

THE NEXT STEPS

The indications are that the Federal Government is to announce very shortly a broad program of social and economic security. It should advance the principle of social insurance along many lines, so as to divide the risks in terms of sickness, unemployment, and industrial handicaps for those affected by these adverse drives. Such measures will be of enormous benefit to children. The principle may well be applied to mothers with dependent children, thus removing one group of families now erroneously counted among the unemployed. We should like to see an enlarged Federal Children's Bureau, possibly within a Federal Department of Welfare, equipped so as to work effectively in its own well-chosen field. The responsibility on government, especially the Federal Government, for leadership in measures affecting children's welfare is unescapable.

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STATEMENT OF R. J. KNOEPEL, VICE PRESIDENT INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN

Dr. GEORGE E. BENNETT. I am Dr. Bennett, supposed to appear on the program for the same cause as to which Mr. Knoepfel is speaking, together with Miss Church, both of us representing the Maryland League for Crippled Children. I would like to find out if it would be possible for us to give our time to Mr. Knoepfel, who is talking on the same subject, so that he may be able to go into the details of the care of crippled children?

Mr. COOPER. I object, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Objection is made. You may proceed for 5 minutes.

Mr. KNOEPEL. My name is R. J. Knoepfel. I am vice president of the International Society for Crippled Children, chairman of the legislative committee of the International Society for Crippled Children, New York City. I represent a constituency of about 35 State organizations devoted to crippled children, and organizations in 10 other States by correspondence and information.

In these States there are about 19 States having very well developed programs for crippled children, covering the whole field of discovery or finding of academic education, orthopedic care, after-care, convalescent home care, leading up into vocational education, vocational guidance, placement, and then continuing from that point, according to the laws of the various States, into the rehabilitation program of the rehabilitation department.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. Will you include a list of those States in the record, please?

Mr. KNOEPEL. I will be very glad to submit it. As a matter of fact, if you would like, I would include in the record this directory which shows all the State organizations and a brief statement of the law of each State and the officers, if you desire it. I will be glad to give you one. I will give it to you, or it can go in the record, just as you prefer; or I will be glad to mail copies of them down to you for the use of the members of the committee.

The CHAIRMAN. The only objection to putting it into the record is that the record is already very long.

Mr. KNOEPPPEL. I do not ask that; I just offer it as a service.

The CHAIRMAN. If you will send a number of copies to the chairman of the committee, they will be distributed.

Mr. KNOEPPPEL. I will be very happy to do that.

Mr. REED. In the course of your remarks, Doctor, will you include a definition of crippled children as involved within the purview of your work?

Mr. KNOEPPPEL. Yes, sir; that is what I would like to do, that is why I wanted more than 5 minutes.

The CHAIRMAN. If it develops during the course of your statement that you need more time, we will extend your time.

Mr. VINSON. Some of the committee thought that the Dr. Bennett and Miss Church who wanted to yield time were not here.

Mr. KNOEPPPEL. They are here.

Mr. VINSON. They are here and they have the time. I cannot see that we lose any time by granting the request.

The CHAIRMAN. Very well, the doctor will proceed.

Mr. KNOEPPPEL. I think that we need not go into the point that this is needed, because there are a number of States economically unable to undertake these programs.

As I stated, only about 19 States have well-developed programs, and that is a matter of degree. This problem is a complete problem, starting with the education of the crippled child and education of the public about crippled children. It really starts and centers in the public schools. The academic education runs along with the rehabilitation, with the operation of the surgeon, with the teaching of a child at a later date something which his particular handicap permits him to do, so that economically he may take his place in society.

In regard to the bill, I have a few suggestions to make, the first of which is that there was not a definition. I offer the definition which we used for the past few years in the Hatfield and the Copeland bills, which I think, with the substitution of the words "crippled children" for "physically handicapped children" would make a good definition.

For the purpose of this act the term "crippled children" shall be construed to mean any persons below the age of 21 years who by reason of physical defects or infirmities, whether congenital or acquired by accident, injury or disease, are or may be expected to be totally or partially incapacitated for participation in the educational and vocational activities expected of normal persons.

I think that is a pretty good definition. There are other definitions which I could submit to you.

Mr. VINSON. Is that definition in any State law?

Mr. KNOEPPPEL. That definition is something like the definition which is in the State law of the State of New York, only that definition is wider and includes "physically handicapped."

Mr. VINSON. Most of them, however, have a lesser age, do they not?

Mr. KNOEPPPEL. The age varies, sir. In some States the age is 18. I think in most of the States the age is 18. In a good many States the age is the age which is prescribed by children's courts, because in some of the States the children's courts are tied into this picture, and the child of the poor is brought into the children's court and the children's judge commits the child either for special attention or treatment. In those States the age is usually that age.

Going on with the bill, it has seemed to us that this bill should surely include education and perhaps vocational guidance up to the age where the rehabilitation people will take up the rehabilitation.

Going a little further down, one of the things that bothers us the most is that the Federal grant shall not make States give up any of their help to this work. I think that is a thing which we must safeguard. In other words, because the State is to get money from the Federal Government they should not give up some of their appropriations, but the Federal money should be added to the State money. So as we go down into page 54, lines 18, to the bottom of the page, it seems to us that this proviso, "that except in the case of severe economic distress or other exceptional circumstance", and so forth, should be limited to epidemics; in other words, that the State should have to match the money given by the Federal Government. In other words, that the sum made available by the State must be at least that which the Federal Government is giving except—and the only exception—in the case of epidemic.

There is in our mind a difficulty as to the definition, "especially in rural areas." What does it mean? What is a rural area? Some laws hold a city of 25,000 population is rural, and others hold 2,500 as rural.

Mr. VINSON. What part of the bill are you talking about when you are talking about rural areas?

Mr. KNOEPPEL. Fifth line, page 54, "especially in rural areas".

Mr. VINSON. That is not in connection with the proviso, is it?

Mr. KNOEPPEL. No. I was going rapidly along. My time is short. I should have paused.

Then further along in the bill, we like the provisions of the bill which recognize the State set-ups. We think that is a very splendid provision of the bill, that all the States having worked in differing degrees to build up a State set-up predicated upon the needs of that particular State shall not have substituted by this bill a Federal plan, but a plan of cooperation with the well-established plan of the State, which knows what the particular need of that State is.

So as we run down to the latter part of this bill, we are in favor of the idea of the Federal Government approving the State program as being correct, and not substituting something else for it.

I have only one or two other things.

Mr. REED. If we are not going to grant the witness more time, I suggest that he has a statement which he would like to insert in the record.

The CHAIRMAN. All witnesses have the privilege of extending their remarks.

Mr. KNOEPPEL. I would be glad to prepare a statement and send it on from New York in the morning to you, showing the field that this whole program covers. You can study it just as well that way as by my saying it here.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank you, Doctor, for your appearance and the information you have given the committee.

The next witness is Miss Mary E. Church, Baltimore, Md., representing the American League for Crippled Children.

Miss LENROOT. Miss Church has yielded her time to Dr. Knoeppel. Dr. Abercrombie has arrived, if he could be heard.