

LAW AND LEGISLATION

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Bills in Congress—The Sixty-Ninth Congress convened with a flourish on December 7, 1925, some 5,000 bills being introduced on the first legislative day. Most of them seem to be for public buildings in various favored localities. If a fraction of the money which these bills propose to spend for local betterments, sometimes referred to as "pork," were actually devoted to health centers or other public health activities, national vitality would be somewhat promoted, not to say improved.

Up to December 22, when Congress took a recess over the holidays, until January 4, nearly 10,000 bills had been introduced and one important measure, the tax reduction bill, had passed the House. The Post Office and Treasury Departments appropriation bill, containing the items for the Public Health Service, passed the House on January 4. Out of the legislative grist, there are 21 bills relating to public health before the House, and 11 in the Senate. Several of these bills are of considerable interest, and one or two are of real importance.

Rural Health—Mr. Bankhead introduced in the House on December 12, H. R. 5184 "to provide that the United States shall coöperate with the states in promoting the health of the rural population of the United States." This bill authorizes a permanent appropriation to the Public Health Service to coöperate with state boards of health in inaugurating and carrying on rural health work. The sum of \$240,000 would be authorized for the fiscal year 1926, and a like amount for each year thereafter, of which sum \$5,000 would go directly to the states. The following additional amounts are also authorized, \$250,000 for 1926, \$500,000 for 1927, \$750,000 for 1928, and \$1,000,000 for 1929 and each fiscal year thereafter. Five per cent of these moneys would be used for federal administration and the remainder would be allotted to the states. The states are required to match the federal appropriation with state funds in order to receive the former, and to

submit a plan of rural health work to the Public Health Service. In other words, the proposed act is similar to the Federal Maternity and Infancy Law of 1921. The bill was referred to the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce of the House.

Although Congress already has authorized permanent appropriations to the states for agricultural education, for vocational education, industrial rehabilitation, and other matters, and although rural health is just as important as are these other matters, there exists a well defined opposition to the system of federal subsidies, a position which may be well founded from the standpoint of government. This, together with the prevailing wave of economy, means that this bill probably has little, if any, chance of ever emerging from the committee to which it has been consigned.

Commissions for Sanitary Engineers—Senator Royal S. Copeland, on December 10, introduced S. 984 to provide a commissioned status for the sanitary engineers of the Public Health Service. Such commissions would be granted only after the engineer had passed an examination before a board of commissioned officers, except in the case of sanitary engineers already serving. When commissioned, these engineers would have rank, pay, allowances and status equivalent to the commissioned medical officers. This bill was referred to the Committee on Finance.

Commissions for sanitary engineers are reasonable and should be granted. There are, however, other scientists in the Public Health Service who should also have a commissioned status, as they are not now eligible to appointment in the medical corps. All of this personnel should, perhaps, be taken care of in one bill, and this is proposed in the plan for correlation of federal health activities. This proposal regarding personnel has the approval of the Surgeon-General and the Secretary of the Treasury and has a good chance for success at this session of Congress.

HOSPITAL MEASURES

A number of bills for hospitals and treatment have been introduced. These include:

H. R. 80, Mr. Hawes. For additional hospital facilities for colored patients at the Veterans' Hospital at Jefferson Barracks, Mo. Committee on World War Veterans' Legislation.

H. R. 324, Mr. O'Connell. Granting hospital treatment to postal employes suffering from tuberculosis, nervous diseases, or kindred occupational ailments in government-owned hospitals. Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads.

H. R. 330, Mr. Spearing. Authorizing additional facilities for the Public Health Service hospital at New Orleans. Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds.

H. R. 3876, Mr. Kelly. Authorizing construction of a Veterans' Bureau hospital at Philadelphia and additional facilities for the hospital at Aspinwall, Pa. Committee on World War Veterans' Legislation.

H. R. 3994, Mr. Woodruff. To admit dependents of officers and enlisted men to naval hospitals. Committee on Naval Affairs.

H. R. 5357, Mr. Edwards. Providing medical treatment for disabled ex-service men of all wars, and similar care for persons engaged in state or federal life saving service, and for drug addicts sentenced in federal courts. Committee on World War Veterans' Legislation.

PURE FOOD

S. 481, Mr. Cummins. To amend pure food law to include food products sweetened with corn sugar. Committee on Manufactures.

H. R. 3766, Mr. Browne. Would require advertisements of oleomargarine to set forth character of the product. Committee on Agriculture.

H. R. 4762, Mr. Haugen. Amending pure food law, to prevent fraud in containers. Committee on Agriculture.

H. R. 5188, Mr. Beck. To amend act of 1886 regarding butter and oleomargarine, to impose special taxes on dealers in and manufacturers of oleomargarine, to penalize adulteration of butter, and to regulate the sale of renovated butter. Committee on Agriculture.

NARCOTICS

H. J. Res. 65, introduced by Mr. Lineberger of California, providing for participation of the United States in a conference on narcotic education to be held in Philadelphia from June 29

to July 2, 1926, passed the House on December 21. A previous resolution, H. J. Res. 26, authorizing the United States to invite participation by other nations, was introduced by Mr. Lineberger. It mentioned that this conference had been called by the International Narcotic Education Association. This is the organization which wanted the last Congress to publish and distribute 50,000,000 pamphlets entitled "The Peril of Narcotics," prepared by the association, of which Richmond P. Hobson is president. (See JOURNAL for August, 1924, page 732.) Congress did not accede to this request. Senator Copeland has introduced a resolution in the Senate, S. J. Res. 27, to authorize participation in this Philadelphia conference.

Mr. Lineberger also proposes, in H. R. 411, to amend the narcotic import act of 1909. Senator Shortridge of California, where the headquarters of Mr. Hobson are maintained, has a bill, S. 1800, to authorize an appropriation of \$2,480,000 for federal subsidies to the states for prevention and control of drug addiction. This bill is similar in its administrative provisions to the Federal Maternity and Infancy Act. It has about as much chance to pass as the rural health measure mentioned above. In fact, it has less.

MENTAL HYGIENE

H. R. 95, Mr. Johnson, provides for care of insane citizens of Alaska, permitting them to be sent to the Government Hospital for the Insane in the District of Columbia. Committee on the Judiciary.

On December 14, the Honorable Mr. Blanton of Texas, interpolated into the consideration by the House of the tax reduction bill, a vitriolic attack on Dr. William A. White, superintendent of St. Elizabeth's, the Government Hospital for the Insane, because he had served as an expert witness in the Leopold and Loeb case. Dr. White was defended by Representative Kindred of New York, who is a physician and a lawyer. Two pages of the *Congressional Record* (372-374) having been thus wasted, the House resumed consideration of the tax reduction bill. In the Senate, Mr. Shipstead has introduced a resolution, S. Res. 84, calling for a Senate committee to investigate St. Elizabeth's. This is an outgrowth of charges of the Grand Jury of the District of Columbia as to overcrowding and other improper conditions.

On mental hygiene, see also H. R. 324 under hospitals above.

CHILD WELFARE

Mr. Davila, the delegate from Porto Rico, has introduced a bill, H. R. 5837, to extend the benefits of the Federal Maternity and Infancy Act to Porto Rico. Last year, this law was extended to include Hawaii.

A new child labor amendment has been proposed by Mr. Griffin in H. J. Res. 17. Committee on the Judiciary.

A DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Several bills for a federal department of education have been introduced. They are S. 291 by Mr. Curtis, H. R. 4097 by Mr. Tillman, and H. R. 5000 by Mr. Reed. The first and last are identical and follow the lines outlined in the October JOURNAL (page 941), as proposed by national educational groups. There would be a separate department, with a secretary in the Cabinet, and authorization for an appropriation of \$1,500,000. Physical education, including health education and recreation, would be one of the subjects dealt with. The Tillman bill calls for federal subsidies to the extent of nearly one hundred million dollars. The Curtis-Reed bill may receive consideration; the Tillman bill will get none.

MISCELLANEOUS

Oil pollution of coastal navigable waters would be prohibited by a bill, S. 94, introduced by Mr. Wadsworth and referred to the Committee on Commerce of the Senate. This measure would supplement the law passed during the last Congress by prohibiting pollution from land sources as well as from vessels. Senator Ransdell has also introduced an oil pollution bill, S. 1717, which would create a board consisting of the Secretaries of War, Interior, and Commerce, respectively, which board would be empowered to prescribe regulations to prevent oil pollution of navigable rivers.

A quarantine station at New Orleans is authorized by S. 450 (Mr. Broussard), and H. R. 3930 (Mr. O'Connor).

Pay of certain retired officers, including medical officers of the Public Health Service, is equalized in bills, S. 1786 (Mr. Wadsworth), and H. R. 5840 (Mr. Speaks). Committee on Military Affairs.

Uniform marriage and divorce laws would be authorized by a proposed amendment to the Constitution in S. J. Res. 31 (Mr. Capper) and H. J. Res. 58 (Mr. Taylor). The Director of the Census would be authorized to collect sta-

tistics on marriage and divorce by S. 1346 (Mr. Sheppard). Senator Johnson has introduced a resolution, S. J. Res. 14, providing for a constitutional amendment for the establishment of minimum wages for women and minors.

The District of Columbia has a bill, S. 120 (Mr. Wadsworth), H. R. 4055 (Mr. Mills) for mothers' aid, and a measure, H. R. 5044 (Mr. Zihlman), for a board of public welfare.

FEDERAL REORGANIZATION

There are a number of bills dealing with the reorganization of the federal executive departments, which would include reorganization of public health activities. These are the Edge Bill, S. 36, authorizing the President to transfer the whole or part of any executive agency as he sees fit; and the Smoot Bill, S. 1334, providing for a Reorganization Board, to consist of two senators, two representatives, and a person appointed by the President. On recommendation by this board, the President would be authorized to make transfers. A similar bill is before the House as H. R. 4770 (Mr. Mapes), while another bill, H. R. 4798 (Mr. Davey), would create a reorganization board of ten to be appointed by the President. The Smoot-Mapes bill is the one most favored, though whether it will pass or not is a question. Reorganization is badly needed and has been consistently advocated for a decade.

A plan for correlation of federal health activities has now been definitely worked out, after a year's study of the proposition, and is presented in another part of the JOURNAL.

CONVENTIONS

This calendar is published through the coöperation of the National Health Council, 370 Seventh Avenue, New York City. The Council will be glad to answer promptly any written or telegraphic inquiries regarding meeting dates in order to avoid conflicts.

February 15-17, Federation of State Medical Boards of United States, Chicago, Ill.

February 15-17, Council on Medical Education and Hospitals of the American Medical Association, Chicago, Ill.

February 18-20, National Vocational Guidance Association, Washington, D. C.

February 21-25, The Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association of the United States, Washington, D. C.

February 22-25, National Association of Deans of Women, Washington, D. C.

- February 22-27, American Congress on Internal Medicine, Detroit, Mich.
 March 15, Wyoming Public Health Association, Cheyenne, Wyo.
 March 30-April 1, Medical Society of the State of New York, New York City.
 April 2-3, American Association of Pathologists and Bacteriologists, Albany, N. Y.
 April 3, American Association of Anatomists, New Haven, Conn.
 April 12, National Convention on Prisons and Prison Labor, New York City.
 April 14-21, National League of Women Voters, St. Louis, Mo.
 April 15-16, Western Physiotherapy Association, Kansas City, Mo.
 April 19-23, American Medical Association, Dallas, Texas.
 April 27-29, Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland, Baltimore, Md.
 May 3, American Society of Clinical Investigation, Atlantic City, N. J.
 May 3-8, National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations, Atlanta, Ga.
 May 4-5, Association of American Physicians, Atlantic City, N. J.
 May 17-22, American Health Congress, Atlantic City, N. J.

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