

PATHFINDER

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SLUMP HITS DOCTORS

Some people have maintained that doctors weren't hit so hard by the economic slump. The claim was that people couldn't help getting sick and their misfortune was the doctors' gravy. But the Committee on the Cost of Medical Care, a nongovernmental committee, of which Secretary Wilbur is chairman, reports a rapid decline in the incomes of doctors during the depression.

Even in the boom year of 1929, the committee report states, half the American doctors received a net income of only \$3,800 or less. More than 21,000 practitioners, about 15 per cent of all in the United States, got less than \$1,500 from their professional activities while more than four per cent lost money on their year's work.

In 1930, the first year of the depression, physicians incomes decreased 17 per cent and they have been decreasing ever since. The committee found that while some doctors have exceptionally large incomes, the larger proportion had inadequate incomes than any other profession.

The average net incomes of doctors in communities of less than 5,000 population was placed at \$3,200 while the average of cities of more than a million population was less than \$7,000. The highest average net income of the profession in the larger cities was found to be only \$7,300.

Another interesting phase of the committee's report was the annual medical bill of the nation. This was found to approximate \$3,000,000,000. The average annual cost of medical care for representative families was found to be only \$71 in the lowest income groups, but rose to more than \$300 in the highest paid families.

The report also reveals that the country has more than 142,000 doctors, 62,000 dentists, 200,000 trained nurses, 132,000 pharmacists, 47,000 midwives and 20,000 optometrists.