

Structures—A. A. Lee and E. Y. Wong—*AEC (OTS)*, 36 p., illus., paper, \$1.

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RADIATION BIOLOGY: Proceedings of Second Australasian Conference, 1958—Australian Radiation Society, J. H. Martin, Ed.—*Academic*, 304 p., illus., \$11. Concerned with the interaction of ionizing radiation in living cells.

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THE THEORY OF NUMBERS AND DIOPHANTINE ANALYSIS—Robert D. Carmichael—*Dover*, 226 p., paper, \$1.35. Reprint of 1914 and 1915 separately published editions.

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THE WIND: Nature's Great Voice—Ethel M. Campbell—*Denison*, 45 p., illus. by Norma Stevens, \$3. About the movements of the atmosphere over the surface of the earth. Elementary level.

THE WORLD ALMANAC 1960 and Book of Facts—Harry Hansen, Ed.—*N. Y. World Telegram (Doubleday)*, 75th ed., 896 p., \$2; paper, \$1.35. Reliable reference work, with survey of scientific feats of 1959.

Science News Letter, February 6, 1960

PUBLIC HEALTH

AMA Journal Hits Health Bill for Elderly

DOCTORS were warned of the dangers of supporting the compulsory health insurance program that would provide health care for elderly persons.

The program, known as the Forand Bill, introduced by Rep. Ami Forand (D-R. I.), is before Congress. It supports Government-financed medical care for all who collect Social Security.

An editorial in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (172, 130/344 Jan. 23, 1960) interprets the actual motivation of supporters of such legislation as this:

"The proponents of compulsory health insurance contend basically that the people—in this case Social Security recipients—should not be permitted to buy their own health care."

Opponents of such legislation, the editorial continues, and this presumably includes the AMA, support, instead, the basic principle that people should be permitted to choose freely how they wish to spend their own money. They urge programs to promote prosperity, maintain the purchasing power of the dollar, support the indigent, develop voluntary health insurance, and construct special facilities designed to meet the health needs of the aged, encourage home care and other appropriate measures.

The editorial criticizes "misleading statistics widely stated" and exploited by supporters of the Forand Bill such as that three-fifths of all persons 65 and over had less than \$1,000 in money income in 1956 and 1957. The AMA contends that this does not take into consideration family and non-monetary income, total assets and other resources.

The proportion of those over 65 who have \$2,000 or more or \$5,000 or more is higher than for any other age group. Furthermore, the Federal Reserve Board's annual Survey of Consumer Finances reveals that the liquid assets of those over 65 have grown faster than the assets of any other age group in the last 10 years, the editorial continues.

Yet the editorial admits that to date the seriousness of meeting the health problems of the elderly has not been accurately determined. However, last April, Arthur S. Flemming, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, submitted to the Committee on Ways and Means a report titled "Methods of Providing Hospital Benefits Other Than by O.A.S.D.I. Mechanisms (Social Security)."

That report stated three out of every four aged persons could prove need in relation to hospital costs of at least those costs that exceeded any protection they might have through private health insurance. Other figures recently compiled point out that there will be 18,000,000 aged 65 or over by 1962.

The AMA editorial denounced the Forand Bill as a "costly, irreversible program tailored to avoid the real problem. It is a fundamental deviation from the basic concept of the social security system.

Science News Letter, February 6, 1960



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