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Tendencies in a Social, Political, and Governmental Way Which May Influence Doctors*

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I am three kinds of a doctor, but none of them is your kind and none of them is related to medicine in any way. But I have been an administrative officer of a great medical school and I think I know something about doctors. Also I have been privileged to study institutions personally, because I traveled hither and thither long before I settled down and became connected with an educational institution. I have seen functioning practically everything in the medical profession, whether it be science or merely craft, that the world has, so far produced. And just between you and me, I have found the ordinary medical man to be by far the most interesting individual to study.

You people know so much, you talk in such big, long words, and you have everything down to such an exact science, that those of us who are interested in trends, who are Chinese-minded, who refuse to pay attention except to those things that influence humanity in the course of two or three centuries, find ourselves in a society that is too minute, too much interested in detail, too much enjoying the microscope, for us to get in harmony with it.

Therefore it is only in a social, in a political, and in a governmental, way that I dare to speak to you. My theme is about as general as I can make it, "Tendencies in a Social, Political, and Governmental Way Which May Influence Doctors," and by doctors I mean every kind. Yet I have a text and I want to read it and to talk to it if I can. I think a review of all the tendencies the world over shows us this:

"All professions owe a stewardship to the state." (That means that all professions in America owe a stewardship to the American public). "And it is no secret that the public is becoming more and more accounting conscious. The profession of the healing art, whether it be practiced by Doctors of Osteopathy, Doctors of Medicine, or any other type of doctor, is no exception to the general rule that in the long run it is the public service that regulates the public demand."

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Now you are all interested in what may happen to you as far as governmental action is concerned. It is within the province of government, and part of good political theory, to see that the health and welfare of the citizenry are advanced. It is also part of the government's processes to see to it that the general public shall be protected from all kinds of malpractice, from all sorts of inefficiencies, from all kinds of fakers. That is a government necessity.

Doctors of 1937 are a peculiar group. You can understand them in their relationship to government and social institutions only if you will see what is taking place throughout the world. It is only lately that governments have become interested in individuals as such. It is only lately, and especially since the creation of the American government, that the individual citizen has counted for very much, either in political theory or in governmental practice.

It would be interesting to discover what it was in man's outlook, what idea that created and brought into being the present doctor, the present healer of individuals. I definitely connect the modern doctor with the concept of pity, and pity as it relates to individuals comes late in the thinking of man. In my lifetime I have seen communities dominated so completely by the theory of the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," that never once would they permit any harm to come to any living thing.

For example the Jain priest of India, the outstanding group of that type of individual, wears a mask lest he inhale an insect and thereby kill. But in those places where the commandment is observed in the extreme, you will find the worst care, the most absolute indifference to individual man, that you will find anywhere in the world.

Of course, we all know that the individual was discovered after years of the teachings of the Jews, and that Jesus gave us the concept of his value. But it has not become universal, and in times of great stress even in a nation like ours the individual is the last thing thought of instead of the first,

in spite of the fact that our government and our political theory is built around the notion of people.

Now think that through and you realize that all doctors today who are practicing medicine in any way are rather late in the field of human institutions. They are becoming more and more interested in the individual, and with that comes what I consider the finest of all political and social theories: a consciousness of the fact that life in and of itself is worth while and worth saving. That is a new idea, and if we can once get it universally accepted we will have the key, and probably the only key, to complete condemnation of war (which is another governmental concept) and the justification of peace on the basis that life is the important thing and should be preserved at all hazards.

As an indication that we are going to do that thing, let me remind you of the great events that are taking place in this world: In this generation we have had three of the mightiest revolutions the world has ever seen—the Chinese revolution, the Russian revolution and the Indian revolution—and in addition two major *coups d'état*, one in Italy and one in Germany. These five great changes have changed the fundamental concept of all thinkers.

Note that in the beginning of these three great revolutions there was one fundamental notion, and in them there is a unity. China has four hundred million people, 90 per cent of them small agricultural country people. India has three hundred million people, 85 per cent of them small agricultural country folks. Russia has one hundred ninety million people, practically 85 per cent of them also small country peasants. Then come the two great *coups d'état*, making, in all, five of these great movements. Whether you like it or not does not make any difference. Whether you are for it or not does not make any difference. You might just as well be for or against the Rocky Mountains as to be for or against any of these great human movements, because they are away ahead of you, and you cannot do anything about stopping them.

Each of them has as its basic notion the welfare of the individual man, and in the whole orient, throughout its entire history, it is only since Sun Yat Sen discovered his three principles, that man has a place there, man is an entity, and man is an individual.

What does that mean to the medical profession? It means that it has facing it one of the greatest responsibilities that ever faced a group of men professing to be professional scientists.

There must be a changed attitude. There will be a changed attitude. The ideas in everything have become more and more social. Even in ethics today we justify behavior not as it affects just you and me in our actions, but rather we justify it or we condemn it as it affects the group. So that two mighty things are taking place: first, the development and discovery of the individual; and, second, the realization that the group, after all, is the instrumentality through which the bigger and broader life of the individual is to come.

I know of no other group in which this is so completely true—surely it does not belong to the politician, surely it does not belong to the business

man, and surely it does not belong to the schoolteacher as such. It belongs to the doctor. I know there is no place in the lawyer's scheme of things for him to make of this newly discovered and now universally recognized entity the best kind of individual. Now of all of the ideas that are fundamental to our modern thought, if we get back of these two concepts we will see the ultimate progress which is coming to man through governmental activity.

Some will shout for the doctors what a generation or so ago was shouted for schoolteachers: "We must nationalize them." The healing art is part of the state's fundamental prerogative, part of the state's fundamental necessity. When we decided that the welfare of the state depended upon the schoolteacher, we instituted public education. No longer in America, no longer in any of the civilized parts of the world, does a mother hesitate in taking her ten or eleven children to school and saying, "Here, I have had a few more than my share, but my next door bachelor neighbor has no children, and he is helping to pay for this." You smile when I tell you that, but go back and read the struggle for public education. They used the phrase, "Taxation without representation," in trying to tell the American states that public education was out of harmony with the American Constitution because those of us who have no children should not be taxed to educate those who have children. It was urged that we tax those who are the mothers and fathers, and not those who have not been blessed with children. But the state has come to the conclusion that education is basically an economic need, a political necessity, and something that the state must be, and is, vitally interested in.

Now all of the professions are regulated. Note what is happening in this educational scheme. No worth-while school is today without a school nurse. Think of it. How old is that? Students educated in state institutions have physical examinations and medical advice from the time they enter the kindergarten until they leave the university. Are they sick? No. Here again we must return to our good, old Chinese ideas. Doctors are, and must be, quite as much for the well as for the sick.

Do you think a government like ours can enter into a great program of social security, where it is going to collect, and is collecting, billions of dollars from the people of the United States, and from the business of the United States, for the benefit of the people of the United States, without getting that on a scientific basis? Putting that on a scientific basis merely means putting it on a basis which gives us an opportunity to use all the knowledge which the people have been able to gain in solving a given problem.

So there are going to be public examinations because this thing is a great insurance scheme. No insurance company has been able to survive without the aid of scientific medical and economic experts, and so the tendencies are here. Is state medicine going to come? It won't come in America first, that is sure. We follow. But as state medicine works anywhere, you may rest assured that with each of the forty-nine different sovereignties

within the United States carrying on various social and political experiments, it will be tried somewhere. I do not say that as a politician. I say it merely as an interpreter of social institutions, attempting to read the pulse of the world and trying to understand the world's aims and the world's ideas. It matters not what the institution is; if the government can use it in such a way as to benefit and increase the ability of the average citizen, you may rest assured it will be turned to by government.

I am not a prophet. I do not want to speak as a prophet. I merely ask all thoughtful persons to take the history of their own country, if they do not know the history of other countries or the history of the world, and see how many times we have ever got anything which has been strikingly different from the pulse of the whole world. Tobacco smoking, and I give you this as an illustration, certainly grew in less than half a century. It had no medium through which to work, it had no agency through which to grow, but it took only fifty-odd years for that habit to get into every nook and corner of the world.

Do you think that today, when ideas circulate the globe so very much faster than the mythical Puck was ever able to do, that you can keep any of them away from us or away from anyone?

There is a splendid woman lost somewhere out in the South Pacific. Everyone feels the terror of that loss because the tickings have stopped. It is not just pity for the woman and honor for her great deeds. You are surprised to think that anybody could be outside the realm of the pulse of the world. She has been lost sight of for an instant,

and we are surprised. It is news on the front pages everywhere.

Nineteen thirty-seven. Compare that with just a generation ago. That is the way ideas are growing and going. Some of them when put into practice are not immediately successful, but that does not mean the death of an idea. The American Constitution was never thought by any of its framers, or by any of its proponents, or by anyone who stood in favor of it, as an instrument that would last very much longer than the election of the first President. It was a glorious compromise which everyone disliked and with which everyone was dissatisfied, but today it is the oldest of all the constitutions in existence. There has come a stability to the American people, and we can all give a reason for this, but the greatest and the most fundamental reason is that none of the fathers expected perfection and they all accepted what they could, realizing that we are living in a growing age, an idea of progress having taken hold of us, and that out of this little seed might come a mighty and a great tree.

Now I think that I have missed talking about medicine and about osteopathic physicians. Yet I believe I have gotten as close to what should be the fundamental thought of all of you—I care not what your philosophy of life is, what your religious outlook is, or what your aim is—as one can get, and I stop where I began, with the realization of the fact that my theme has been social, political and governmental and nonmedical, and I stop by telling you that for doctors, as for everyone else, there is no finer motto than the old Roman one, "*Pro bono publico*."