

# \$60 Million Health Program Underway

(Editor's note: This is the first in a series of articles on the story of the development of the North Carolina "Better Health Program", the cornerstone of which is the Medical Center of the University here now under construction.)

By Vardy Buckalew

Early in 1944, a committee of distinguished physicians, including the president and three past presidents of the North Carolina Medical Society, met in the office of Governor J. M. Broughton. The general health conditions of the people of the State were in serious need of improvement and these men were very much concerned.

Here are some of the conditions that they reported: North Carolina stood 42nd in the number of general hospitals beds per thousand population and in a comparable position in the number of doctors. There had always been a shortage of trained medical personnel in the state. There were 33 counties in North Carolina without a hospital bed. In 1943, 50 per cent of North Carolina's young men were considered physically unfit for military service. These eminent physicians recommended a program to the governor to remedy these situations.

This meeting launched a "Healthier North Carolina" program which includes a total of 104 projects involving a budget of about \$60,000,000. The cornerstone of this state-wide project is the gigantic Health Center now under construction in Chapel Hill as a part of the University. This medical plant and organization will form the Division of Health Affairs and will operate as a distinct administrative and fiscal entity within the University. Dr. Henry T. Clark, a UNC graduate in 1937, is the director of the Division of Health Affairs.

The "Healthier North Carolina" program got under way when Broughton presented the plea of the Medical Society physicians to the Board of Trustees. The Governor pointed out, "It would seem wise . . . to make provision for adequate medical care and service to those of our citizenship who by reason of unemployment or low income are unable to provide this service for themselves." The Trustees unanimously approved this service for themselves." The Trustees unanimously approved this recommendation and a 50-man Hospital and Medical Care Commission, directed by Clarence Poe, was appointed by Broughton to make a survey of the needs of the people and to make recommendations for improving the condition. This commission was popularly called the Poe Commission. The seven subcommittees, after studies of the conditions of the state medical situation, adopted this goal as a remedy—"More Doctors, More Hospital, and More

Insurance."

The next step was to promote the program to the people of North Carolina. Under the direction of Dr. I. G. Greer, in the spring of 1946 the wheels for this promotion were set in motion. This crusade was led by professional, business, and lay leaders, and by Kay Kyser, who chucked a fabulous salary in Hollywood to come back to help his home folk.

The program was finally begun when the 1947 Legislature enthusiastically appropriated the necessary funds to get started and

the Legislatures of 1949 and 1951 made additional appropriations to complete the various projects.

## -Taft-

(Continued from page 1)

can't understand why a Southern Democrat who disagrees with Mr. Truman on every issue that I have presented, shouldn't vote Republican . . ."

Taft has been a frequent critic of the Administration's foreign policy but under the Weil Lectures, speakers generally refrain from direct political assertions. It

is expected, however, that during a question-answer period following the talk, that Taft will give some of his views concerning domestic issues as well as foreign. The Weil Lectures were estab-

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