

Califano says Iowa, 19 others need not lose Medicaid funds

By JAMES O'SHEA

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Joseph Califano, secretary of health, education and welfare (HEW), Wednesday called on Congress to quickly pass legislation that would give him authority to suspend HEW-ordered cutbacks in Medicaid payments to Iowa and 19 other states.

In a meeting with several congressmen that was organized and chaired by Representative Mike Blouin (Dem., Ia.), Califano said HEW imposed the cutback in the first place because of pressure from the Comptroller General's office, an arm of Congress.

Califano has ordered that \$3.1 million be cut from Iowa's quarterly Medicaid payment. The funds, scheduled in Iowa July 1, were cut because state inspectors failed to visit all of Iowa's nursing homes to verify whether Medicaid recipients in the homes belonged there. The state's inspectors had visited all but five of the state's 410 nursing homes.

Hands "Tied"
"I admit it's like hitting a fly with a sledge hammer," Califano said.

However, he said that his hands were tied because of the comptroller general's study, which told him to enforce the HEW regulations more strictly than in the past.

Later Wednesday, the Senate Finance Committee cleared for floor action an amendment that would head off any reduction in Medicaid matching funds to the states for three months. The House Interstate and Commerce Committee is expected to approve shortly a six-month moratorium on the proposed \$142 million Medicaid cutback while states comply with Medicaid review rules.

Califano supports such measures, and some congressmen at the meeting were hopeful that some form of legislation could be acted upon by weekend.

Califano said there is no reason any state should miss even one dollar of its Medicaid payments if Congress acts. He said HEW issues a letter of credit authorizing the Medicaid payments.

"If a state complied with the law, it will get a letter of credit with its full authorization and can draw on it. If a state didn't comply with the law, the

letter of credit only authorizes about 80 per cent of the money," he said. "I don't know of any state that will spend all of its quarterly Medicaid payments in the first part of the month. So if Congress passes legislation, we will simply up the allotment to the full amount," he said.

Call for Action

Blouin said "this makes it imperative that Congress act as soon as possible on the legislation introduced in both the House and Senate to give states an additional three or six months in which to comply with the review procedure."

However, Blouin also told Califano he was concerned that the HEW decision may cause some hard feelings between the state and federal officials.

Representative Thomas Harkin (Dem., Ia.) also was at the meeting set up by Blouin and asked Califano if there was something wrong in the states that failed to comply with the HEW regulations. Califano said the problem really was in the law itself. Harkin had criticized Iowa Gov. Robert Ray for failing to make sure the proper reviews were made.

FARMER, 74, FOUND SLAIN EXECUTION-STYLE

By PATRICK LACKEY

Register Staff Writer
LUZERNE, IA. — The body of a 74-year-old Luzerne farmer who was shot to death was discovered Wednesday in his house.

Authorities said Charles Plucar, a lifelong resident here, had his hands tied behind his back and then was shot once in the back of the head Tuesday afternoon or evening. His body was discovered about 10 a.m. Wednesday by a nephew, Cecil Gilbert, and a friend, H. H. Dodd, both of whom live within a mile of Plucar's home.

Authorities said the home and a workshop behind the house had been ransacked and they speculated that Plucar had been tied up, robbed and shot.

Benton County Sheriff Kenneth Popenhagen said Wednesday there were no suspects in the shooting. Authorities said they were looking for some items apparently missing from Plucar's home.

Gilbert said Plucar had an eighth grade education and lived his life within a mile of the farmhouse where he was born.

"An old man living there by himself... somebody thought he had money," Gilbert said. "But he never had no electricity, no telephone. I tell you, he lived cheap. There was no expenses. That's the way he lived all his life."

Plucar never married and was a laborer all his life, said Gilbert.

He said his uncle made ends meet by doing odd jobs like sharpening saws and fixing farm implements for neighbors.

"That man couldn't have had much money. Where would he have gotten it?" he said.

The Benton County Sheriff's department, the Iowa Highway Patrol and six agents from the Iowa Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) are investigating the slaying.

Sheriff Popenhagen said Plucar was last seen alive at 2 p.m. Tuesday sitting in a chair on his lawn. Plucar, who normally went to bed at 8 p.m., was still wearing his coveralls when he was found Wednesday morning.

Dodd said he first suspected something was wrong Wednesday when he stopped by Plucar's home about two miles southeast of here and discovered that a workshop behind the house has been ransacked.

When Plucar didn't respond to Dodd's knock on the door, Dodd went to Gilbert's home, a mile away.

Gilbert said he returned to Plucar's house with Dodd. He said he started into the kitchen when he saw his uncle lying face down in a pool of blood on the kitchen floor with his hands tied behind him with a twisted cloth.

Gilbert said his uncle never locked the doors of his house until he was ready for bed. He said it looked like the two-story house had been searched.

"Everything was better shelter. He never kept it that way. He was very neat."

"The man never harmed anybody in his life that I know of," Gilbert said.

ISU golf course watering curbed

The Register's Iowa News Service
AMES, IA. — The fairways in the golf course at Iowa State University are no longer being watered because of the city's water shortage, according to a school official.

Gary Watachke, manager of the university's course, said he stopped watering the fairways about three weeks ago, after city officials asked residents to conserve on water.

The tees, greens and new plantings will continue to be watered, he said.

Americans don't believe energy shortage 'serious'

By GEORGE GALLUP

PRINCETON, N.J. — Washington is making no progress in convincing the American people of the nation's critical energy problems.

The latest nationwide survey shows only four persons in 10 (40 per cent) expressing the belief that the energy situation is "serious." The balance say the situation is only fairly serious (42 per cent), not at all serious (13 per cent) or have no opinion (5 per cent).

In an early April survey, 41 per cent said the situation was "very serious." This figure increased marginally in a survey taken not

long after President Carter's energy speech on Apr. 18, but subsequently declined slightly to the current figure.

Three key reasons are offered by persons who feel the present energy situation is not very serious, as determined by a small-scale supplemental survey conducted by mail.

— "It's a phony crisis, manufactured by the oil companies to raise the price of fuel."

— "The big oil companies have a monopoly going," is the view of a 36-year-old fireman from Brockton, Mass. "They own most of the land where our rich coal supplies are. It's just a giant ripoff."

— "We can readily convert to other forms of energy, such as coal, nuclear or solar power when the need arises."

"What's the big deal?" asks a 34-year-old female office worker from Rockford, Ill. "We can always switch to coal or some other form of power."

— "I don't see any evidence of energy shortages."

"I just don't believe there is a crisis," said one homeowner. "At least I haven't felt the crunch myself. The gasoline filling stations are still pushing sales as hard as ever."

While approximately half of the public can be said to be relatively unconcerned about our energy problems, a solid minority, as indicated, describe the situation as "very serious."

— The key reason given by those who feel the energy situation has reached a crisis point is the devastating effect a Middle East conflict or another oil embargo could have on American industry or another winter as cold as the last.

"America is a nation of waste," said a 32-year-old farmer from Vale, S.D. "We waste more fuel than most countries use. The Arab embargo and this year's cold winter

show why the energy situation is so serious."

A 32-year-old Hyattsville, Md., resident worried: "We are vulnerable to foreign pressures because of our growing dependency upon other countries for our oil."

Analysis of the results by background characteristics shows that 52 per cent of persons with a college background say the situation is "very serious" compared to 35 per cent among those who did not go beyond high school and 36 per cent among those whose formal education was limited to grade school.

Little difference is found between the views of Republicans and Democrats. Nor is much difference found in terms of the age or sex of the survey respondent.

Rather sharp differences, however, emerge in terms of occupational groups. Those in the professions or business are much more concerned about the energy crisis than are those in clerical work and sales or in manual labor occupations.

Here is the question and trend: "How serious would you say the energy situation is in the U.S. — very serious, fairly serious, or not at all serious?"

	Very	Fairly	All	No
	40%	42%	13%	5%
Latest (June 3-6)	44	41	12	3
April 29-May 2	44	41	12	3

— Carter TV Speech on Energy —
April 1-4 41 39 16 4

The following table shows the results by key groups:

HOW SERIOUS IS ENERGY SITUATION?	Very	Fairly	All	No
	40%	42%	13%	5%
NATIONAL	40	42	13	5
College Background	52	40	6	2
High School	35	46	15	4
Grade School	36	34	16	14
Democrats	42	40	12	6
Republicans	40	44	13	3
Independents	38	46	13	3
Professional and Business	50	41	7	2
Clerical and Sales	33	50	16	1
Manual Workers	35	44	16	5
Men	38	41	17	4
Women	42	43	9	6
East	40	40	14	6
Midwest	34	49	14	3
South	47	36	12	5
West	38	46	11	5

The findings reported today are based on personal interviews with 1,524 adults, 18 and older, in more than 300 scientifically selected localities during the period June 3-4.

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Iowa elected president of Mid-America Regulators

Fred H. Moore, a member of the Iowa Commerce Commission, has been elected president of the Mid-America Regulatory Commissioners. Moore, a lawyer and businessman from Spencer, was appointed to the Iowa Commerce Commission in 1972.

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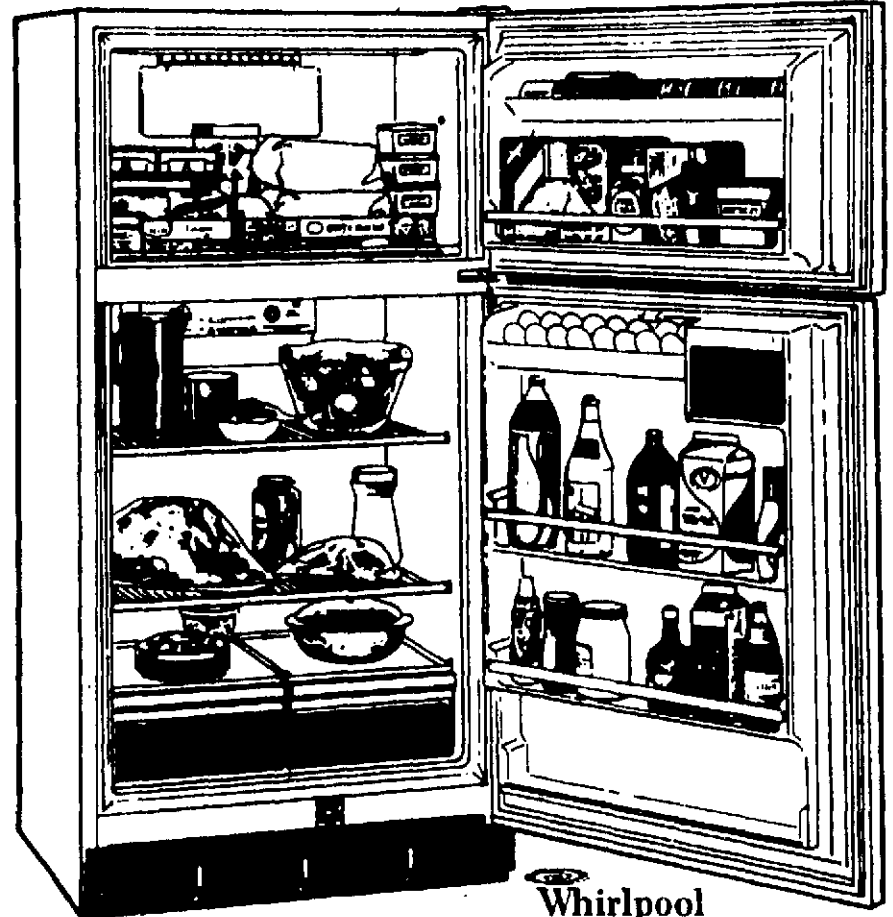
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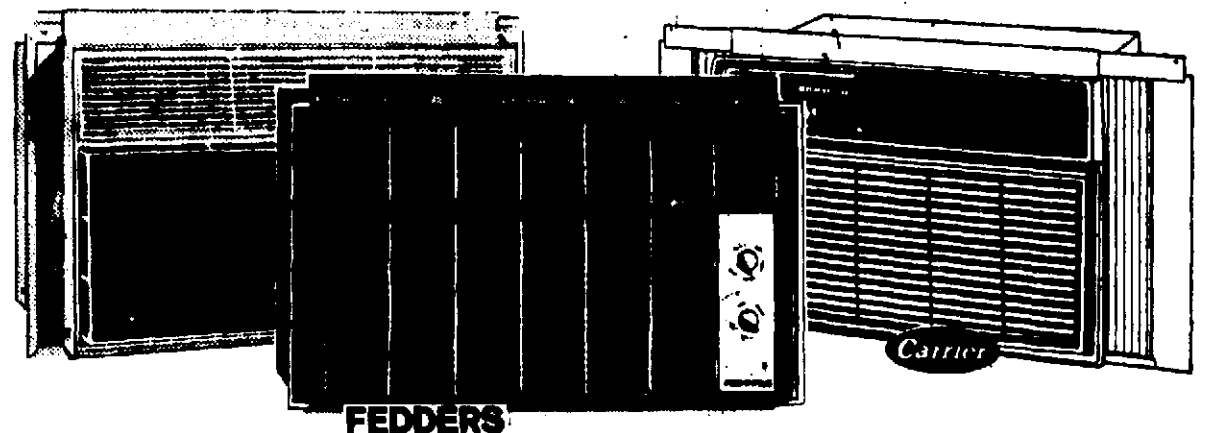
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