

BOOK REVIEWS

Medical Care for the American People. The Final Report of the Committee on the Costs of Medical Care. Adopted October 31, 1932. Reprinted by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Public Health Service. Health Services and Mental Health Administration. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1970.

The Committee on the Costs of Medical Care is a bittersweet episode in the annals of medical care. We have read its reports, recall its precepts, acknowledge its legacy, and with equal ease point to the limitations imposed upon it by a vocal and powerful minority, identifying thereby the gap between its promise and what might have been. It is for this reason that HSMHA issued at this time a reprint of the final report of the CCMC, *Medical Care for the American People*, and why John Cashman and I. S. Falk refer to its relevance in their respective introductions. Cashman, in the foreword, for example, believes that the Committee's conclusions and recommendations are "very relevant," and Falk, in an introductory essay, which despite its brevity is an outstanding descriptive statement of CCMC's effect on health policy in this country, describes the report as "a useful background for many aspects of the current scene"—that the process and results of the Committee's deliberations, and the solutions proposed, are instructive "because the problems on which they focus bear kinship with those of today." It is more than historical curiosity, then, that resurrects the final report, but rather its utility. Are they correct? Is there reason to reissue the final report now, or would it have been better to have left it enshrined with other classics of medical care, revered but belonging to an era long past? The text itself provides the answer.

The final report begins with a capsule of medical care; gives highlights from the Committee's 26 fact-finding studies; identifies the nature of the problems as a need to devise remedies for a system characterized by deficiencies and wastes; and describes the relationship between medicine and economic activity. In subsequent chapters may be found other medical care desiderata, such as the essentials by which the soundness and appropriateness of medical care programs may be judged; plans for coordination, administration, and financing of health services; a review of 25 health care

programs under various professional, consumer, community, or commercial sponsorship; and an exposition of the Committee's principal recommendations. Following the report are two minority reports and two personal statements, one declaring that the recommendations of the Committee did not deal adequately with the fundamental economic questions which the Committee was primarily formed to study and consider, and the other an attempt by an individual to rephrase the issues and offer recommendations with less restraint and duplicity than the Committee of necessity had done collectively.

Although very few will question the value of rereading such thoughtful material (especially the second and third chapters on the essence of a satisfactory medical program and an ultimate objective in the organization of medicine), and many will acknowledge both its interest and importance as a primary document, can we legitimately ascribe to the principle of utility?

Falk argues in the affirmative. The problems and needs of our present time—"for better organization for the availability and delivery of personal health service, more extensive community-wide public health services, more comprehensive insurance for the group payment of the costs, more effective coordination of planning and performance among the private and public services for health maintenance and care, and a more nearly adequate system of resources for the education and training of the personnel required for all of the needed health services"—he concludes, reminds us of the problems with which CCMC grappled in 1927-1932 and which were, for the most part, thought to be resolved by the members of CCMC who prepared its majority report and formulated its five principal recommendations.

In this sense of continuity, then, the final report is indeed useful. Rereading the text we acquire insight, knowledge, and humility; but utility also touches on wisdom and judgment. Interpreted in this manner, the decision to reprint the final report may be questioned. It is more than just the primary document that is needed at this crucial time, but rather a history of CCMC itself. In such a work—based on the manuscripts of such principal players as Davis, Emerson, Falk, Moore, Sinai, Sydenstricker, Wilbur, and Winslow, a review of the CCMC Collection found in part in the Wilbur

Papers (located in the Lane Medical Library at Stanford), and the potential of the oral memoir technique—we would learn, by studying as Falk suggests the process and results of the Committee, how a health policy is pieced together. It is the dynamics and interrelationships that took place within CCMC, the role of accident, the ambiguities and elegance of compromise, and the struggle and anguish necessary to bring ideas forth that is the stuff of history. Long out of print, a personal copy of the final report, provided gratis by HSMHA, is a welcome addition to our libraries. But rereading the text only whets the appetite; we need to know so much more.

Arthur J. Viseltear, PhD

The Use of Land. A Citizens Policy Guide to Urban Growth. Edited by William K. Reilly. Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York, 1973.

This 318-page task force report is highly informative and readable. Sponsored by the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation, it presents critical problems and potential solutions in the control of land use. It is well worth the trouble to skim, read, or study in depth.

A particularly well written summary emphasizes recommendations under headings of "Open Space, Historic Preservation (much more than monuments), Adapting Old Laws to New Values, Development Regulations, Development Incentives and Opportunities, Lot Sales in Rural Areas, and the Role of the Citizen." These recommendations are courageous and far reaching. It is assumed that continued growth and urbanization are inevitable but should be controlled in the public interest.

The task force was drawn from academia, officialdom, the law, banking, economics, and national citizen associations. One land developer sat on it. A professional staff and advisers supported the effort. Emphasis is understandably on the economic, legal, and political aspects of controlling land use.

The report describes problems faced in four locations of particularly rapid growth—Florida, California, Colorado, and Long Island. New concepts for regulation are described, enabling ownership to remain in private hands while beneficial land use is achieved. Noncompensatory control is discussed. A National Land Trust is recommended to assist regional planning and

control. Other techniques are suggested such as density transfer (from one tract to another) and pooling; incentives for development in place of restraints; citizen participation in all aspects of control; clustering developments for maximum open space; and comprehensive planning.

The limitations of traditional zoning are graphically described and the use of environmental impact statements and measures is suggested as a substitute or supplement. "Make it profitable to do it right."

Admittedly, little is said about the effect of land use on public health. (For that subject see the APHA 1972 position paper on land use.) Other effects of land use are also set aside, such as transportation, air and water pollution, waste disposal, agriculture, and industry. Instead, the study concentrates on methods of planning and

control and on a most fundamental issue, namely, the extent to which we must modify our traditional concepts of land ownership and sovereignty if we are to survive. The position taken is courageous, explicit, and encouraging, and the mood of the people today is described as permitting, even demanding, such changes in attitudes.

The report's shortcomings and omissions stem from the magnitude of the problem and from the editorial choice to concentrate on methods of control. I would welcome greater attention to planning methods and to the long term reconciliation of beneficial development with public demands. Exclusions pose real problems. In a comprehensive plan there can be no "elsewhere" in which to place uses and persons not wanted "here." At the same time the report is a long one and

would be improved by shortening. What report (or book review) wouldn't be? "I wish I had time to write you a short letter." Yet it reads well and, except for Chapter V, I did not find it wordy. And that chapter is probably the most important one in the book.

The report concludes with a useful description of potential citizen participation in many specific areas. An optimistic prognosis is made of beneficial results from citizens' efforts.

The Use of Land is not a bible nor even a comprehensive guide. Its subtitle might more accurately read, "A Citizens Guide to Controlling the Use of Land." But it is a heartening and affirmative statement of where we stand on control of land use and where we should be going. I commend it highly.

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