

LOBBYING AND THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Interview

with

Lavinia Engle

by

Phyllis Levine

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MS. LEVINE: March 13, 1971, home of Lavinia Engle. This is Phyllis Levine,
 MISS ENGLE: My scrapbooks would not have as much as that because I was out in
 the field and not here, but I don't believe I have hardly any...
 I don't think there's much of anything about Suffragette campaign
 here.

The State of Maryland was one that we would have thought would actively support
 the Federal amendment, as was the case in a great many states. A very large lobby
 loomed up suddenly. It was heavily of the liquor interest. It was the -- well,
 it's hard to describe -- it was the type of person like the man who led the fight
 against ratification here, old Senator Frick. He really lived in an age that had
 long since passed. And...they appealed to...they painted women as, we would say now,
 far from the left. They called us...the...well, it isn't insecure, but the irrational
 idealists and things of that sort. That we wanted to promote socialism in the State
 was a very common attack.

That last three years before the Amendment was submitted and then the two years
 afterwards we fought to get it ratified.

And the National Board was pretty savvy as to where we could expect good
 organization support. The women in the State were organized and had all the assist-
 ance that the National could give them as soon as possible, so that they would have
 permitted us, as it was, to move on in to states such as some of them have; West
 Virginia and...I think the New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania campaigns were
 among the Federalists, because there you had all of your organized opposition to
 social programs.

They counted on people who felt they'd be heavily taxed for social programs,
 who felt that they would create a more restrictive way of life, et cetera, et cetera.

But it was -- it was interesting and rather strange that the...and I don't have
 that list before me, but somewhere in my library, I do have it -- so states that
 moved ahead and ratified--of course, Wyoming was the first.

MS. LEVINE: Yes.

MISS ENGLE: Then the second team of states that had ratified -- in Texas, we got a bill through that didn't -- it was not a constitutional amendment, but just a state statute to give women the right to vote in the primary.

And it wasn't until we had that thing on third reading that the opposition suddenly came to and realized that the primary vote was the vote that would control.

So there we got state ratification. I think I told you this story of what we decided here in Maryland. After the ratification died, the last necessary or needed state was a fact. We were in franchise.

The question of what to do about the other states that had not ratified. Mrs. Ellicott, and I think it was Mrs. Charles Woodruff, and I were down talking to Governor Ritchie who had just been inaugurated. He had won as more or less a reform candidate. Baltimore was pretty well controlled by what was called the Mann-Kelly machine. And they had fought him in the city. He said to Mrs. Ellicott, "Mrs. Ellicott, what do you want us to do in this section? Do you want us to introduce a resolution approving of the suffrage amendment?"

Mrs. Ellicott looked at us and said, "Governor, we have discussed that. We know that our first big challenge will be on the so-called Shepherd-Towner Act," (which established the Bureau of Infant and Maternal Care in the Children's Bureau, and which had an amount of money for Federal grants aid in the states that established similar bureaus.)

At that time, the United States had one of the highest, if not the highest (sort of up and down at times) maternal and infant death rate of any civilized country. And it was a crying issue. The anti-suffragists opposed it--opposed it virily--and so down there when we asked the question, Mrs. Ellicott said, "Governor, we have discussed that. And we have discussed the opposition to the Suffrage Amendment and

what we may expect from that particular--what would you say--type of mind in our Legislative Session when we were going after bills that are first of all, perhaps, to clarify the status of women in connection with their own property and their own earnings and their right of joint responsibility and consequently power for the children in the family."

"And we have the Shepherd-Towner Bill to establish this Bureau. And we have decided it would be wiser not to introduce anything that lined up the old opposition on the Anti-Suffrage group against us as the new women's voters group. We thought it would be wiser to let that be an issue that was decided and we would go after support for the legislation we want.

MS. LEVINE: Now, have you found that that lobbying practice stood you in good stead later on?

MISS ENGLE: Well, yes -- lobbying was not really an organized art. But there are some things that you certainly do have to watch.

For one thing, you have to watch that there does not build up a group who take pride in opposing the sort of things you want. And in this instance, the first was the economic and legal status of the wife and of the single woman.

It was also characteristic that the League supported stronger child labor methods on both Federal and State levels. They supported a good many school reforms.

And these were the things that you went down to the State Capitol and appeared before Hearings and also you developed and saw that good material--as explaining the case for this particular statute--was provided every member of the Legislature.

You then followed that up with the usual lobbying -- you went to the Capitol or you visited the members of the Legislature at home and made your case and asked for his support.

Our national suffrage association and the League were always -- well, I think the word would be, restrained -- and thoughtful in how they approached candidates. We did not go in for high drama. There were occasions when we needed to have a great

many people there to say they supported the act which we were introducing. And on those occasions, the League turned out the guard. They brought carloads of people to attend the Hearing, but it was a Hearing in which you didn't take a militant attitude.

The Alice Paul organization had some very fine women in it. It had a group, however, who felt that your — your dramatic expression of approval — just as in the suffrage days, they thought it was a good thing to go into meetings and break up the meetings, if there happened to be one that you didn't get thrown out of fast enough.

They came to some of the meetings of the National Suffrage Association and took the floor and screamed for more aggressive action.

MS. LEVINE: This was the Alice Paul group?

MISS ENGLE: The Alice Paul group. Mrs. Ellicott followed the Anna Howard Shaw and the Carrie Chapman Catt and Lucy Stone — all believe you had to convert to your point of view in the hope then that when you came to carry out the statute, in actual practice of law, or establish the thing that you were trying to get, you could by and large get a great deal of support from it and from the people who had primarily opposed it.

So it was, oh let's say it was a low key in some ways. And this didn't suit the Alice Paul group. They felt—and you know, you always get organizations, political and otherwise, that feel that a headline, no matter what it says, is good for what you're doing.

None of us really believed that. We thought that a quieter and more educational approach...and you'd leave a piece of material with the man who said he was too busy to see or to talk with you. And say, well, it's not necessary to come back because we'd like to have you read this and know what the facts are.

And quite frequently, the man or woman (they began early to have a few women in the Legislature—as a matter of fact, at one time we had more than we have now).

It was a slower way of moving, but it meant when you got through your legislation, that you had something.

One other thing that we found most highly desirable, in certain cases, where your legislation had some pretty strong opposition, in many cases they took the legislation into court. And State and National Leagues had lawyers representing them. And they went before the court and in several instances went to the Supreme Court.

It was on the State level, I remember, we passed a law after discovering that the Child Labor Law was frequently broken and that young boys—young children—who were below the State legal permission, if that's what you want, worked in certain types of employment. We had some ghastly cases where young boys had worked around machines and tools and been horribly injured. We had a famous case where girls, comparatively young, worked in a watch factory out at Elkton and the girls were given little brushes to paint on the — what is it they use for illumination?

MS. LEVINE: Yes, the illumination...

MISS ENGLE: Well, that...they developed some pretty terrible sores and various diseases and the case came to a point where they were not covered adequately with any sort of compensation for that.

MS. LEVINE: Yes. Wasn't that that they touched the brushes to their mouth? They left the brushes in their mouth and transferred the radioactive material...

MISS ENGLE: Yes. Yes.

MS. LEVINE: ...to their mouth and left the radioactive material in their mouth.

MISS ENGLE: ...So that what we had were quite a number of girls who were in serious condition and several whom the doctor said could not possibly recover.

Well, we introduced legislation. We also employed, thanks to Mrs. Ellicott's generosity, a very able panel of lawyers. And we won the case. And not only won

the case, but forced by legislation protective conditions so that girls were not so endangered.

In one of the cases that we took, the men in the fireworks factory where this girl worked claimed that it was syphillitic in the jaw and not radium and -- not -- what was the other thing that they used besides radium? Well, it was one of the things that you can paint on to the hands of a watch and they glow in the dark.

MS. LEVEINE: Luminescence -- some...

MISS ENGLE: Some sort of illumination, yes. So we took that case clear through the Court of Appeals and won it. And the girl had necessary money to end her years as she had to pretty soon in comfort and also, it put a pretty heavy bill on the person who was responsible for her condition.

We then introduced a bill that provided that any employer who employed young people underage for what they were given to do were held responsible for double indemnity. And that indemnity could not be covered by insurance. They could have their regular insurance which covered the Fireworks factory involved in the death of the girls, et cetera, et cetera, and the other was put on as a penalty.

And the group went into Governor Ritchie's office to protest it, saying it was illegal, it was double indemnity, it was double costing, et cetera, et cetera. The Governor shook his head and said the ladies know what they're doing; this is not insurance, this is a penalty and you can't insure for it.

Well, you had that sort of support in some states, [and in some] you didn't, and then it was a good deal harder to get things through.

But a great many things that we can point to as having had their beginning struggle as state-local programs were enacted during those early years.

MS. LEVINE: Now, when you...when you were elected to the State Legislature, were you elected as a delegate from Montgomery County?

MISS ENGLE: Oh, yes. You see, our State Legislature is based on that, you know.

MRS. LEVINE: And -- then did the League lobby you?

MISS ENGLE: Oh, yes.

MS. LEVINE: What was your relationship with the League during the time you were...

MISS ENGLE: I was on leave, because we found what was really needed was inside experience, and so there were several of us.

I took a leave of absence when I ran and when I served. It was very true, I kept my eye on things the League needed my help on, but I was off the payroll.

But anyway, the State Legislative body is a very interesting organization. I came away from my experience there with the feeling of a great deal of respect for the basic concern of the members of the session for the welfare of the state.

Now you had your people elected who were pretty selfish in their interests. And who were anti a great many things, but they were all always a small minority and they did give you a sense that democracy does work.

MS. LEVINE: What were some of the more interesting legislation you worked on?

MISS ENGLE: Well, some we didn't get through. We had in the early days these... the session put in a state bill for unemployment compensation.

This was before--long before--the Social Security Act, but other states were looking into this question of what happens.

Of course, you see, during the early 20's, when we had the repercussions of World War I and also the debts for it, taxes were up and there were a lot of things that had to be done.

Unemployment insurance meant that there was an amount that had to be paid; and the bill provided also that the employee was paying into the insurance fund (which I've always thought would have been better on the Federal level if the Federal bill had included that payment...just as we did with the Shepherd-Towner Act where the Federal money was available, but the State had to put up an equal amount.

You also learned that the militant approach leaves too many scars. Besides not really being the thing democracy should stand for.

You go into a legislative session on the Federal or the State or the local level, where...knowing that certain people, as well as certain elements that would include people of similar mind or similar financial interests or a lot of things like that, but if you had a good case and you made it well prepared and covered all bases and presented it in that way, you got a very respectful hearing and you got a great deal of support for that.

We did a lot of things to interest women more during the sessions before I went into the Legislature. And during the time I was there, we had a spot that was offered to us by the then one radio station in Baltimore -- 15 minutes at the end of each week, in which to present what had gone on in the session. And it was very good. As a matter of fact, when there had been a lot of activity, they frequently gave us extra time. It went to the entire radio coverage of the state, which wasn't as high at that time, of course, in the early days. But we also sent it out as a sort of little legislative newsletter we do now. I was just reading mine yesterday for the March issue.

I was really delighted with how well the things that women are interested in were covered, and how comprehensive that information was.

You see, the ... newspapers carry a good deal of what goes on. Not always the things in which you're the most interested. All the headline-making things that you want. And that information...we also did one thing that paid off in a big way. We had quite a list of little county papers. And we mailed them a copy of what we had either said on the radio or all the summaries that were going to our members. And a great deal of it got into the papers, which was helpful for our bills we had and for their understanding and respect for the League.

MS. LEVINE: Who were some of the other people who were in Montgomery County delegation at the same time you were?

MISS ENGLE: Well, let me see. I can't remember all of them. There was an awfully nice chap who was a dentist from Rockville. I should think of his name. Dr. [Edmonds]. Then we had -- two men who were farmers. We had a lawyer and I think that was all.

MS. LEVINE: You were the only woman?

MISS ENGLE: Oh, yes. Mary Ristau was the first woman in the Legislature and then after that, Elsie Barber, who was the Vice President of the League, ran and her home was in Annapolis and on the river there, and she was keenly interested in a good deal of the legislation that dealt with the fishing in the bay and the river, resulting in a Commission--State Commission (of Virginia and Maryland) to try to stop the then rapidly becoming oil burning ship steamers that came up the bay. And they had the very bad habit of starting the pumps to pump filth while they came up the bay or up the river.

Of course, it went right on top of the oyster beds. Lobbying by letter is also effective and we got out notices to the League throughout the state and to members of the State League, where they did not have a county League (they did not at that time), had all the material that we could get so that they could write letters to their delegates, and we staged a number of special hearings where we had a good many people down there.

One of the women who was very active in the Legislature was a tiny little thing. Her name was Meloy (M-e-l-o-y) and her husband was a lawyer. She had been his secretary and then married the boss. And she had a good deal of knowledge about legislation and was exceedingly active--very able. We had, of course, Elsie Barber living here in Annapolis, was always on hand. And was herself a member of the House, as I said, later.

We had several other — oh, we had many other very able women and professional women. Dr. Lillian Welch, who was one of two doctors who took care of the girls at Goucher.

I have never forgotten one of our State meetings because we had another woman from one of our Southern Maryland counties who had a very drawling voice. And she was also apt to be a little persistent about things that we didn't think quite as important. So she had been getting up every few minutes to say, "But, Madam Chairman, it's the principle of the thing." Everybody was kind of a little weary. Well, Dr. Welch was tall, a slightly hatchet-faced gal, with very quick wit and a sharp tongue. And after Mrs. Catherine Thomas, it was, had said this for the eighth to tenth time, she got up, got attention and said, "Madam Chairman, I'm reminded of an instance when I was teaching school. A small boy was brought in for being in a fight with another small boy. And I said, 'Well, why did you hit him?' And he said, 'Well,' he said, 'my sister was cross-eyed.' And I said, 'Well, is your sister cross-eyed?' 'It ain't that,' he said. 'It's the principle of the thing. I ain't got no sister!'"

(Laughter)

Well, I think that one of the things we enjoyed about the League was it was a very...it was a combination of very brilliant and technically—what would you say—educated women. And it had also a good cross-section of housewives, and we had a very good representation from both (more from the District, that had a large, foreign population and who weren't working element population. And they were excellent. We had a very good group of Negro women. The Maryland League was a non-segregated—not desegregated—from the very beginning.

We had discussed it—a small group of us—with Mrs. Ellicott and Mrs. Woodruff, and Dr. Welch and a few others. I had said, in the beginning, when we were planning our constitution and the things that we would do in the State, that I had always been tremendously impressed by the group of colored women who worked with us in the suffrage

campaign. One of them was Mrs. Mary Church Terrall, who had her degree from Howard and was a practicing lawyer here, a colored woman.

There were also several women lawyers in Washington and in nearby counties who were white women who had their law degrees from Howard because it was the only D.C. law school that admitted women. But there were no schools where they could get a B.A. or a B.S.,--well, a Bachelor's Degree or even a Master's Degree unless they went North to the then very expensive private schools.

The Universities did not -- all of them -- admit women, and there were very few women lawyers in this country. The first woman to practice law in Washington was a white woman, who graduated from Howard. And all over the South, that was true. You had lawyers and doctors and women who had other degrees, who had gotten them at these mission colleges. It was a function of those colleges financed by the churchmen and churchwomen up here that the schools they built and staffed and supported were more liberal in some ways than the schools up here.

MS. LEVINE: Uh-hm. Isn't that interesting?

MISS ENGLE: It was an interesting development. Well, going back to the lobbying. A lot of your best lobbying in the State is done when the men are home. And over the weekend, when you can talk with them informally, small groups, and tell them what's going on. We also learned at that time.

It was -- as the League knows now -- it was very helpful to come to a consensus as to what you would support. What would be your major interest in that particular session. And to have a good deal of publicity in the local papers and a good many opportunities to talk to the candidates and then to the elected members.

Because you can...of, you have a different planet of thought if you're sitting down at home, in your home county and--either in the delegate's home or one of your homes--and informally discuss the need for such and such, rather than the more formal

hearings where you are clocked off, as to time and where you are talking to a wider audience and inevitably, you have to be a little more restrained on how heavily you emphasize something, where you know there is opposition and you don't want to solidify the opposition, which was Mrs. Ellicott's point to Governor Ritchie.

But it was a period of real learning and I think the fact that the League has maintained its study program...sometimes I think we're a little too rigid as to how long you study. It should be possible to have...to have real knowledge and reach a conclusion that can be supported by the organization, with less time element in it.

And I think that we may face a...a period where the...here the numbers in the League make it almost impossible to get your story across to the great majority of women who are members. If that could be done, and take your ballot by sending out a ballot and asking them which of these things do you approve of and what should we do? Now, we do that to a certain extent at the meetings. I'm a little concerned always at the small size of some of our meetings. Now the unit I belong to does have a right good attendance. They have usually--it's in the 20 to 25 and recently, well, we had a meeting here in my home not long ago--we had 31 or 32 women.

And Norma Esch tells me that there were about 40 at the last meeting, which shows there was genuine interest and knowledge enough of what it meant, for them to turn out and back it.

The channels of knowledge and the opportunity are so much wider, broader, and all of that with the radio and TV and everything, and yet I do not think that we reach people any better than we did in those earlier years. We had few radio stations and they were usually much more open to that sort of local discussion. I think we need to really take a good look at communication between the League members who are in different parts of the county or state and different states. And how to do it, with as large an organization, is certainly a challenge. So there we were.

MS. LEVINE: Uh-hm. Uh-hm. Let's go back a minute to something you talked about. Oh, I can't remember if it was last session or the time before. You mentioned Alderson.

MISS ENGLE: Yes.

MS. LEVINE: ...that you had worked with Jim Bennett at that point and this was evidently the poor house in the county here. Is that...?

MISS ENGLE: No. Alderson is a women's prison.

MS. LEVINE: What's it called? Oh, the Women's Prison.

MISS ENGLE: Yes. Yes.

MS. LEVINE: I see.

MISS ENGLE: Up to that time, we had no Federal Prison for Women. And there were women offenders who learned things in prisons that probably they never would have learned outside. So Alderson was a project that Jim Bennett had a great deal to do with establishing and the League was helpful. I think it was on our Federal program, too--the conditions under which women who were serving sentences were held. And the Alderson program was definitely a rehabilitation program. And it was one in which you tried to...by that time society was beginning to really talk of what you could do to retrain a person's social and mental attitudes.

One of our early, very early, concerns was (I think I talked of that before) of the training--State training schools--for boys and girls both.

The so-called rehabilitation programs were pretty thin for that, but we were able to get the institutions in Maryland, where most of them were entirely financed by the State, but they were sold and operated by either a church group or just a group who were interested; and they were not of the most modern type. Girls' institutions, for instance, was one in which there was practically no regular educational program. It was definitely a penitentiary type of incarceration.

MS. LEVINE: What was your -- what part did you play in getting the new prison...

MISS ENGLE: Well -- the

MS. LEVINE: ...in Montgomery County?

MISS ENGLE: The whole...well, it was not for this county. Alderson is a Federal prison.

MS. LEVINE: A Federal prison.

MISS ENGLE: Yes. It was on our agenda and discussed and we had women who had experience in penal institutions and care from other states, and New York State and one or two other New England states. And most of all, California had very, very able women working in that field. I'm trying to remember the name—it's so funny, I can see her actually—the name of the woman who was Chairman of the committee when that went through.

Mrs. Ellicott was on the Board of the Girls' Reform School — the thing I was trying to think of — of the Girls' Reform School, which was the dreariest place, with practically no facilities for anything but for a girl to set solemnly still and pray for the time she'd get out.

The place that was bought for the Montrose School was the old Betsy Patterson estate. There was a good deal of land. The old Mansion house [and the chapel] were kept. There were cottages and girls of different age groups. And there was a — a teacher or a matron who lived in each cottage. It was not a large...

MS. LEVINE: But, maybe — maybe what I was thinking of was the Almshouse. Didn't we have almshouses in Montgomery County?

MISS ENGLE: Oh, yes. You had a lot...

MS. LEVINE: You played some part...

MISS ENGLE: Well, that was a...you know at times it was not always quite clear—who initiated a program or how it went because we had a very strong woman's committee which represented every woman's organization in the State that was interested: The General Federation of Women's Clubs, at that time the Consumer's League had local...and the University of Women had one—the teachers

had one, and this joint women's group would go over programs and back programs.

The almshouse was one of the League's very particular interests. We had women who were on various boards that had gone and looked at and been disturbed by the almshouse—a place where old men and women went to die. And that's all it was. Some of them. So, anyway it was Brooke Lee who said to me, "If you ladies really want to do something about the almshouses, you've got to get it on the back page of the Baltimore Sun," which is where the outstanding local matters were put.

So we talked it over and talked with our women's group, many who were interested in our social reform, and decided that maybe we needed a study. So we got the Legislature to pass a resolution for a study of the States's local almshouses.

And the resolution passed, and then they had to get someone appointed to carry it out and the Governor appointed [Lacey Shaw as Chairman of the Commission] and me [as study director] together with some [men and] women on the commission.

So we started out—we went to each one of the almshouses, taking with us a photographer, a doctor, the local health—Public Health doctor—wherever we could. And an architect to pass on the condition of the building and the fire hazards and a lot of other things. And it was a pretty sorry story.

I think the point I may have mentioned to you here — not in this county — but in a nearby county, there was an elderly colored man living in what must have been a chicken house, with tarpaper put over it. And he was having his food brought out to him on a tin plate and we asked what...and they said, oh, he's got something in his throat that's catching. And we're afraid that somebody else will catch it.

Well, our doctor looked it over and said he has cancer of the throat. And he went in and called an ambulance and they picked that man up and got him into a hospital that same day.

The almshouses were not all as dreary as that. Others here in Montgomery County followed a rather customary plan. They bought a farm that had a big old house on it

and made the...divided up the rooms or...and expanded the bedroom space. And it was clean. It was...the food was good. They farmed the farm and those of the men and women in the almshouse who wanted to were helpful in the work that went on. There was no...there was no activity program. I don't want to say recreation, because most of these people were too old for that.

There were not infrequently young children who were there. Once case down in Southern Maryland--St. Mary's County--where the child had had serious burns, and she was out there without regular medical attention for those burns. And again, our doctor got her in the hospital. It...it hit the State pretty squarely, because they picked up...the papers, of course, picked up all the horror stories and there were several, and came to a point of beginning to...to build a program to replace the almshouses.

Frank Bane, who was at that time head of the Public Welfare Program in Virginia, made a study about the same time. His Board and the Commission came out with a recommendation that they should destroy or sell or get rid of all these small, local almshouses, and have regional, if not State-wide, with the proper building and proper supervision and good food and medical attention and all the things that you would want.

Our recommendation here in Maryland was that so high a percent of the people had either a physical condition which should be treated with hope of recovery or it was chronic. And our recommendation was that we build two chronic disease hospitals--one on the East and one on the Western shore. And that for the others, who could not be cared for, we make a State allowance for a county--it was joint State and County allowance--to such people so that they can either be boarded with families or if they're able to look after themselves, have enough to live on that way.

And it sort of was an advance on what we finally got in the Public Assistance Program for the aged, which were...we had a...a chap from the West, Dr...I can't

think of his name...who was all over the country calling for \$30 a month, was what they wanted.

In those days you could live very...less expensively, but never cheaply. But the almshouse situation was quite a common way of caring for that all over the country, which is the reason why...one of the reasons we were able to get the Social Security provision...of Old Age Assistance through.

And it certainly paid off. At the present time, I am not too happy over the...the minimum subsistence wage...when it is as low as the Bill puts it at the present time.

I think you do have...and we have right here in the county, we do have many old people who just are not getting...not only not adequate physical care, but they're getting no medical care. Because they live in areas that do not have a physician who would take on that...either do not have any doctor in the area, or do not have one who would take on that class of patient at the low pay they could make.

It's a distressing situation and particularly so when a good many of our experts in the field of geriatrics tell us that most of the old age crippling conditions started in their childhood. And that if we had a comprehensive medical care program so that you started when the evidence of the disease appeared, you could not only cure a great many, but you could also stabilize their ailments so that they are leveled.

But, of course, now our chronic hospitals do take...here in Maryland, take a good many of them. QQuite recently I learned the chronic hospitals we secured for the aged chronics now concentrate on curable cases, and what we used to call the incurables, who cannot afford our expensive nursing homes, are again in need of help. 7
This whole business of the aged is one that we haven't grown up to evaluate it as a whole.

I'm always interested in the fact that very few of our public officials or people working in the field ever stop to take a look-see at how much money for the Social Security beneficiaries comes into the county or the State. The figures are available at any time and when you realize that here in Montgomery County, we got a payroll of more than \$2,000,000 a month, that accounts for...this is not just the aged...it's the Aid to Dependent Children of workers who died in coverage, it is the Blind and the Permanently and Totally Disabled, and a certain group over 72, who never worked where they could accumulate Social Security benefits.

The benefits now have been raised due to the need for more education, so that a child beneficiary of a deceased wage earner can draw benefits up until age 22, if he or she continues in school and goes on from high school to college.

And there are 300,000 children in the United States now taking advantage of that. Now, that's money that was accumulated from the time a child first started to work and worked for a period of time and under the conditions covered—many of the youngest are the young children who worked in the movie colonies and who go on as actors and are given fairly permanent employment. Their parents are there, but the child performer is listed as an individual and paid as such. 7 And if parents die, those children could...or if parents didn't die, the benefits that were going to them after they retired, would enable them, perhaps, to do more for the children in school.

The fact that the Social Security is an insurance should always be emphasized. We are now told that the raise, which will be about ten percent and will establish a minimum amount of \$100 a month for a single person—and, of course, more for a man and family, although at age 65, you don't have too many—they retire.

Those that you have that are drawing the deceased wage earner's benefits are a little more -- a little more. Now at the time Social Security was enacted, we

hadn't started in this high spiral of increased cost of everything, and it certainly is true. On the other hand, it is a fund which is in the Treasury, invested in Government bonds and is available only for the payment of Social Security benefits.

Sometimes our men elected to high office do not understand that. Back when President Eisenhower came in, his first Secretary of the Treasury took a look-see, and like all incoming Presidents of a different party from the out-going, he wanted to make a dramatic change from what was called a very extravagant regime to a more business-like regime.

And to do it, he wanted to use the funds from some of these funds that were in the Treasury in one form or another that were dedicated to certain purposes, as the Road Fund.

Well, he didn't realize that the Social Security funds--and he had made quite elaborate plans for taking a great many millions of dollars that was invested in Government bonds and paying--letting it be paid off and then using that money for expenses--general expenses of the Government.

Well, he found out because ^{the} Social Security Bill provides the Board of Trustees and they name the Commissioner of Social Security and several other people, including several outside of Government office altogether. And Social Security funds are dedicated funds and may not be used for anything except put in bonds to draw interest and pay benefits.

Unfortunately, they turn to another--well, we won't go into that--to another fund that built up and used that. But it's a...

MS. LEVINE: I wish you would go into it. That always sounds intriguing.

(Laughter)

MISS ENGLE: Well, it was the Federal Employees Annuity Fund.

MS. LEVINE: Oh.

MISS ENGLE: I asked the Chief Actuary not long ago, "Was anything been done to replace that money?" and he said no. And I said, "Well, when is it really going to come to light?" And he said, "Well, about nine years, ten years from now, when some President is going to have to pick up that bill."

So, well -- I think that the -- I think that legislation now nearly always does include...certainly the inclusion of the Gas Fund just to build roads is a thing which ought to be changed, and I think will be.

But when you come to insuring a factor as Old Age, where we know what the increase is likely to be, and dependence on the part of children of a deceased wage earner, and you know that money--every cent of it--is spent locally and it's spent for food, clothing, shelter and medical expenses, primarily, it was not lost.

It was thought in this country, as other countries, that people save a great deal more privately than they actually do. The majority of the older people in this country have either ownership of homes, or an equity in it. But they do not have much saved apart from that.

And that is the type of Federally economic studies and studies of individuals by the Federal Government that I think should be greatly expanded. Because the feeling that things that are done for the older people are a drain on the taxes, they should turn around and look at how much money is actually spent in the community.

And that's where you get your total community well-being lifted, a very substantial amount. Because it's money that's spent here, that does the most for it.

MISS LEVINE: Let's see. Tell me some more about the Committee on the Aging that you belong to. Who appointed you and...

MISS ENGLE: Oh, oh!

MS. LEVINE: ...and where are you working?

MISS ENGLE: Oh, this Committee on the Health and Medical Services for the Aged. Well, back in 1966, I think it was, Dr. Windham, who is the pastor of the Baptist Church up here on...a few blocks up...was concerned

about the condition of the older people. And called together a group of us, and suggested that we set up a Committee of Concerned Citizens to see what could be done about some of the cases that are brought to his attention in his own parish.

So we had a group of—I think it was about 20—who belonged to that and we did some studies of the sketchy sort, but we got a lot of material together. And went to the Legislature and suggested certain things, and at our County Council. Then, Dr. Windham got the program moving.

Dr. Lionel Cosin was in this country at that time, and luckily in 1967...it was...he came here and spoke. I had known him before and he had spoken at Social Security for us.

He is the head of the Department of Geriatric Medicine in the College of Medicine at Oxford, England. And is probably the leading expert in the field of Geriatrics, and of the care of geriatrics. So, we did a good many things like that. We...then the County Council...the Federal Government had passed the Older Americans Act and had provided funds to set up and get started. They got seed money, not continuing ones for things that related to better care and all the needs of the aged. So the County Council here took over Dr. Windham's Committee of Concerned Citizens and we became the county members of the County Commission on Aging. And it is tied into the State Commission, which Senator Margaret Schweinhaut, of this county, is the Chairman.

And it's a nationwide group. We'll have the next White House Conference on the Aged in November — will be held in Washington.

I'm serving on one of the committees, representing Consumer's League on Health and Medical Services there. Our committee has had speakers and has made some investigation—not formalized or anything—and we recommend to our County Council, who then picks up and hopefully recommends to the State Commissioner on Aging, things that we think need attention.

We have very real needs for carrying medical services to people who do not live within really walking distance of some of the facilities that would be available. We have a substantial number who, I'm sure, just do not get medical attention for that very reason. Now, when you begin to talk of where they are and how they are, some people think that we look around at these largely church-owned and operated retirement homes and that this takes care of it.

Well, the figures are that only 4 percent of the people over 65 are in any kind of an institution—a nursing home or a retirement home, or a hospital. And that the rest of them are trying to live at home. They much prefer to live at home. And there are many things that can be done.

We have the Lutheran group in this county, pioneered and now is working on expanding Meals on Wheels. Some other institutions are going that. And churches, largely. Then we have a group of doctors from N.I.H. and one Dr. Myersburg, here, who are developing and running in their first stages a mobile clinic. And this is a clinic for the aged and for also children — and other people too. And what they are working on and demonstrating is a way in which we can get medical services taken on a regular basis to these outlying districts where they cannot easily get in for treatment here.

I hope that the medical complex which the county has—most of the land they inherited—from the man who so generously left it for county institutions for physical and mental health—I think that if we could develop something that had as part of its work, the mobile service to areas that are too remote, although the way the developments are going now, we aren't going to have very much of that—I just hope that we can maintain a few strips of green land and I think the developers never heard, apparently, that you need a certain amount of green leaves in order to have the oxygen you breathe.

But that ought to be brought home to them. Now I think it is. Our former president of the League, Idamae Garrott, is taking some very good stands.

Our committee meets regularly. We had representatives in the several retirement homes and it all boils down when you see it, to the fact that the majority of the poor would not have money to go in.

It is an expensive operation and the Oxford experiment, under Dr. Lionel Cosin, has demonstrated very clearly that with the proper treatment, even if it only comes after they're older, the great majority can live either with a relative, in their own home, or have a place where it's more a home and not an institution.

And, interestingly enough, one of the most advanced programs in that field is one for the Little Sisters of the Poor. And Sister Mary James spoke at one of our committee meetings, brought another Sister with her, and she mentioned many interesting things in passing. So, we had a lot of questions, and she turned to me when they started and said, "How long since you've been in one of our homes, Miss Engle?" And I said, "Well, I made a study of almshouses and other retirement homes so many years ago, I'd hate to tell you." "Well," she said, "you're going to have a surprise." She said, "Some of us in the Order decided that the time had come when we, as a Begging Order, should not feel that we have accomplished everything that we should, but we should be looking for better services and guidance. And we adopted a rule that the new member of the Order coming in--and it is an Order dedicated to poverty, of course--must take two years of training or work with the aged." She said if some of these who come into the Order feel that they would like training as a Registered Nurse, we finance it for them. And other things. They have an institution here in Washington that is the only home for the aged I have encountered that has a complete psychiatric unit. It is entirely staffed by Sisters of the Order, who have been professionally trained. And it really is -- it's an interestingly fascinating Order.

Well, the time I was there, it was just old people sitting gloomily, perhaps, or resignedly, waiting to die. Now, they say to the people who come in, if you want to, it's the only place where you can go when you have absolutely no money.

The other institutions do have some scholarships, they're called, but it isn't that you can just go to the place and stay. "I am poor, I am without a home, I'm without a place to stay, and I need something done for me." They will say, "Now, if you have money, above a certain amount that comes to you, we would ask you to put aside first an amount for you alone—your own personal expenses." And she said, we make that \$50 a month, and if a person comes and has no money, we give him that much and they buy the little things that they need at the time. Then she said every room is separate, a private room and they can go over to our warehouse of things that have been given us and pick out furniture they'd like. They can each pick out the pictures. Then she said, "We say now, there's no requirement for you to do anything. If time hangs heavily on your hands, and you want to do something, go and talk to the Sister in charge of that. And if you want to get a job outside, we have an employment service." You know, it was a breath of fresh air.

MS. LEVINE: Yes. Sounds wonderful.

MISS ENGLE: She was quite a young woman, and had another young girl with her who was a Sister. And it's nice to know that women really face things like that.

And she said this narrows the national program. But it was our American Sisters who led off with a lot of it.

Yes, old age is...you talk about the golden age and this and that and the other thing. We have to face the fact that it would be a lot more golden if we...if they had had adequate medical attention during their entire life and that's the big question that's before us now.

Here we are—as one of the foreign journals said—the country that has the best research going on in the field of child care, child health, and of aging, and of middle-age.

And they have the research, but they have the least well-prepared delivery of the research to the patient. Because ours is completely an independent service of you go and get what you can afford to pay for.

MS. LEVINE: Thanks, Lavinia.

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