

WELFARE REFORM

Guest Editorial

Happenings That Affect the Future of Every Individual National and International Problems Inseparable from Local Welfare

Our beloved legislators, aided and abetted by a loyal army of bureaucrats, have done it to us again. They have made a mess more difficult to unscramble than a dozen eggs, and it is costing all of us, as taxpayers, several hundred million dollars a year with the assurance that it is going to cost a lot more. The name of the game is welfare, and what a game it is!

Business Week magazine reports on a study of welfare programs made public by Representative Martha Griffiths who is chairman of the Joint Economic Committee's subcommittee on fiscal policy. The study was made with the help of the General Accounting Office and covered benefit records of typical households in six poverty areas. As Business Week puts it, the study "— documents for the first time the widely suspected fact that some families can get more out of the \$100-million non-system of federal, state, and local benefit programs than they could possibly earn. — and more than many of their neighbors do earn."

The examples are legion. One woman in an Eastern city was reported to be collecting \$416 a month, tax-free, from five or more benefit programs. The average wage of an employed woman in the same neighborhood is \$371. In addition to killing incentive, the present welfare hodgepodge actually makes it impossible for many of its beneficiaries to work for a living if they have any regard for the well-being of their families. If a woman receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children gets a job, the benefits she receives drop to 67 percent. The price of food stamps goes up as earnings rise, and if the family lives in subsidized housing the rent increases also. Representative Griffiths points out, "— As a result, the family's total income may increase by only a few cents per dollar earned." But the penalties are even harsher than this, as Business Week explains, "In many states, medicaid stops dead when income rises one dollar above the eligibility limit, confronting a family with the possibility of medical bills double or treble its earned income." In such situations as this, there is no way out of the welfare squirrel cage once a family gets into it.

The Griffiths study shows that most "professional" welfare households receive money from more than one program, often as many as six or seven. The record was held by a family collecting from 11 programs and averaging better than \$700 a month. Households receiving benefits from five or more programs generally had incomes above the official federal poverty lines of \$4,137 for a family of four, and in two neighborhoods benefits — exceeded the \$6,500 adequate-income level advocated by the National Welfare Rights Organization."

Public attitudes toward those who want to reform welfare "non-systems" and get benefits to those who really need it will have to change before any action is likely to come. We must accept the fact that those who work for a living should earn more money than those who don't and live solely on welfare. People on welfare who work should receive more money than those who don't, and welfare systems must be coordinated to avoid overlapping and pyramiding of benefits for those diligent enough to make a career out of getting all they can. Practically everyone agrees with these reform goals and with the point that the incentive to work, as well as the opportunities for employment, must be improved.

If we really want to control government spending and keep the tax collector from beating more dollars out of us, there must be the broadcast kind of public support for welfare reform at the state and local as well as the federal level. Reform in plain English means cutting out welfare programs that make professional freeloaders out of people who would rather not be. It means designing programs that get benefits to those who really need them. It means that there will have to be public support for elected representatives, who are often pictured as heartless, cruel, penny-pinching destroyers of humane programs to help the poor, when in fact they may only be designing better welfare systems that will come a little closer to doing the job



50 YEARS AGO

June 15, 1923

J. H. Backus, Publisher

Announcement has been received at the News Office this week of the graduation of Clarence W. Hardy in the medical class of 1923 from the University of Michigan. He states that he will enter Louisville City Hospital, Louisville, Kentucky, July 1st for a three-year internship.

Miss Anna Joyce closed her school Thursday with a picnic and program. She will teach in the same school the coming year.

Mrs. Guy Wood is assisting at the State Bank during the absence of Mr. Fuller, who had tonsilectomy.

Sheridan Witter is filling in vacation periods at the Burrows' National Bank during the summer vacation.

Mrs. Flora Bess is spending a few days with Mr. and Mrs. T. G. Burdick at Tip Top.

L. E. Davis and Fred Slocum are assisting Floyd Slocum on the barn for Will Clarke.

Fred Withey of Buffalo, was the guest of his sister Mrs. C. S. Lusk of Tip Top for a few days last week.

Mrs. E. V. Greene of Tip Top, spent one day last week in Almond guest of her mother, Mrs. Anna Tucker.

In spite of the inclement weather Thursday, the closing exercises of the Lane School District were enjoyed by about forty patrons and friends. It marked the end of a very successful term, taught by Miss Emily J. Clarke. Everyone is pleased to know that Miss Clarke will continue the good work next year.

The Davis Hill School closed Friday with a picnic which was enjoyed by the children and parents.

Miss Ella Dunne of Rexville and Robert Flynn of Toledo, Ohio, were united in marriage at St. Mary's Church in Rexville, Monday by the Rev. Father Silke. They were attended by Miss Mary McNeill of Rexville and Leo Flynn, brother of the groom.

The body of Mrs. James McGinty was brought to Andover Monday, June 11th, from New York City, where she had been for the past two years, and interment was in the family plot in St. John's Cemetery, Andover.

Joseph Eberle of Olean and Lewis H. Atherton of Cuba, have rented the Swink Hotel of Peter Huyek, and taken possession.

Walter Lanphear left Andover Tuesday evening for Salem, West Virginia, where he will pass a few weeks guests of his daughter and family, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Carpenter.

Miss Florence Dougherty was home from Hornell Business School to pass the weekend with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Dougherty.

Mrs. Ellen Ferguson and daughter, Clara, of Cameron Mills, are visiting her sister, Mrs. Raphael Cook.

Mrs. H. G. Clark is visiting at the home of her sister, Mrs. E. N. Johnson of Whitesville.

Miss Emily J. Clarke was a guest of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Pease Fri-

day and Saturday.

Mrs. Emma Kelley of Whitesville was a guest of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Church, Thursday and Friday of last week.

Mr. and Mrs. B. A. Clair left

Thursday morning by auto for a visit with their son, Everett Clair at Philadelphia, Pa.

Mrs. Loretta Quigg is in Rochester today attending the graduation of her brother, Dannie, from the Mechanics Institute.

Miss Doris Wagner was home from Sand Hill, where she is teaching, to pass the week-end with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Wagner.

Mrs. Grant Sherwood was a guest at the home of her daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Church of Voorhees Hill, Tuesday and Wednesday.

40 YEARS AGO

June 9, 1933

J. H. Backus & Son, Publishers

Former Andover Priest, the Very Rev. Patrick C. Tracy, celebrated the 35th anniversary of his ordination at Wellsville, Tuesday.

Mrs. Roxie B. Hans, 56, died at her home on Greenwood Street, Thursday, June 1. Her husband, a son, a sister and a brother survive. Funeral services were held Sunday with the Rev. Frank H. Bisbee officiating. Interment was

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by Alex Rankin

The 1973 session of the Legislature is history and now 207 Senators and Assemblymen are back home trying to explain their \$3,500 a year pay hikes and other legislation they passed or killed.

They are also trying to catch up on sleep.

While their constituents were on vacation, legislators were working through the Memorial Day weekend in the annual session-closing mess when bills suddenly appear out of nowhere and are passed with little debate and less reflection.

Bills that were defeated earlier in the session suddenly appear again and are passed. The pay hike bill was passed shortly after midnight.

And after it is all over the man who has all the power in Albany, Gov. Rockefeller has his final say. For the next month he will be vetoing bills or signing them into law.

During the closing hours of the session the governor suddenly appeared in the Capitol press room, and he made it very clear that he has little respect for Republican Assembly Speaker Perry B. Duryea, Jr. and Republican Senate Majority Leader Warren M. Anderson.

Normally a visit by a rank and file Republican legislator to Rockefeller's office is a rarity. This year it was commonplace. Rockefeller normally likes to wheel and deal at a distance, through Duryea and Anderson. This year, he let it be known, the leadership in his opinion was so poor he had to deal with the "commoners" in person.

Of course, Duryea and Anderson interpret this as independence. They refused to buckle under to the governor, who called in the legislators as a last resort.

Which sounds good unless you look at the record and discover that in terms of major legislation — drug laws, the Adirondack Park Agency, pension reform — the governor got what he wanted.

Rockefeller had to compromise to get an additional \$500 million in bonding power for the Urban Development Corp. He had to agree to language in the bill giving, for the first time, towns and villages the power to veto UDC projects.

Which is not much of a compromise when you remember that despite all the controversy over UDC, it has yet to use its own power to override local zoning regulations.

The Legislature gave him a pension reform measure and he didn't like it, so now the governor will call them all back to the Capitol in July in a special session to deal with the subject. The gov-

ernor wants local municipal pension systems to conform to the pension reforms he negotiated with state employees.

With the Legislature happily adjourned until July, the governor is into the 30-day bill signing period, vetoing legislation and signing others into law.

With his pen Rockefeller consummated the Urban Development Corporation deal he hammered out during the session. He signed into law a bill allowing town and village governments the power to veto UDC projects and granting the giant public corporation another \$500 million in bonding power.

In order to get the \$500 million from legislators, particularly those from Westchester County where UDC had run into a brick wall over proposed housing projects, the governor had to agree to the local government veto power.

Until he signed the bill into law, UDC had the power to override local vetoes by zoning boards.

Rockefeller vetoed a bill that would have allowed local school districts to include funds for interscholastic sports programs in "contingency" budgets that can go into effect without voter approval after voters have defeated regular budgets.

He also vetoed a bill that would have repealed a law requiring all school districts to have fire alarms that are tied directly to the nearest fire departments. Instead he signed a bill putting the requirement for such alarms off for one year.

Rockefeller signed a bill into law requiring that all voluntary and proprietary hospitals file annual reports with the State Health Commissioner listing financial transactions and disclosing the true fiscal conditions of the hospitals.

Another bill signed into law forbids horse racing on Easter and Palm Sunday. It is an amendment to the new Off-Track Betting Corporation set up by the Legislature.

Rockefeller also signed into law a bill expanding school work-study programs.

The new law, which takes effect September 1, allows 14 and 15 year old students enrolled in work study programs to be employed up to four hours on any school day and up to a total of 28 hours a week.

Another bill the governor signed brings all landfills, incinerators, recycling centers, and other solid waste disposal facilities under the control of the State Department of Environmental Conservation. State and local health departments have shared the responsibilities for landfills in the past.

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