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HOME ADDRESS:
CARTHAGE, TENN.

COMMITTEE:
APPROPRIATIONS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, D. C.

October 11, 1945

Macon

Hon. Henry C. Johnson
Lafayette, Tennessee

Dear Henry:

I am in receipt of your letter concerning federal aid for establishing and equipping hospitals. The President has asked that appropriations be made for this purpose and several bills are pending in Congress, but as yet, no law has been passed.

I am enclosing a booklet regarding the advancement of funds to non-Federal public agencies to assist in the plan preparation of their public works, which includes hospitals. This fund is used only in the drawing up of plans.

You may be sure that I am most anxious to help our section, and will give these bills my careful consideration. If the money is appropriated for this fund and I can be of any service to Macon County, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely yours,

Albert Gore, M. C.

AG:EC

(People should remain free to choose their own physicians and hospitals. The removal of financial barriers between patient and doctor would enlarge the present freedom of choice. The legal requirement on the population to contribute involves no compulsion over the doctor's freedom to decide what services his patient needs. People will remain free to obtain and pay for medical service outside of the health insurance system if they desire, even though they are members of the system; just as they are free to send their children to private instead of to public schools, although they must pay taxes for public schools.

Likewise physicians should remain free to accept or reject patients. They must be allowed to decide for themselves whether they wish to participate in the health-insurance system full time, part time, or not at all. A physician may have some patients who are in the system and some who are not.

HENRY C. JOHNSON

ATTORNEY

LAFAYETTE, TENN

Oct. 3, 1945

Hon. Albert Gore, M.C.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Congressman:

Our county Health Nurse has just been talking to me regarding a government sponsored hospital program for rural counties, such as Macon. I had to admit I had not heard of it in the particular way she said the medical journals were outlining it, but promised I would learn from you what there is to it.

[Here is ^{our} Macon county's situation, briefly. We have only three licensed physicians in the county. The youngest of these is Dr. Howser, who is past 66 years of age and in a poor state of health, having spent several months of the past year in a Nashville hospital. Dr. Allen ^{The second doctor} has, for many weeks, been confined to his home, is well past 80 and will apparently never be able to practice again. ^{The other doctor} Dr. Kirby is nearing 70 and tells me he is doing only a limited practice. Two other unlicensed but practicing doctors are both past 70 and able to do very little.]

Altho funds are available, we have no county health doctor and the program is in the hands of Miss Thomas, county health nurse.

Where is there a section in Tennessee with so large an area and in such a plight for medical service? [If there is a government sponsored program for establishing and equipping hospitals for sections in such a unfortunate situation as we are in, we wish to know what we can do and what you can do to help us. Our county court is well aware of our serious need and ready to cooperate in every way but we are not able to build and equip a hospital on our own and [we have failed in all efforts to attract young physicians to this rural section, with no hospital and nothing to induce them.

HENRY C. JOHNSON

ATTORNEY

LAFAYETTE, TENN

Of course we will appreciate your assisting us with this problem, and if there is a government program for such conditions as ours, we need to get something under way.

If there is nothing available for us now, what is the prospect for the congress sponsoring such a program.

[Only yesterday, the victim of an automobile wreck was brought here and with no facilities for handling such a case, was kept here over two hours, with no attention, before he could be sent to ~~Lebanon~~ anon, our nearest hospital, where he soon died, when perhaps his life could have been saved with prompt and proper attention.] We do not have even any kind of ambulance service closer than Hartsville.

I think I have previously discussed our constantly growing need for something to be done which is beyond our ability to do for ourselves. [I hope you will have some good news for us.]

Cordially yours,

Henry Johnson

WSM, SUNDAY November 25, 1945

GOOD MORNING, FRIENDS:

President Truman, in perhaps his most forthright message to Congress, recommended the enactment of a far reaching health insurance program. The President took pains to explain that the program he was recommending was not 'socialized medicine.' Opponents of the program, ^{however} like Senator Taft for instance, immediately branded it ~~as~~ 'socialized medicine.' ^{over the last few years} A great campaign, ^{led by} ~~the~~ ^{the Am. Med. Society,} has been worked up over the country against socialized medicine. Realizing the effect of political labelling and catch-phrasing ^{or}, we see the President saying his program should not bear the label of socialized medicine and Senator Taft ^{+ other opponents} saying it should.

The one thing to which ^{so many} doctors have raised the most strenuous objection is that they might become regimented by the government and told what patients to accept, what fees to charge, what services to render; and on the other hand, in socialized medicine many doctors have also seen the possibility that patients would be assigned to certain doctors and that ^{the patients} ~~they~~ could not seek the services of other doctors, ~~while on the other hand,~~ ^{and other} doctors would not be allowed to attend patients not assigned to them by the government.

Now some people may have envisioned such a program, but the President ~~has~~ quite positively made it clear that he had no such thing in mind. For instance, he said,

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What is this system which the President has recommended? It is ~~divided~~^{important} into three parts. One, a health insurance program; two, a hospital building program, and three, a program of social objectives ~~regarding~~ relating to stability of income and other economic opportunities.

The President proposes that the first thirty-six hundred dollars of everyone's income be taxed for the purpose of providing a health insurance fund. From this fund people's doctor's bill would be paid. Justifying health insurance, the President said that "the American people are the most insurance minded people in the world. Everyone who carries fire insurance knows how the law of average is made to work so as to spread the risk. If instead of the costs of sickness being paid only by those who get sick, all the people -- sick and well -- were required to pay premiums into an insurance fund, the pool of funds thus created would enable all who do fall sick to be adequately served without overburdening anyone."

Now what are the reasons which prompted the President to recommend a nationwide health insurance program? Well, in his message he gives the reasons quite plainly. For instance, he said that millions of our citizens do not now have a full measure of opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health. The time has arrived, he said, for action to help them obtain the opportunity and that protection.

The President pointed out that nearly five million youngmen ~~had~~^{were} been found to be physically unfit for military service, which was about 30 percent of all those examined.

Going deeper into the problem, the President said that people with low or moderate incomes do not get the same medical attention as those with high incomes. ^{is said} "The poor have more sickness, but they get less medical care. People who live in rural areas do not get the same amount or quality of medical attention as those who live in our cities."

^{now} Right at this point I would like to digress from ^{for a discussion of the} the President's message and bring the problem home by examining the actual situation that exist in a large part of rural America.

^{to begin with,} The cost of becoming a doctor has become so exorbitant and the time required ^{to} as become so long that not many boys can raise the necessary money nor are willing to spend the necessary time to become a physician. It is quite natural that the few who do persevere want to practice in cities where they can have elaborate offices, modern hospital facilities and where, in addition, they and their families can live in ^{a more} elite social atmosphere. This is quite understandable and I am ~~not~~ in no way attempting to criticize a young doctor who wants to practice in the largest centers and enjoy the fullest measure of life. That is but natural, but how does it leave the people in the rural sections. I will tell you how it leaves them; it is

fast leaving them without ~~any~~ doctors, ^{as is illustrated by Macou Co and} ~~by the~~

~~There are many, many, in fact many thousands of,~~ small communities that once had one, two, or three doctors which now find themselves either without any or with only an aging physician who has remained loyal to them ^{through} to the

~~years,~~
~~lost.~~

As an example,

There are counties in Tennessee that do not have a doctor who has begun the practice of medicine there in forty years. In this connection I would like to read a letter which I received a few days ago from a leading citizen in one of the counties in Tennessee which it is my honor and privilege to represent in Congress. Here is the letter.

This is part of what the President is talking about but by no means all. He was speaking of health and medical care on a national basis and said, "We should resolve now that the health of this Nation is a national concern; that financial barriers in the way of attaining health shall be removed; that the health of all its citizens deserves the help of all the Nation."

To do this there are three basic problems which we must attack and attack vigorously. The first is the number and distribution of doctors in hospitals. We do not have enough doctors and those we do have are badly distributed, concentrated, as I heretofore said, mostly in large cities.

The second is the building of adequate and properly distributed hospital facilities.

The third involves the problem of money; that is bringing medical, dental, surgical and hospital care within financial reach of everyone. Many a poor man is actually not financially able to pay the expenses of adequate health care for himself, his wife and a house full of children. Instead, therefore, of having adequate health care, they only receive the minimum; only have a doctor or a dentist when the physical ailment becomes acute. A tooth is only pulled, for instance, after it is decayed and the toothache starts, when the tooth could have easily been saved with proper care earlier.

The president has boldly attacked this ^{great} problem and has proclaimed it a national problem. The fight will be bitter and long. ~~the opposition is already~~ ~~in fact, this is not~~ hard at work. ~~hard~~

Well, the P. Barker investigation is justifying the pr.