

ECONOMICS, LABOR, & BUSINESS

ceive the same wage—even though this would limit a union's freedom to negotiate wages. And the AFL-CIO's fervent anticommunism is largely a thing of the past. It opposes military aid to the government of El Salvador, besieged by Marxist-Leninist guerrillas, and only mildly condemns Nicaragua's Sandinista regime.

"What has labor got for all its compromising of principle?" Green asks. Nothing. Nor, he predicts, is it likely to gain much more while a majority of Americans, and a majority of union members, oppose so many of the causes it has embraced.

SOCIETY*Controlling U.S.
Medical Costs*

"Public Attitudes about Health-Care Costs: A Lesson in National Schizophrenia" by Robert J. Blendon and Drew E. Altman, in *The New England Journal of Medicine* (Aug. 30, 1984), 1440 Main St., P.O. Box 9140, Waltham, Mass. 02254.

Faced with a hefty and fast-growing national bill for medical care, Americans are telling public-opinion pollsters that they would welcome an overhaul of the U.S. health-care system—as long as no one asks them to make any sacrifices.

In 1982, total U.S. health-care outlays (including government and private spending) reached \$322 billion—about 11 percent of the gross national product (GNP). By the year 2000, report Blendon and Altman, both analysts at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the annual cost could reach \$1.9 trillion, or 14 percent of GNP. At \$1,550 per person per year, U.S. expenditures already far exceed those of Great Britain (\$400), France (\$800), and West Germany (\$900).

Fifteen public-opinion surveys conducted since 1981 have consistently picked up "schizophrenic" attitudes toward cost containment, the authors say. Majorities regularly inform pollsters that rising costs are the health-care industry's Number One problem *and* that the United States spends too little on health services. Two out of three Americans think that federal health-care spending should be increased; 59 percent favor a national health-insurance program, even if a tax hike is needed to pay for it.

Underlying these seemingly contradictory views are two others—"widespread discontent with the nation's health-care system and pervasive satisfaction with personal medical care."

In sum, Americans remain very attached to "Doc," the trusted family physician. Two-thirds of those polled accuse doctors of being money grubbers, but 72 percent find no such fault with their own physicians. Most Americans balk at the idea of using health-maintenance organizations or medical clinics, though they offer cheaper service than doctors in private practice. On the other hand, 66 percent would gladly require

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the poor to use these facilities.

Americans tend to favor reforms that have little direct impact on them. Thus, 60 percent back federal price controls on doctors' services. Yet, Americans are nearly unanimous in their opposition to a British-style nationalized medical-care system or to curtailing federal spending for high-technology treatments such as kidney dialysis, which costs Washington about \$20,000 per patient per year.

A public so muddled in its thinking will be hard to lead, the authors say. But they believe that doctors should make it their business to turn public opinion around and begin the hard work of cutting costs.

State Lotteries: Few Winners

"The Social and Economic Impact of State Lotteries" by H. Roy Kaplan, in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (July 1984), Sage Publications, 275 South Beverly Dr., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90212.

State governments are gambling that lotteries will provide a painless way to increase revenues. But to H. Roy Kaplan, a sociologist at the Florida Institute of Technology, lotteries are a poor substitute for "dependable, equitable, and responsible methods of revenue generation."

Using games of chance to finance public projects is nothing new. The Virginia Company raised money for its 1607 settlement in Jamestown through sales of lottery tickets, a method also used by the 1777 Continental Congress to pay for the American Revolution. (Benjamin Franklin, legendary for his frugality, was nevertheless an avid bettor.) After 1800, countless lotteries were sponsored by state and local governments as well as churches and colleges—including Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. The sales were nothing to sneeze at. The citizens of New York State bought \$1.5 million in lottery tickets in 1826. Lotteries were, however, invitations to corruption, and scandals cooled the lottery craze. By 1878, they were illegal in every state but Louisiana.

New Hampshire began today's revival by launching its new lottery in 1963. Now, 17 states run lotteries, claiming that they are needed to



An 1820 ticket for a lottery sponsored by the state of Pennsylvania. The proceeds were earmarked for the "improvement of internal navigation."