

OVER-MATCHED?
(Originally published June 1962)

In the past few weeks the predominating topic of conversation in the lounge has had to do with the federal administration's apparent all-out campaign to create a public clamor for the passage of the King-Anderson bill. At the time of this writing the much-heralded rally of thousands of hastily recruited Senior Citizens has yet to be assembled in New York to hear Mr. Kennedy sound a nationally televised alarm; across the lines the A.M.A. is still readying its pitiful artillery for a counter barrage over national television the following evening.

Despite all the months of build-up and all of the heated discussions pro and con as to the relative merits of the Kerr-Mills, King-Anderson, Blue Cross, Javits and other plans, we feel sure that less than one doctor in 15 (and probably a much smaller percentage of our non-medical friends) has read any of these proposals in their original form, or knows exactly what each of the plans claim to do or not do. It is unfortunate that it is a human weakness to opionate on matters (particularly those in which we become emotionally involved) without having a solid background of factual knowledge upon which to base opinions. In spite of this failing, which is a common one to both sides of the argument, and regardless of the strengths or weaknesses of one proposal against the other, we cannot escape the uneasy and frightening feeling that we have been maneuvered into a corner and are about to be overwhelmed by a furious flurry of punches, both fair and foul, not only from our main opponent in the ring, but from the hand-picked referee, judges, ringside handlers and front-row spectators as well.

Whether the medical profession is right or wrong in its resistance to changes that it feels will lead to a poorer quality of general medicine under socialization, we suspect, particularly after the awesome display of presidential power and federal political blackmail used in the case of the steel industry, that should such pressures and coercive measures be unleashed again, there is little hope for the A.M.A.'s viewpoint to survive the onslaught.

We have much the same feeling as we would have leading our Little League baseball team into Yankee Stadium for an all-important, pennant-deciding series against the Yankees and all of their farm system.