conviction in a dramatic way. Despite the risk involved, they could not afford to let free and responsible enterprise handle the case. Polio to them meant power.

The theatrical performance of polio foundation and various public health officials in the Salk vaccine Follies of 1955 is too recent to need additional comment here. The part played by physicians and politicians, however, is less clear.

The Role of Physicians

With a few notable exceptions (such as Shelby County, Indiana, Multnomah County, Oregon, and several places in Idaho), physicians themselves, by their failure to stand up and tell the world of their scientific misgivings, by their failure to insist on having no part in the program until adequately assured that it would be neither collectivist nor detrimental to the interests of their patients, must assume their share of responsibility for what transpired.

When the matter of participating in the proposed mass tests of 1954 was first broached to doctors by the polio people and their associates in the U.S. Public Health Service (it was conceded that the testing required the assistance of practicing physicians), the invitation was accompanied by a strong hint that, if physicians refused to go along with this experiment designed to end polio, their public relations "undoubtedly" would suffer.

Conditioned as physicians have become to the doctrine that maintenance of good public relations is somehow more important to them than measuring up to their professional responsibilities, many of them succumbed to these blandishments and agreed to take part in the test program. Having capitulated to expediency in 1954 it was hardly possible for them to remain aloof in 1955. Thus many doctors found they had actually abrogated their medical responsibility and become involved in technics which were distasteful to them and which, if carried to a logical conclusion, could destroy both private medicine and their profession.

The Role of Politicians

Turning to the role of politicians in the fiasco, it simply followed the unchangeable pattern of political behavior; namely, that every contingency is put to the accumulation of political power at the expense of social power. Whether the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis realized it or not, the Salk vaccine program was just such a contingency.

No legislation, no politician, made any improvement in the Salk vaccine, made it safe, or prevented or cured a single case of poliomyelitis. Yet politicians wound up with the Foundation's Salk vaccination program right in their own bailiwick. Out of the Foundation's misguided enthusiasm came Public Law 377, the "Poliomyelitis Vaccination Assistance Act of 1955." It does nothing to counter polio that couldn't and wouldn't have been done in the normal course of events by existing mechanisms, but it does provide for expenditure of $30,000,000 by an administrative bureaucracy.

Of the $30,000,000 appropriated, $5,000,000 may be used for planning, administering and conducting vaccination programs. What private business would long permit itself the luxury of a 16 per cent administrative overhead?

To stimulate prompt "compliance" by the states with the federal program, appropriated funds will be made available only until February 16, 1956. To qualify for its share a state must fulfill the following conditions:

1. It must have an approved plan; that is, one acceptable to federal bureaucrats.

2. The vaccine must be used only for eligible groups; priorities are established by the U.S. Public Health Service Surgeon General (on the advice of a politically-named National Advisory Committee, which can be ignored).

3. No means test may be applied in polio vaccination programs conducted by public agencies; any ability or desire to pay must be disregarded.

4. Only one state agency may administer the program; all necessary reports, accounting and so forth must be maintained; and vaccine must be made available throughout the state.

Some people, particularly physicians, sincerely hold that socialized medicine in America is as dead as the dodo. Under that label it is. But a number of Public Laws 377, no matter what they are called, constitute socialized medicine. A collectivity of such laws will turn the run-of-the-mill physician into a precinct committeeman, while the man of integrity will give up medicine for some decent occupation—like driving a truck.

Fitness Not Required

Democratic government grew out of the basic assumption that sociology is not a science, and that a cobbler is as competent to make laws as is a college professor or a business man. "Any cook can learn to run the government," was Lenin's slogan. Running the government is the only public activity for which we require no assurance of fitness.

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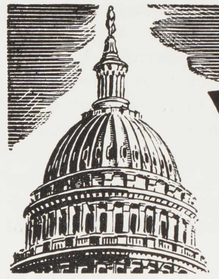

WASHINGTON, D.C.

by Frank C. Hanighen

The "interregnum," as it is being called, has made Washington a city of confusion these fall days. The President's illness has brought about a situation of great political uncertainty and transition, but it has also created a vacuum in the nation's capital. With the President away and some of his aides out of town visiting him, with the Congress adjourned and its members scattered among the constituencies (or on junkets around the world)—there remains little public activity in the center of federal government. Hence, those staying there direct their gaze outward, scrutinize developments in the several states and seek to measure events with the slide rule of Washington judgment.

One major field which interests those on Capitol Hill and Constitution Avenue is the developing labor conflict. That struggle largely centers on one highly important issue. This correspondent, writing in the FREEMAN (February 1955), described the "right to work" laws, passed in seventeen states, which ban the "union shop" or clauses in labor contracts that force workers to join unions, and reported that the Capital anticipated a prolonged national conflict over them. Such a forecast has not gone far astray.

In terms of legislation, the country-wide battle between employers and unions on this issue has resulted in little change. One more state passed a "right to work" law, but meanwhile labor union lobbying has prevented passage of such laws in other states. Generally, the result has been a standoff in the cockpits of the state capitals.

In terms of events on the firing line, however, two significant engagements have resulted in real decisions—although how final the outcome may be remains to be seen. First, Walter Reuther's United Auto Workers Union in the past year has mounted a severe and bloody offensive against the Kohler Company, Wisconsin plumbing goods concern. Violent picketing and sanguinary mob action by imported goons failed to shake the management or the anti-union sentiments of a large number of employees in their resistance to the union demand for a "union shop." In one phase of this struggle, the union by well-organized violence stopped the unloading of two shiploads of pottery clay, destined for Kohler, at a nearby lake port. The union succeeded in this by intimidating local authorities. However, this picture of insolent goons and quavering municipal officials caused such an adverse reaction in Wisconsin that a reluctant, "liberal" governor felt it necessary to threaten to use the militia to protect subsequent shipments to Kohler. The union leaders, apparently realizing that they had gone too far, did not challenge the state's authority and late in October two clay shipments arrived at the plant without serious trouble.

Reuther also sought to force compulsory unionism on a plant in Newcastle, Indiana—the Perfect Circle Corporation, manufacturers of piston rings—in a dramatic battle which came to a climax early in October. The same pattern of violence, obviously well organized by the United Auto Workers Union, culminated in an exchange of gunfire between workers in the plant and goons outside. Again the labor attackers had to retreat when state authorities took effective action by militia to protect the right of workers to enter the plant. In this case, it was significant that the Perfect Circle Corporation, which has four other plants in Indiana, peacefully concluded one labor contract with another CIO union, the United Steel Workers, and that the contract contained no union shop provision—the "sticking point" in the affray between Reuther's union and the other Perfect Circle plants.

In short, Reuther's strategy had been to throw in the shock troops in certain theaters of this war against employers to win the essential bastions of "union shop." Organized union leadership on a national scale, as Washington observers see it, has reached a point where it cannot win or retain union membership by real response from the rank and file of workers, and consequently resistance to the "labor bosses" has so increased that the union strategists are literally "up against it."

Now, local resistance to goon rule may—as in Wisconsin and Indiana—check campaigns directed by union headquarters. But, Washington wonders, will Reuther (and other labor chieftains as well) next seek to solve this problem by arrangements with big business? Union deals on a national scale with gigantic corporations have in the past forced smaller concerns to make concessions to labor unions which they would not otherwise have made. Officers of such mammoth companies, harassed