

MEDICARE

The big push for Medicare, one of the essentials in President Johnson's program for a "Great Society", is already well underway. The President drew sustained applause last night when he called for hospital care for the elderly under social security. Today, some fifteen hundred members of the National Council of Senior Citizens arrived in Washington to keep up the new momentum.

The Senior Citizens met with Senator Clinton P. Anderson of New Mexico and Representative Cecil R. King of California - backers of the Medicare bill that foundered in the closing days of the last session of Congress. The two legislators have already introduced similar legislation, which President Johnson is expected to endorse fully in his health message to Congress on Thursday.

Later, the Golden Agers met with Health, Education and Welfare Secretary Gelebreeze, who told them flatly: "We're on the eve of victory".

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In Red China, meanwhile, the Peking People's Daily hailed the battle of Binh Gia as a "magnificent victory" for the Communist Viet Cong. The battle showed that Communist forces in South Viet Nam "are now strong enough to fight a sustained battle and annihilate a large number of enemy troops at a single stroke" - surpassed Nam Cao's.

VIET NAM

Military and political repercussions from that costly government defeat at Binh Gia, in South Viet Nam, continued to reverberate today through^{out} the Far East.

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JET PILOTS

Hi there Dick and again Good Evening Everybody:

Have you ever wondered or bothered to think about it just what sort of a life does a jet pilot lead when he's no longer flying jets? Where does a veteran on one of the overseas round the world airlines go when he retires? I discovered years ago, that most retired Admirals are in Southern California, the San Diego-Coronado Island area. As for Air Force Generals, they favor Texas, as you no doubt have heard, especially San Antonio.

As for that brand new group, the globe-flying airline jet pilots - here may be a clue. On board a big Pan American world cruiser a member of the crew said to me: "Sitting back there, twenty or more rows behind you is one of our retired pilots who says that on several occasions he flew you across the Pacific or somewhere." So, I looked up this chap and naturally I asked him what he's doing now. For one thing Captain Gilbert Blackmore still has difficulty staying in any one place - for long. Every so often he takes his wife and off they fly over one of the oceans - as passengers. It doesn't cost them much. Just one-tenth what it costs another traveller. And then he added that he does have a home - that it's

a rice ranch in California, in the Sacramento Valley - he and three other ex-jet pilots own a rice ranch. But, they don't plant their rice one seed or shoot at a time as we are so familiar with that picture - you know, of rice planting in Asia. It's almost one hundred percent mechanized with these chaps. Captain Blackmore plants his rice by plane. He fertilizes and sprays by plane, and then the rice is harvested and hulled by big machinery, and sold through a co-op exchange. Often their rice winds up in Japan - because we Americans are not rice eaters. And, they're doing all right. They and their neighbors have some twenty thousand acres in rice. He says that for the American market they have to shuck it, and polish it to make it white and in so doing take out nearly all of the rich food values. We Americans do have some quaint ideas, don't we?

At any rate, our ex-jet pilots seem to be profiting by what they have learned or what they learned rather recently when they were flying jets around the world.

Solong,

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MALAYSIA FOLLOW INDONESIA

Regardless of Indonesian intentions, in Malaysia they're taking no chances. The British today landed a force of five hundred crack Scots Guardsmen on the Island of Borneo, to help bolster Malaysian defenses there.

At the same time, the buildup of Malaysia's mainland forces continued apace with the arrival of another contingent of combat-ready British paratroopers - further insurance against the threat of Indonesian attack.

INDONESIA

There was still further stalling by Indonesia today in its threatened withdrawal from the United Nations. The Indonesian delegation had been expected to deliver a formal notice of withdrawal, first yesterday, then today - and still it hasn't done so.

In the meantime, Japanese Prime Minister Eisaku Sato today joined the chorus of world leaders urging Indonesia to reconsider quitting the U.N. And there was a growing feeling in the U.N. itself that Indonesian President Sukarno might return to the fold - if only for lack of world sympathy.

Has a word for S. A. Hall

CURTAIN

The Paris Opera House has a brand new

metal stage curtain of which it is justly proud. The

curtain is soundproof, fireproof, rustproof, waterproof

and - to a certain extent - even bullet-proof. But

because of that metal curtain, a scheduled performance

of the Paris ballet had to be cancelled last night.

You see, the curtain weighs sixteen tons -

so it has to be operated mechanically. And last night,

that soundproof, fireproof, rustproof, waterproof,

bullet-proof curtain - well, it simply refused to go up.

Now a word from Dick Noel

SUIT

This story tonight from sunny Sao Vicente, Brazil.

Sao Vicente's public prosecutor has asked police to dismiss charges of indecent exposure against a young lady found wearing a topless bathing suit.

The prosecutor held that the one-piece suit - of "monokini", as it is known in Brazil - is no more obscene than the two-piece bathing suit called a bikini. He sated his case in these words: "In the bikini, the straps are horizontal. In the monokini, they are vertical".

If there's any difference, he said, it's only - "geometrical".

COMMUNISTS

It's beginning to look as if that long-delayed Communist Summit Conference will be put off once again - this time perhaps for good.

You may recall - the Communist Summit was slated most recently for March first, presumably to heal the ideological split between Russia and Red China, or break it wide open. But Western observers tonight report a growing coolness toward the conference plan - even among Russian satellites.

According to Kremlinologists, the new Communist line seems to run like this: Since Red already China has/indicated it will boycott the conference, it could only make a bad situation worse.

SWIM

Here's one for the books. Donald McNeal, a husky ex-paratrooper, was washed overboard last night by a giant wave off Key Largo, Florida. He wasn't even wearing a life jacket.

But today, eighteen hours later, McNeal was found paddling along [—]some thirty miles up the coast, not far from Miami Beach.

The Coast Guard offered one possible explanation for the unintentional marathon swim. It was this - that McNeal apparently ran into the Gulfstream and was swept north as he swam through the night.

POPE

Pope Paul today scheduled the fourth and final session of the Ecumenical Council for late this year. The pontiff thus fulfilled the pledge he made the day after his election as Pope - a pledge to see the Council through its continuing task of infusing new vitality into the Catholic Church.

Starting date for the fourth session will be September fourteenth, with the church hierarchy expected to conclude its work before the end of the year. In all, twelve documents remain to be considered - including the controversial declaration of religious liberty - still heatedly contested at the close of the third session.

CONGRESS FOLLOW MEDICARE

If there remained any doubt about the Democrat's strength in Congress - and their determination to enact the president's program - it was further dispelled today with the realignment of House committees.

The realignment, reflecting top-heavy Democratic gains in November, gave the Democrats two more seats on the crucial Ways and Means Committee and another two seats on the powerful Appropriations Committee.

Proponents of Medicare thus end up with a clear-cut majority for the first time on the Ways and Means Committee - long a stumbling block to such legislation. As for the pick-up on the Appropriations Committee, it's considered a sure sign of smooth sailing for the President's tax program - at least in the House.