

# Washington Digest

## Housing Bill Suffers Rough Going in Congress

Taft Breaks With Conservatives in Backing Administration Measure; Long-Range Building Policy Asked.

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WASHINGTON, D. C. — It is fully expected that what is left of the plan for settling America's number one problem — the problem of finding a home — will be cut up by congress and pasted together in some new, strange shape by now. If it is still in the works when you read these lines there is a possibility that what finally emerges from the hopper will be more what the patient planners wanted and less like what the various pressure groups wanted.

The interesting thing to me about the debate on this measure in the beginning was this: although the administration features of the bill went squarely against the conservative grain of our conservatively ingrained congresses, it had one champion who usually sits as far away as he can possibly edge from anything of even a pale pink hue.

I refer to Sen. Robert Taft, Republican of Ohio. What Mr. Taft says never falls on deaf ears in the senate even if the ears are doubting ones and sprout from the heads of those cruelly affronted members once referred to as "the sons of wild jackasses." Vox Taft to the conservative is his master's VOX.

The two key features to the administration bill were the subsidy, which would grease the way for quick construction of the lower-priced type of homes, and the price ceiling which would make it cheaper to live in a house than re-sell for profit. That is, the present owner of a house could sell his property for any price he could get without restriction, but owner number two would have to re-sell it for what he paid (plus, of course, reasonable cost for improvements).

These two conditions may have been good or bad. Whether they were or not they were opposed for two main reasons: first, because they were considered "government interference" and therefore radical, and second, because powerful lobbies, the profits of whose principals would have been curtailed, put all the pressure they could on congress.

In spite of the feeling that the spirit of the housing bills was "liberal," if you prefer that word to "leftish" or "New Dealish," Senator Taft supported it. He had made a careful study of housing and come to the mature conclusion that the administration idea, as embraced in the bills introduced by Senator Wagner in the senate and Representative Patman in the house, was as nearly the right sort of legislation as could be obtained. The CIO took the same view.

Now when viewpoints as different as these two arrive at agreement, the simple citizen is inclined to think that their joint approval is pretty sound sponsorship.

### Labor Wants Planned Action

The CIO has printed a very businesslike booklet on the subject in which we are reminded that we have always had a housing shortage because our cities just grew like Topsy, that the shortage is steadily growing and that estimates show that by the end of this year almost three and a half million families will be homeless unless they are taken in by relatives or double up with others—as the President suggested they will have to do meanwhile.

The reason that we always had a housing shortage, according to the CIO, is because we never had a housing policy. We have a public school, educational policy; a police protection policy; a war and navy policy. As a result, we have a pretty good school system, our police give us reasonable protection to life and property; we have never lost a war nor suffered invasion. But we can't have roofs over our heads.

That is what the current housing legislation is supposed to provide. One more factor may be injected into this controversy which could affect it materially: the veteran, chief sufferer from homelessness, is as yet unorganized. Once organized, he could out-pressure the other pressure groups.

Since I heard forthright speeches of Senator Vandenberg and Secretary of State Byrnes which sounded a sharp warning to Russia that the

United States was ready to carry out its international obligations and use force to check aggression, the following sentence has been before me: "... the American people, now in the height of their might and majesty, are no longer a sovereign nation."

That sentence is from Nathaniel Peffer's book, "America's Place in the World" which the Saturday Review of Literature calls a "stubbornly and trenchant discussion." I agree with that description of the book and believe that what Peffer says is true and that it is vital for Americans to understand why it is true.

Peffer says that we have lost our independence and our autonomy "in that which matters most in the life of the nation—peace or war." And then he shows with his "stubborn realism" how this has come about, how in the beginning (before 1776) America "had no control over its own destiny because it was so weak, now because it is so strong."

And he shows clearly and convincingly that, no matter how anxious we may be to stay out of foreign broils, any major war in Europe or Asia will eventually involve the United States. Our sincere but romantically futile dream of splendid isolation is forever broken.

### Must Lose Life To Gain It

Many thinkers have pondered over this question. In tracing America's international affairs, this authoritative and provocative writer traces our course through the great crises whose milestones are marked with the dates 1776, 1787, 1861 and 1911. 1917 was the warning that was not heeded. We were drawn into a war then, not of our own making, but we did nothing to shape world affairs which followed and which, inexorably, drew us for the second time into a world conflict in which we had no direct concern.

It may seem a far cry from diplomatic intrigue and the vicissitudes of human hatreds, organized murder and lust, to the world of the spirit but I could not help thinking as I considered the efforts I witnessed at Nuernberg of a certain text in the Bible; the words of Jesus as recorded in the gospel of St. Mark (XVIII:35), "For whosoever shall save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

I am well aware of the fact that the devil may quote the Scriptures with the best of us but I do not think one has to be charged with Mephistophelian tactics when one traces a parallel between the loss of our nation's sovereignty in the sense in which Mr. Peffer expounds it and the loss of our spiritual life in the New Testament sense.

It is needless to iterate here that the principles upon which this nation was founded derive directly from the Christian philosophy. However, we have never fully lived up to that philosophy since we still feel it necessary to indulge in that highly unchristian procedure which I once heard the late Lloyd George describe as "organized savagery"—war. War has always been justified as a measure of defense—defense of our citizens, our territory, our sovereignty.

We have now lost our sovereignty in that we must be willing to die to save it. Let me replace the word "life" with the word "sovereignty" in the rest of the Biblical text, which would then read: "Whosoever (and that means a nation as well as a person) shall lose his sovereignty for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." Until America and all the nations are willing to sacrifice their sovereignty to a higher, world organization, whose tenets are four-square with the gospel's in proscribing war, we can never hope to win back a sovereignty in accord with the Christian principles which are the foundation of our nation.

A former American military government man says our state department and Britain and France are keeping Russia from searching Nazi assets in foreign countries. It seems strange that if Russia has been slighted in any way we haven't heard about it in a loud voice before now.

### BARBS... by Baukhage

The term "collective bargaining" was first used in London in 1891 by Beatrice Webb and was promptly popularized in this country by Samuel Gompers of the AFL, says a 20th Century fund survey.

Plastics from bituminous coal are now being made into linoleum for floor coverings. Wonder if they'll be in "striking" designs.

People who deal in black markets support the Bill of Rights perhaps, but not the Bill of Responsibilities.

I lunched with Marshal Montgomery and he showed me his necktie. What do the colors mean, I asked. He replied: Red for blood, brown for mud and green for the fields of Normandy after the breakthrough.



**BOWLING CONQUERED BY WOUNDED VETS...** For thousands of war-wounded, the Red Cross insignia is a badge of mercy. They give their services and provide facilities to aid while away tedious hours of hospitalization. Here aided by Mrs. Lucille Carey, Mrs. Marian Lee and Capt. L. J. Sheaffer, are left to right, Sgt. Paul Jackson, Sgt. Robert Abajian and Pvt. George Rodriguez, who are given a chance to continue their bowling in Los Angeles alley. Reports indicate that many of the wounded have become expert bowlers, which also aided in their rapid recovery.



**FAMOUS FIGHTING FAMILY REUNITED...** The famous fighting family of Mr. and Mrs. Leon Ostler, Chelsea, Mass., are together for the first time since Pearl Harbor, with the exception of the oldest son, Pfc. Charles, 32, who was killed in action in Italy. The group around their father and mother includes twins, Roland and Robert, twins Richard and Lawrence, George, Donald, Arthur, Howard, Leon and sister Marilyn at piano.



**EGYPTIAN STUDENTS RIOT IN CAIRO...** With demands that the British leave Egypt, students and sympathizers take possession of part of the city of Cairo without opposition from police. The rioters terrorized the capital, many fires were started and considerable damage resulted. Similar riots later broke out in Alexandria, site of a great British naval base. While the riots did not have government backing, little effort was made to prevent or control the demonstrations against the British government.



**THIRTY MILLIONS IN GOLD THEIR GOAL...** Irwin A. Williamson, famed explorer, is shown, left, with Capt. Edward Erikson, as they planned expedition to recover a reputed \$30,000,000 in gold from the cursed Spanish galleon "Santa Rosa," which has been on the sea's bottom since 1765. Williamson discovered location in 1941 and brought up the ship's bell. Location is somewhere off the coast of Cuba.



**PARIS OBJECTS...** Against France executions of 10 anti-Fascists. This mass demonstration was held in Paris demanding an immediate break with France.



**HIGH-PRICED SPARKPLUGS...** Harold Newhouser, left, pitcher, and Hank Greenberg, star slugger of the Detroit Tigers, shown together during training at Lakeland, Fla. Their combined salaries are said to exceed \$100,000.

## NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS

By PAUL MALLON

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

### COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS OPERATION COSTLY

WASHINGTON. — The degeneration of the superior American efficiency in business into something like Europe before the dictators—where trains did not run on time, telephone service was whimsical and telegraph messages and airmail might be expected to arrive two or three days late—was observed painfully by me in my trip down through the southeastern states.

The railroads are not yet a monopoly in this country, perhaps the people are getting from them as good service as the deficiency of materials and men will permit—or a reasonable approximation in general thereof. However, telephone service is a monopoly. If the citizen cannot get service on one line, he cannot walk across the street and try another. The company has a monopoly of the business; the workers have a monopoly of the work with their unions. This imposes upon them a public responsibility beyond other businesses and other workers, to perform their public service efficiently.

I am not now considering the strike threat issue. I have not investigated merits or demerits of opposing contentions. Yet your house may burn to the ground causing you great and needless loss, if fire calls are not handled promptly because of strike, negligence, inefficiency or any other reason. Deaths may be caused by delays of a few moments in ambulances, operations or blood transfusions. Robbers may make good escapes. All the property as well as the very life of the citizen rest heavily upon the efficiency of this single means of swift communication between people. No company and no group of workers have the right to cause damage and death among the people as a whole for any reason, whether just or unjust. To do so is a violation of every natural law of man and common decency. With the right of monopoly in business and/or work (closed shop) goes a public responsibility which cannot be ignored or avoided for any human purpose.

### MONOPOLY DOES NOT IMPROVE VITAL SERVICE

I was forced to muse upon these serious considerations of vital (inalienable?) rights, by my minor experiences of trying to handle my comparatively unimportant business through telephone, telegraph and airmail while away from my office for a few weeks. I found the telephone and airmail wholly dependable. The airmail, of course, is a government monopoly and inefficiency is to be expected from past experience. But I found that airmail special delivery letters, mailed at the same time each day at the same point of origin, would arrive at their destination on schedule only one time out of three. The other two times, the mail would be from one to two days late. I understood then why so many newspapers were complaining about late arrival of mail copy. The post office has plainly failed to recover yet from the war.

Telephoning became an idle but interesting amusement. Each occasion furnished something novel. Out of 10 calls to Washington, I eventually got three through. One was prompt. The other resulted from an hour of effort to get a supervisor, who put it through for me, after my original call and the operator's promise to "call you back in 20 minutes." Both had become lost so deeply that no one around the exchange had heard of it. The third call in the afternoon was completed the following morning. The others never got through for reasons which are not reportable authoritatively by me, but I was told a variety of things: "There will be a delay of 30 to 40 minutes," or "your line is busy," and then a few seconds later: "it does not answer." I could never find out why it could be busy and then in a few seconds did not answer. I soon found out complaining accomplished nothing. Electrical noises would erupt in the phone and deafen my ear if I even suggested such a thing to myself. The only way you could get a supervisor was to work through a friendly operator on a private switchboard who could make just as loud noises as the telephone monopoly.

The sending of a telegram I found to be less of an adventure, and could be done in less than a day. In fact, I have only one complaint against the telegraph monopoly (they apparently gave my telegram to the wrong party on the phone). I will say telegraph service is at least better than when the Postal vacated the field.

But what of the people who deal in important figures of money, men or perishable materials? This is a big nation dealing daily in big matters. What of the national labor leaders trying to call off strikes?

## HOUSEHOLD HINTS

To keep uncooked meat in a refrigerator, place it in a dry dish with a loose-fitting lid; cooked meat should be covered tightly to prevent drying.

Prepared mustard and finely chopped sour pickles added to highly seasoned mayonnaise makes a perfect spread for frankfurters and hamburgers.

Don't paint over whitewash. Wash off the whitewash with clear water and paint only after wall has dried thoroughly.

Gone are the days of gloomy kitchens. Use color to make your kitchen a bright and cheerful place to work. Before you select a color scheme, remember that light-colored, smooth surfaces reflect light. Dark, rough ones absorb light. If the kitchen is sunny, use cool colors such as blue, blue-green, green, or blue violet. If it is dark and gloomy, it needs the warmth of yellow, yellow-green, orange, yellow-peach, tan or cream.

The easiest way to season a plain hot vegetable in addition to salt and pepper is to add meat drippings or melted fat. Add just before serving.

On hand-knit or crocheted gloves, leave three or four inches of yarn on the inside of each finger. Catch this lightly in place on the wrong side. When gloves begin to show wear, thread end can be used for mending.

When boiling rice, add a teaspoon of lemon juice to a quart of water. It will make the rice white and the grains will be separated when it is boiled.

### Pelicans Cooperate When On a Fishing Expedition

The most amazing example of cooperation in the animal world is the fishing expedition of the pelican, says Collier's.

Upon finding a well-stocked bay or lake, a flock of these birds form a large half circle in the water facing the shore and then, moving a few feet apart, "fish" the narrowing area as thoroughly as men with a seine.

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