

BUSINESS IN THE BLACK

AFRICAN AMERICANS & OTHER MINORITIES RECEIVE LESS MEDICARE SERVICE DOLLARS

by Charles E. Belle
Sullivan Says "Simon Says"

While it is estimated that resolving the savings and loan larceny will cost \$500 billion or \$2,000 for each American for the next 30 years, your health is personally in jeopardy just breathing. By being a black face in a Republican administration, a cabinet member like U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, Louis W. Sullivan, M.D., is always on the spot. Especially when his department oversees almost 40% of the entire U.S. federal budget!

But this African American had no answers to providing adequate equal health services to the African American and other minority communities when asked in front of the Commonwealth Club of California, San Francisco luncheon audience, overflowed with health care professionals.

Sullivan seems to be doing the saying, "Simon says do this." The all too familiar saying of those with no new ideas of their own, ordering all others to come up with ideas and get together. The lack of leadership by Sullivan's own leader in this area is reflective of Republican Administrations recent rejection of the Civil Rights Act. An action which in itself would have protected and provided working African Americans and minorities with equal health care from their employers.

Everyone is ultimately responsible for his/her own health as the Honorable Louis Sullivan says repeatedly. Responding to critics of his department's delivery of health care services, or lack thereof, Sullivan says it's changes in cultural health behavior that is at fault. Individuals today, he says, "need a comprehensive approach" to achieve proper health care.

His answer to the need for more funding for AIDS is that everybody who wants funding for non-AIDS care thinks that too much is already been given to fight AIDS and that the AIDS fighters simply think they have too few dollars. Do not look for an effective attack from this Administration if its answer to

the AIDS problems is an example. The needle exchange concept is not going to be resolved by this Administration official. Only the no smoking sign is up clearly after a conversation

with Secretary Sullivan.

Since African American males are smokers almost twice as much as the average American white male, Sullivan believes his anti-smoking stand will save

some of them. The "cost of government health care programs is claiming an ever-more onerous portion of the revenue pie," is Sullivan's reason for not refining or redirecting the over

250 programs under his control to correct the imbalance of health care services to African Americans and other needy minorities. Since Sullivan is an appointee of the President, he must

do whatever "Simon says." And judging from Sullivan's speech, the Administration has said nothing about doing something about providing equal health care to the citizens of this country.

HOW TO STOP UNION BUSTING

by Norman Hill

Over the past year, the New York Daily News and its parent organization, The Tribune Company, have been scheming to rid themselves of all the newspaper's union employees. Management's strategy has been to provoke a strike and then hire scabs as permanent replacements. In contract negotiations, the newspaper's bargainers made giveback demands so unreasonable that the unions had no choice but to reject them. Meanwhile, the bosses began to harass and otherwise mistreat their workers. Finally, in late October they instigated a walkout and immediately hired scabs whom they had lined up months before.

Because the News' primitive union-busting campaign has occurred in a highly unionized industry and within a union town, organized labor and its allies must understand that nowhere in the United States are unions secure against this kind of attack. Therefore, we need to examine the events surrounding the strike to see if we can learn some lessons for the future.

One of the strike's lessons is obvious. More than ever, the trade unions and their friends understand the importance of pressing for legislation banning the use of permanent replacement workers in a labor dispute. Such legislation will be consid-

ered by Congress next year, and we in the black-labor alliance will fight for its adoption.

Another important lesson should be noted by both the trade union movement and the black community. Not long ago, the News lost a discrimination suit brought against it by black employees. This tells us something about the newspaper's attitude toward minorities. But suddenly, shortly after the strike began, management sanctimoniously expressed an interest in hiring members of minority groups. Its real aim, of course, was to pit minorities against the striking unions in order to recruit cheap scab labor. Fortunately, this crude attempt to divide workers along racial and ethnic lines collapsed when the National Association of Black Journalists, the Asian-American Journalists Association, and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists refused to play ball. This episode reminds us that the well-being of American workers depends on their solidarity regardless of race or background. Our mission at the A. Philip Randolph Institute is to solidify ties between the black community and organized labor. By its outrageous conduct, the News has inadvertently inspired us with a fresh appreciation of the importance of our work.

Finally, the News is using homeless people as street hawkers in a desperate attempt

to get newspapers into the hands of readers. This tactic teaches us that workers have a stake in the well-being of all members of society. As long as there are destitute people, management will have a pool of potential workers desperate enough to dance to its tune. So when the Randolph Institute presses government for economic and social programs to raise the poorest among us to a decent standard of living, we are concerned

not only with these people but with the welfare of all working people.

In the past decade many Americans have forgotten that racial harmony and compassionate government are in the interest of all but those who would divide society in order to exploit workers. Hopefully, the Daily News strike will remind them of this basic lesson and thereby enlarge the political support for the black-labor alliance's agenda

for racial equality and social and economic justice.

Norman Hill is President of the A. Philip Randolph Institute.



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