



ED ESHLEMAN'S WASHINGTON REPORT

In the closing hours of the 92nd Congress, Social Security Amendments were one of the major things under consideration. Most of these amendments had first passed the House of Representatives last year as a part of the bill H.R. 1. But you may remember that H.R. 1 also contained the Administration's controversial welfare program when it passed the House.

The Senate tied the bill up debating the welfare provisions. Therefore, we came down to the last minute before H.R. 1 received final consideration and then only because the welfare provisions were totally eliminated from the legislation.

Even without the welfare sections, H.R. 1 was a major bill because it expanded Social Security and Medicare benefits and increased payroll taxes to pay for them. Since there is sure to be wide general interest in some of these changes, I thought this column should be used to outline some of the major provisions in the legislation.

The minimum monthly benefit for certain Social Security

recipients was raised to \$170 per month (\$255 for a couple). The recipients covered by this change are those who had long years in low income employment. Their increased benefits would begin in January, 1973.

Widow's and dependent widower's benefits were raised from 82.5 percent to 100 percent of the deceased spouse's entitlement. A widow whose benefits start at age 65 or after would receive 100 percent of her deceased husband's primary insurance amount, or - if his benefits began before age 65 - an amount equal to the reduced benefit he would have been receiving if he were alive. Under the bill, the benefit for a widow who comes on the rolls between 60 and 65 would be reduced proportionately to take account of the longer period over which the benefit would be paid. January, 1973 is the date when this provision becomes effective.

The bill permits earnings up to \$2100 per year without a loss in Social Security benefits. The present earning limit is \$1680. For earnings above \$2100, a reduction in benefits of \$1 for each \$2 of earnings is included which provides a greater work

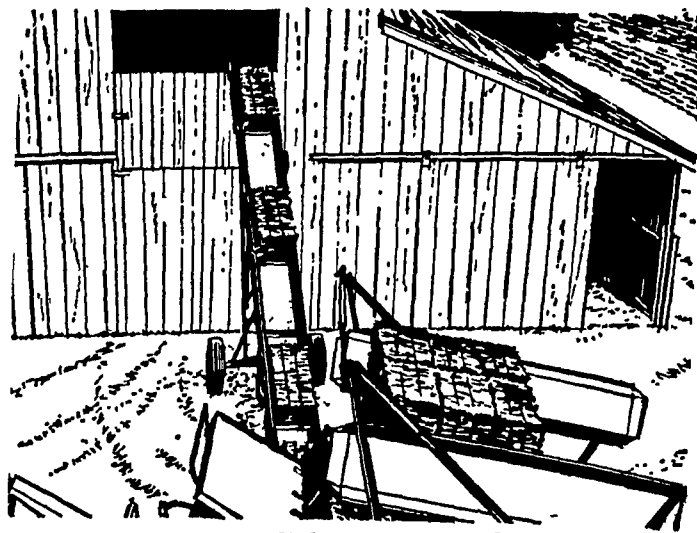
incentive than exists under present law.

There was a reduction in the waiting period for disability benefits. The present six-month eligibility period for receiving disability checks is reduced to five months effective January, 1973.

Disability benefit beneficiaries will be covered under medicare as of July 1, 1973. The bill provides for medicare coverage of a disability beneficiary after he has been entitled to benefits for not less than 24 consecutive months. Persons covered by this provision include: disabled workers at any age; disabled widows and disabled dependent widowers between ages of 50 and 65; beneficiaries age 18 or older who receive benefits because of a disability received prior to attaining age 22; and disabled qualified railroad retirees.

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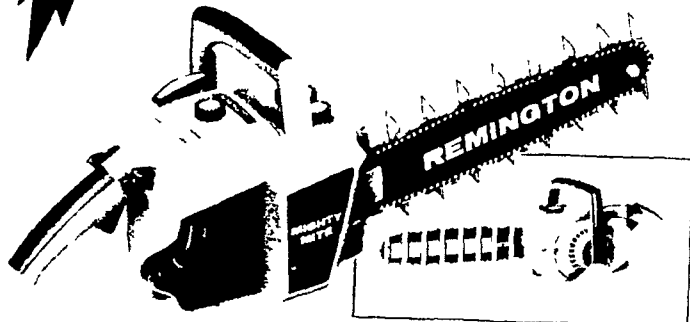
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