

## HEALTH IS THE GREATEST HUMAN ASSET

**N**O ONE will disagree with the statement that health is the greatest of all human assets. To the individual good health is a treasure, especially when those near and dear to him are affected by poor health.

One of the strangest characteristics of the human family is its lack of interest or concern in the national health. Good health, the greatest gift of God to our material lives, is apparently little valued from a public standpoint.

If the public is interested in the health condition of all the people, why is it that a report issued by the Senate Committees on Education and Labor to Congress, showed that the most disgraceful health conditions exist in this the richest country on earth?

The fact that more than 4,500,000 young men "in the prime of life" were found unfit for military service and that another million or more have been discharged from the services because of defects developed from their health condition prior to induction into the service, is ample proof that our national health has been sadly neglected.

The same report states, that because of defects, injuries and illnesses which could have been prevented had proper medical care been available to all the people, the nation suffered great losses in manpower, both for the armed forces and industry.

The committee stated that a million and a half of men now in uniform were rendered fit for service only through medical and dental care provided by the government after they were inducted.

The committee also found that in 1943 600,000,000 man-hours of labor were lost and to that extent production suffered and the earning power of many workers was depleted.

It is a lamentable position for a great nation to find itself in and national prosperity is bound to suffer if such a condition continues.

From many years thousands of men and women have labored hard in the field of charitable health work. Millions upon millions of dollars have been donated to fight tuberculosis, cancer, infantile paralysis and many

other human ailments, and although from time to time we are cheered with reports of something being accomplished, these dread diseases continue to flourish and destroy life.

The health of every individual should be the concern of the people as a nation and nothing should be left undone to make sure that public health becomes a public responsibility.

We hear the cry "Socialized Medicine" and many people observe with great alarm that the medical world is going to be socialized. The great profession of medicine knows better than this. What greater ambition could a noble profession have than to see a nation strong, healthy and happy?

Public health should not be left to sentiment, charity or any other device which means uncertainty in securing the proper medical attention at the right time.

The Senate Committee report under discussion, recommended some remedies, which, although very minor compared with the needs of the nation, will be helpful if adopted by Congress. These recommendations include Federal grants to states to assist in the building of hospitals and medical centers.

The committee did not pass judgment on the matter of health insurance plans which have been advocated by nearly every progressive group in the country. The committee did say that health insurance is one way of meeting the problem and may be the only effective way.

The committee also said, "We have seen what neglect of opportunities for health and physical fitness has cost during the war. We should resolve now that never again, either in war or peace, will the nation be similarly handicapped."

The committee report was signed by Senator Claude Pepper, Senator Elbert D. Thomas and Senator Robert M. LaFollette, Jr.

Such outstanding men as the foregoing should command public attention and their recommendations should carry great weight in Congress. For a stronger and healthier America, let us hope and pray.

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### Organized Labor Helps Russia

More than \$700,000 as well as huge quantities of gifts in kind were contributed to Russian War Relief by organized labor in the past year, Edward C. Carter, president of the agency, told the board of directors at a meeting held in New York recently.

The A. F. of L. Labor League for Human Rights and the C.I.O. Allied War Relief Committee gave the money through the National War Fund, Carter said. The sum represents an increase of \$100,000 over the 1943 allotment for Russian War Relief from labor unions throughout the country. The gifts in kind were donated throughout the year during various RWR campaigns.

In presenting the annual report of the agency's operations, Carter revealed that the

American people as a whole gave \$22,695,112.71 in 1944, making a total of \$46,246,240 received in cash and goods in kind since the inception of Russian War Relief a little over three years ago. He emphasized the value of contributions by trade-unionists, who have vigorously supported this organization through their union locals.

Among the agency's directors are William Green, president of the A. F. of L., Philip Murray, president of the C.I.O., and A. F. Whitney, president of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen.

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Passenger traffic in 1944 was the greatest ever handled by the railroads in any one year, amounting to 95½ billion passenger miles, or an increase of nearly 9 per cent above the preceding year.