced these past months by the embarrassing fact that its own functioning left something to be desired. Fundamental issues, recently discussed and dealt with by the association's executive committee, were precipitated by the dismissal late last August of Florence Taylor, assistant secretary, and by her statement submitted to the members of the executive committee on what she held to be the real issues underlying her dismissal by Walter West, executive secretary. Mrs. Taylor has been a member of the national staff since 1927, with special responsibility for administration of membership requirements. Latterly Mrs. Taylor had acted as secretary of subcommittees on technical requirements and on exceptional cases.

The facts in relation to Mrs. Taylor's dismissal seem to be something like this: From time to time Mr. West had indicated to her his opinion that she was devoting too much time to membership work and was not participating sufficiently in the general activities of the association. However, in January 1937, her salary, along with that of others of the staff, was raised by the executive committee.

In August 1938, Mr. West handed Mrs. Taylor a written evaluation of her services and a request for her resignation. The evaluation repeated criticisms of her membership work and added comment on what was said to be her inability to integrate her contribution with the rest of the association's program and her insensitivity to changing field conditions.

Mrs. Taylor did not feel that these criticisms represented the real reason for the request for her resignation. Rather she related that request to differences of opinion between Mr. West and one of the membership subcommittees, which she served as secretary, in respect to the content of its recommendations and the manner of their consideration. She felt that basic issues in democratic committee procedure were involved and declined to resign. She was then dismissed from the staff.

In late September, Mrs. Taylor sent to members of the association's executive committee, to Mr. West and to certain committee chairmen and members, a memorandum outlining what she held to be the issues behind her dismissal to-

gether with copies of the correspondence between her and Mr. West. Neither then nor since did she raise any question of reinstatement, her reason for this being, she said, "... not merely because I realized that the action of the executive secretary in dismissing me has destroyed any possibility of good working relations between us, but also because I want any discussion of this action to deal primarily with organizational issues."

SLIGHTLY SUBSEQUENT TO THE MAILING of Mrs. Taylor's memorandum Fern Lowry, a member of the executive committee, and of the subcommittee concerning whose procedures differences of opinion existed, addressed a letter to her fellow members of the executive committee and to twenty or so members of the association in different parts of the country. In this she asked them to discuss, not Mr. West's authority to dismiss Mrs. Taylor or the validity of his evaluation of her services, but "an organizational structure which fails to safeguard certain democratic procedures within a membership organization. . . ."

Miss Lowry's procedure in sending her letter to others than members of the executive committee raised many cross currents of discussion and criticism, but since the procedure seems to have had little to do with the ultimate action taken by the executive committee the matter need not be elaborated here. Miss Lowry has stated that she was not challenging Mr. West's authority to act, but was seeking guidance for her own thinking in advance of consideration of the issues by the executive committee.

Although the executive committee had an ad interim committee to deal with administrative emergencies, the president of the association, Harry Greenstein of Baltimore, decided that the whole matter properly should come before the executive body at its December meeting and appointed a committee to bring out the facts and identify the issues involved.

Meantime, the New York City chapter of the association had taken cognizance of the issues raised by Mrs. Taylor's dismissal and had referred the matter for clarification to its committee on grievances. This committee found, as Mr. Greenstein's fact-finding committee did later, that there was no question of Mr. West's authority to dismiss Mrs. Taylor nor of her reinstatement. It addressed itself to consideration of personnel practices and relationships within the association which seemed germane to the case. Its report, adopted by the chapter in late November, urged, among other things, that the national executive com-

mittee reexamine the division of responsibility between itself and the executive secretary of the association and that it give immediate attention to a revision of the employment practices of the national office "so as to bring them into conformity with the association's statement of desirable practices and that in such revision special emphasis be placed on definition of job specifications and organizational lines of responsibilities."

By the time the executive committee of the association met in early December—with 100 percent attendance, by the way,—it was clear that the committee's real concern, as Mrs. Taylor had insisted from the first, must be with the major issues of committee relationships and organizational policies that the case had raised. The discussion of the committee, much of it in executive session, extended over three days and a good part of the nights. In examining its own shortcomings the executive committee found that it had left too much responsibility to the decision of the executive secretary; that its meetings have been too infrequent, especially as the ad interim committee had proved an ineffective administrative device; that the work of the various committees was too loosely organized in relationship to the staff, the executive committee and each other; that it had developed no formal approved plan of personnel practices; that it had assigned too heavy a volume of work to the staff. As an explanation for these shortcomings it pointed out the underlying fundamental differences of opinion within the membership of the association concerning basic policies and program with resulting confusion to the staff.

AS MEASURES OF CORRECTION, THE executive committee resolved on certain action:

It affirmed the authority of the executive secretary for staff selection, management and discharge, but with action on major matters by and with the consent of the executive committee.

It abolished the old ad interim committee and established a standing administrative committee of seven, to be elected annually by the executive committee. This will meet approximately once a month and will act for the larger body on general matters including the administration of the budget.

It set up a personnel practices committee representing the staff, including clerical workers, and the executive committee, to develop promptly a plan for personnel practices and appeal procedures.

It set up a committee to formulate