as great as health and life itself. While no one could persuasively argue that non-profit hospitals, particularly government hospitals, are run properly, they are not in fact directly operated for a profit. They are legally required to admit and treat patients unable to pay for their services, a requirement not imposed upon profit hospitals. They are eligible for public funds to improve facilities and services; profit hospitals are not. Most members of the board of directors of private non-profit institutions, though commonly bankers, lawyers, and other establishment types, do often use the hospital services themselves.

Not so with profit hospitals. These facilities are operated for a profit, often by absentee owners in other states who just happen to be in the health business instead of the coal business. For instance, St. Luke's Hospital in Bluefield is owned by Extendicare, Inc., of Louisville, Kentucky. Raleigh General Hospital in Beckley is operated by the Hospital Corporation of America, whose headquarters is in Knoxville, Tennessee. Doctors Memorial Hospital in Welch and Guyan Valley Hospital in Logan are both owned by the Wisconsin Shoe Company Group, Inc., of Kansas City. This same

shoe company also owns Gassaway General Hospital in Braxton County. Closer to home, Bluefield Sanitarium, Inc., besides owning the state's largest profit hospital at Bluefield, also operates the Stevens Clinic Hospital in Welch. Its president, W.H. St.Clair,Jr., of Charlottesville, Virginia, has extensive holdings in banking, mining, and lumbering in southern West Virginia. The same family corporation which owns Beckley Hospital also owns Oak Hill Hospital in Fayette County. Two of its four officers are former governor Hulett Smith and Beckley Mayor John McCullough, who have large interests in real estate, banking, and insurance in the Beckley area.

Regardless of who owns them, all profit hospitals are run by the naked profit motive, not by what is best for sick people. From this fact flow the many evils of the profit hospital industry. For the only way a profit can be made is to keep operating costs below incoming revenue. As costs are kept down, so inevitably is the quality of health care. The difference between costs and revenue is not merely a financial one; it can be the difference between restored health and continued illness or death.