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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE

EARL B. WIXCEY, CLERK

September 28, 1949

Mrs. Albert D. Lasker
Claridges
London, England

Dear Mary:

As you know by now, we not only got out to the floor but we have succeeded in actually passing the Aid to Medical Education bill, the Survey of Sickness bill, and a third bill in which we combined the Arthritis and Rheumatism bill with your other measure to make uniform the composition of all advisory councils. In each case, Senator Pepper did a magnificent job of handling the situation on the floor.

I am pretty sure that there always would have been at least one objection to the passage of the medical education bill on the consent calendar. That is why we had asked Anna Rosenberg to call your White House and Democratic Committee contacts in your name to help in getting the measure on the must list for floor debate before adjournment. The Senator and I, of course, did a lot of calling ourselves and Senator Pepper took it up with the Policy Committee. Subsequently Senator Lucas and the Policy Committee announced publicly that the bill would be scheduled for full floor debate. This made it possible for Senator Pepper to take advantage of an opportunity presented by an unexpected lull in the debate on military aid. He moved in fast and, with relatively few Senators present, got unanimous consent to make the education bill the pending order of business and then explained it so persuasively and lucidly that the bill was passed by a voice vote and without anyone objecting.

I am enclosing copies of all three bills and of the reports that were submitted to the Senate along with them. By now, I think you know the full story of the changes made in the Institutes bill and the reasons therefor. In each case, Norman assured me that, in view of the circumstances, the changes would be perfectly acceptable to you. I myself am quite sure that if we had held out for any more the bill might not have come

out from the Committee, and certainly would not have passed the Senate this session. Bill Reidy and I can think of only one other thing which you might have wanted included in the bill -- a provision giving the Councils greater authority. However, I understand that you had agreed to accept, for the present at least, Senator Pepper's S. 2272 making all the Councils uniform in composition and not extending their powers. We did succeed in incorporating that in to~~be~~ the Institutes bill. I am sure that any attempt to go farther would not only have blocked the bill in the Senate but would have meant administration disapproval. In any case, if the House goes along with us and we get the Institutes set up with uniform Councils the next step should be fairly simple. I am sure in my own mind that you would not have wanted us to risk creation of the new institutes because of this issue.

Like the Institutes bill, the Survey of Sickness bill came out of Committee sponsored by all thirteen members of the Committee. This assured its passage. It also accounts for the fact that the bill does not provide for an immediate survey but rather for a study of and a report on the methods which might be used in making such a survey. When the original bill was taken up, Senator Taft's opposition was quite extreme. He seemed convinced that the bill's real objective involved the compilation and dissemination of propaganda for health insurance. His attitude was such that I am sure that the bill would not even have gotten out of Committee. Fortunately, by shifting the discussion to methods of making the surveys, we got the gentleman so interested in this more technical problem that he was not only willing to support the study of methods but did not seem to notice that the bill commits the Congress to making periodic surveys. You will be glad to know -- and this is just between ourselves -- that Perrott of the Public Health Service assures us that he will do the same thing under this bill as he would have done under the original bill. In short, in studying methods of making surveys, he will actually conduct sample surveys, the results of which will be available to us. Moreover, I am sure that after his report is in we will be able to get much much larger appropriations with which to conduct really worth-while surveys than would otherwise have been possible.

All in all I am very happy with the results to date. We have not only gotten a great deal more out of Committee than I had dared hope for but each bill has come out with unanimous support and we have actually had them passed.

I think what has happened so far proves the wisdom of our policy of talking and talking and talking, bargaining back and forth, and taking whatever time might be required in unspectacular Committee work to get broad bipartisan support of our bills instead of just using our voting power to report out measures which would be bitterly opposed on the floor.

Now it is up to the House. In view of the brief time left before adjournment, and knowing that the House will, in all probability, not get through with what we have already sent over, we are not going to try to get any more measures through our Committee this session. Instead, I think we will attempt to reintroduce the Senate Resolution put through during the 80th Congress by Senators Taft, Donnell and Ball, granting funds to the Subcommittee on Health and authorization to conduct investigations and to make reports during the period of adjournment. If we succeed in this, it will give us what we need in order to prepare and distribute the report on health insurance which was discussed at your last Washington dinner.

I have only had time for a minute's conversation with Andy Biemiller since his return. His description of his pleasant luncheon with you both in Paris left me envious. It also seems to have filled Andy with a determination to do everything possible to force his Committee to act on our bills. I don't know how good his chances are since the entire Congress seems to be pretty well fed up and anxious to get home. Perhaps, however, you will be back in time to take hold of the boys over there and see to it that they stay on the job at least long enough to catch up with the Senate.

Hoping that you and Mr. Lasker have had a pleasant vacation, and looking forward to seeing you both very soon, I remain, with warm regards,

Sincerely,

Charles A. Murray
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