

British Medical Plan Popular; 1950 Election Won't Abolish It

System Has Proved More Costly Than Expected, But Has Done Much Good

Editor's Note: There has been a popular notion in America that if the Socialists lose the next British election a lot of their experiments will be abandoned. For example, the much-publicized scheme of state medicine.

The Scripps-Howard Newspapers sent E. T. Leech to the British Isles to study conditions there. He has done so for more than a month.

In this story, which is the sixth of a series, he discusses the medical plan and its future.

By E. T. LEECH, Scripps-Howard Writer

LONDON, Aug. 20—Britain's famous medical plan is here to stay, regardless of who wins the 1950 election. Private practice won't come back.

It is the one Socialist creation which is popular in Conservative as well as Labor Party ranks. In fact, with the election campaign starting, Conservatives are claiming it as their own baby.

There is much criticism of the state health system. This mainly has to do with abuses which have made it far more costly than expected:

and with delays in getting hospital care, dental service and eyeglasses. England did not have enough hospitals, doctors, nurses or facilities suddenly to take the whole population under its medical wing.

Short-cut, by overworked doctors trying to see enough patients to make a living, also bring many complaints. Doctors—who get a state fee of \$3.40 a year for each patient on their list, up to a maximum total of 4,000—are unhappy. Many work at least twice as hard as ever before for about half the income. They are demanding higher fees.

DENTISTS are under heavy fire. A nation never much given to dental care rushed in for treatments and false teeth. Fees recently were cut about a fourth, but dentists still do far better than physicians. The papers print stories about excessive dental incomes (up to \$100,000 a year in one case) through mass services often performed largely by office helpers. Numerous investigations into quality of work have been made.

Opticians are swamped. It takes three months to a year to get spectacles—and a long time for eye operations. London's County Council has been investigating charges that school children must wait more than three months for glasses, even in critical cases.

Breaking or losing your spectacles in England is a major tragedy. An angry M. P. recently told Commons about an elderly couple who had been using the same pair of spectacles for more than a year after the husband lost his.

Hospitals are flooded with patients. Many serious cases must wait for long periods to gain admittance. Once in the hospital, they are rushed home as soon as is physically possible. This situation is due not only to a shortage of doctors, but also of nurses, technicians and staffs. It is hard to recruit nurses, but medical schools are filled.

DOCTORS are hounded by some patients whose main object is to get their money's worth. They may not be ill. Or they may want prescriptions for such minor medical supplies as aspirin or a roll of adhesive tape.

If the doctor signs an order, a patient can get almost anything without charge—such as a hot water bottle. The matters of free wigs, medicinal spirits and special corsets for women have received a lot of attention. But even critics of the medical plan told me they had been exaggerated, and that such instances are now declining.

However, doctors do have to submit to endless appeals to fill out forms. If a doctor orders it, a family may get a larger hospital unit, on grounds of medical necessity. Or an extra coal ration. Or an increase in some rationed food.

But early abuses of the health

Nationalized Next?

U. S. for Ending Marshall Aid in 1952, Howard Says

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British newsmen questioned him at length about the current series of articles about Britain by Edward T. Leech, senior editor of the Scripps-Howard Newspapers.

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He told newsmen at Heathrow airport that the Leech articles as a whole do not blame the present British Labor Government for all the problems confronting Britain. He said they recognized that some

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But he added that there is concern in the United States about its own treasury.

"There is a bottom to our barrel, too," he said. "There is an awakening to the fact in the United States that world demands on the United States are not diminishing but continuing to increase. A halt has got to be called."

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NOTICE CHRYSLER EMPLOYEES
ALL EMPLOYEES REPORT FOR WORK ON THEIR REGULAR SHIFT MONDAY, AUG. 22.
CHRYSLER CORPORATION
NEW CASTLE, IND., PLANT

Times Artist Wins Prize

World Report—
Times Artist Wins Prize



J. Hugh O'Donnell, Indianapolis Times editorial artist, was a winner in the Disabled American War Veterans editorial contest. His cartoon, entitled "Peace Record Equaling War Record," placed second in the national contest. Mr. O'Donnell is shown at his drawing board in The Times editorial rooms.

British Tired of Yankee Insults, London Paper Says

Assails Leech's 'Poison Pen' Articles and Raps American 'Claptrap' and 'Downright Lies'

LONDON, Aug. 20 (UP)—London's Sunday Pictorial will tell the United States tomorrow that the British are "damned annoyed" at the "lies and slanders" of American critics.

The Pictorial, an independent, pro-Labor tabloid newspaper with a circulation of 5 million, will carry a banner headline proclaiming:

"We British Are Tired of the 'Poison Pen' Attacks and Raps American 'Claptrap' and 'Downright Lies'."

The Pictorial will be a cartoon reproduced from an American newspaper showing a shabby John Bull begging in front of a "socialism saloon."

The text calls American criticism of the Labor government "downright lies . . . arrant-claptrap . . . a thundering insult . . . the comment of power drunk political wire pullers."

"It is fair to say that the British are tired. In fact, we're damned annoyed."

Even severe critics admit it has done much good for the poor—especially women and children. Under the old system, in which employed men got medical service from "panel" or company, doctors, their families were not included. The mother and child in poor homes often did not get attention until critically ill. There was a great deal of free care in voluntary hospitals, as in America. But a great many lacked it.

Faults or no faults, the British people plan to hang on to what they now have.

Tomorrow: Will Freedom Be Nationalized Next?

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