

CURRENT EVENTS IN REVIEW

By Edward W. Pickard

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President Defends AAA and Canadian Trade Treaty

WHILE the United States Supreme court was hearing oral arguments in the Hoosac Mills case in which the constitutionality of the whole Agricultural Adjustment act was attacked and defended, President Roosevelt was in Chicago seeking to justify the entire New Deal farm program. He addressed the American Farm Bureau federation in the International Amphitheater at the stock yards and was heard and enthusiastically applauded by some 25,000 farmers and as many others as could get into the theater and adjoining wings supplied with loud speakers.

The farm program, the President said, aimed to "stop the rule of tooth and claw that threw farmers into bankruptcy or turned them into serfs." As evidence that it is succeeding, he asserted that farm income "has increased nearly \$3,000,000,000 in the past two and a half years."

Necessarily Mr. Roosevelt defended the new Canadian trade treaty because only two days before that pact had been bitterly attacked by his late trade adviser, George N. Peek.

"Just as I am confident," said the President, "that the great masses of city people are fair-minded, so I am sure that the great majority of American farmers will be fair in their judgment of the new treaty."

"If the calamity howlers should happen to be right, you have every assurance that Canada and the United States will join in correcting inequities, but I do not believe for a single moment that the calamity howlers are right."

"We export more agricultural products to Canada than we have imported from her."

"We shall continue to do so, for the very simple reason that the United States, with its larger area of agricultural land, its more varied climate and its vastly greater population, produces far more of most agricultural products, including animal products, vegetables and fruit, than does Canada."

"In the case of the few reductions that have been made, quota limitations are set on the amount that may be brought in at the lower rates."

In his analysis of the Canadian agreement, Peek showed that 84 per cent of the tariff concessions which the New Dealers granted to Canada were on agricultural and forestry products. He also showed that the articles on which the New Dealers granted tariff reductions amounted to 308 million dollars in 1929, whereas Canada in return had granted concessions on articles valued at only 245 million dollars.

After completing his speech and eating luncheon with a lot of local notables, the President went to South Bend, Ind., where he received an honorary degree from Notre Dame university and delivered another address.

Coal Act Held Invalid by Liberty League Lawyers

IN THE opinion of the lawyers' committee of the American Liberty league, the Guffey coal act is unconstitutional. Although this law, intended to stabilize the soft coal industry, has been upheld completely by one federal judge and partly by another, the committee said it violated the Constitution in that it:

- 1. "Capriciously and arbitrarily infringes upon the individual liberties of producers and employees" and
- 2. "Undertakes to regulate activities which are essentially and inherently local in character."

Neither the "pretended exercise of the taxing power through the assessment of that which is not in fact a tax but a coercive penalty" nor congressional declaration that the industry was "affected with the public interest" made the act valid, the committee contended.

Offer Made to Italy at Ethiopia's Expense

ITALY is being punished for starting the war against Ethiopia, and will be well paid for stopping it. That is a nutshell is the status at this writing. Great Britain and France reached an agreement as to the offer to be made to Mussolini before the imposition of an oil embargo, set for December 12. This plan for peace, drawn up by British Foreign Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare and Premier Laval, was based on the proposal that Italy should retain part of the territory already conquered in Ethiopia, chiefly in northwestern Tigre province, including Adowa but not the sacred city of Aksum, and that the Italian-Somali border should be rectified. In return, Ethiopia would be given a seaport, either in Eritrea or in British or French territory. Thus poor Ethiopia, already declared by the League of Nations to be a victim of Italian rapacity, would be still further victimized by the consent of the two great powers that dominate the league. Presumably, if Emperor Haile Selassie refuses the

terms and decides to continue his fight for the territorial inviolability guaranteed by the league covenant, he will be abandoned to his fate.

Should Mussolini show a disposition to accept the proposals, it was expected the oil embargo would be postponed to permit negotiations. If he rejects the plan the embargo would go into effect and supposedly the war in Africa would continue at least until the rainy season next spring.

Italian airplanes bombed the city of Dessye three days in succession but Haile Selassie, who was there, escaped injury. However, the American hospital and a Red Cross camp were practically wrecked and many persons were killed or wounded.

Navy Limitation Parley Opened in London

PROBABLY with slight hope of accomplishing anything worth while, representatives of the United States, Great Britain, France and Japan met in London and opened the international naval conference. Italy also was represented, but only as an observer and listener.

Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin welcomed the delegates in a smooth address asking the chief sea powers to lessen some of their demands to "avert the calamity of unrestricted naval competition."

Norman H. Davis offered President Roosevelt's suggestion of a 20 per cent reduction in existing naval treaty tonnage, or, failing that, a continuance of present fleet limitations.

Then arose Admiral Osami Nagano, chief of the Japanese delegation, and told the conference that Japan demanded parity with Great Britain and the United States instead of the existing 5-5-3 ratio and requested a "just and fair agreement on disarmament."

He said in part: "A new treaty, in the view of the Japanese government, should be based upon the fundamental idea of setting up . . . a common limit of naval armaments to be fixed as low as possible, which they shall not be allowed to exceed; simultaneously, offensive forces must be drastically reduced and simple defensive forces provided, so as to bring about a substantial measure of disarmament, thus securing a state of nonaggression and nonaggression among the powers."

The French delegates were prepared to accept drastic limitation and even reduction of tonnage and gun calibers on individual ships; but they thought on land and air armament issues must be considered in any discussion of the relative strength of navies. Italy reaffirmed her loyalty to the principle of limitation and reduction of armaments.

The pessimistic feeling that prevailed was attributed to the Japanese demand for parity, the rivalry in the Mediterranean between France and Italy, the war in Ethiopia and its sanctions developments and recent occurrences in north China. Any one of which might well wreck the conference.

Farley Thinks Midwest Safe for Roosevelt

POSTMASTER GENERAL FARLEY, in his capacity of chairman of the Democratic national committee, called that body to meet in Washington January 8, when arrangements will be made for the convention of 1936 and the place of that gathering selected. He told the correspondents that the chief bidders for the convention would be Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City and San Francisco, and denied the report that the first named city already had been decided upon.

He said he thought the highest bidder would be selected, provided it has adequate convention hall and hotel facilities.

Stories that Senator Donahay of Ohio or some one else would be given second place on the ticket instead of Garner were laughed at by Mr. Farley. He asserted that there was no doubt about the renomination of Garner for vice president. Asked about the two-thirds rule, he said the committee might recommend its abandonment, but that any change was the business of the convention. Commenting on the Literary Digest poll, which shows a majority in the midwest states voting against the Roosevelt New Deal, Farley said:

"So far as the poll relates to sentiment in the midwest states, like Iowa, it is 100 per cent wrong." He insisted that the President was very strong, not only in that section of the country, but in every part.

"The President will carry as many states next year as he did in 1932," said Farley. Roosevelt carried all except six states at that time. Farley said he believed Roosevelt would win the electoral vote of Pennsylvania.

Consumers May Purchase Potatoes Without Fear

CONSUMERS who buy potatoes in regular retail establishments are not liable to a fine as high as \$1,000 if the spuds are grown and marketed in violation of the potato control act. Only the first purchaser of unstamped potatoes is liable. This is the ruling of the AAA, and the act may be amended later to include this provision.

The bureau of internal revenue regulations require that the producer cancel the stamps, after they are attached, by writing in ink or indelible pencil or by stamping his initials and the date.

Industry Is Called Upon to "Save the Nation"

ALFRED P. SLOAN, JR., president of General Motors corporation, was the chief speaker at the annual dinner of the Congress of American Industry in New York, and he made an earnest plea to industry to save the country from bureaucracy and possible socialism.

Industry should lead the nation away from the fallacious theory of plenty "to promote the general welfare of all the people," Mr. Sloan told the nation's leading manufacturers. Should big business fail to accept this "broader responsibility," it will bring, he said, the "urge for more and more interference from without—government in business."

Mr. Sloan conceded the gravity and the extreme importance of problems of today—the paramount necessity of charting a sound course for the "long future." He advocated:

- 1.—Reduction in the real costs and selling prices of goods and services.
- 2.—A more economic balance of national income through policies affecting wages, hours, prices and profits.

The meeting of the congress was held in conjunction with the fortieth annual convention of the National Association of Manufacturers, and the speakers before that body were as emphatic in their condemnation of the economic policies of the administration as was Mr. Sloan. President C. L. Barde said: "Whether we like it or not, industry has been forced in sheer self-defense to enter the political arena or be destroyed as a private enterprise."

Robert L. Lund, chairman of the board, said: "The New Dealers have been forced to desert some of their boldest experiments. This has come to pass because the American people have demanded a return to common sense and sound business. American industry has taken the leadership in this combat."

Two Provinces of China Are Granted Autonomy

NORTH CHINA autonomists, supported by the Japanese armies, evidently are too much for the Nanking government, of which Chiang Kai-shek has now become the premier. The provinces of Hopen and Chahar, with a population of 30,000,000 or more, have been granted virtual self-rule under a political council. The central government made only three stipulations—that Nanking would continue to control the new state's foreign affairs, financial, military and judiciary matters; that all appointments would be made by Nanking, and that there would be no actual independence for the area.

Grave doubts arose over the power of the projected regime to rule, one rift in the northern reorganization appearing immediately with the resignation of Gov. Shang Chen of Hopen. Time, and Japan, march on.

Supreme Court Refuses Hauptmann Case Review

BRUNO HAUPTMANN, convicted of kidnaping and murdering the Lindbergh baby, lost almost his last chance of escaping the electric chair when the Supreme court refused to review his case. The decision was made through the single word "Denied."

Hauptmann's attorneys had announced previously that, in the event a review was refused, they would seek a new trial if new evidence could be found and would appeal for a commutation of the death sentence to life imprisonment.

Christmas Trade Is Far Above That of Last Year

SANTA CLAUS is doing big work this year for the merchants of the country. It is estimated by officials of the Commerce department that the Christmas trade will amount to \$4,500,000,000 or half a billion dollars more than in December last year.

Preliminary holiday trade reports from all parts of the country to the Commerce department indicated that retail trade already is running from 5 to 35 per cent higher than a year ago.

Building Trades Unions Reach Fine Agreement

GOOD news for the building industry. President Green of the American Federation of Labor gives out the word that there will be no more jurisdictional strikes among construction workers. The factions in the building trades department of the federation have found a plan to prevent workmen from delaying construction by strikes over jurisdiction.

In the future the contractor is to decide which union shall do the job when a dispute arises, and then if a joint committee of the unions involved is unable to adjust the difference the question is to be referred to a federal judge as arbiter.

Washington Digest

National Topics Interpreted By WILLIAM BRUCKART

Washington.—A politician without a problem confronting him is virtually unknown. Whether he be a big shot in political life or just a ward heeler, his life is constantly beset with difficulties. Those difficulties always have and always will force him to wiggle and squirm and sprout additional gray hairs.

The newest problem worrying politicians is the Townsend old age pension proposal. Promoters of that fantastic scheme are gaining such a headway that even James A. Farley, postmaster general, chairman of the Democratic national committee and chairman of the New York state Democratic committee, is currently reported to be developing frowns on his otherwise smiling face. When Mr. Farley begins to get worried, there is cause, indeed, for all of the other politicians, big and little, to get worried. The Republicans also are concerned about the Townsend plan. But it is not quite as important to the Republicans as it is to the Democrats to take a stand on the Townsend plan because the Democrats are in control of the national administration and obviously they are on the defensive.

The battle being pressed by Mr. Townsend and his satellites is no small concern. Impossible as it is of operation; doomed to ultimate failure as such a scheme must definitely be, it continues to expand in its scope of political influence and has arrived at the point where it constitutes a power that must be reckoned with by all.

I am convinced that anyone who will analyze the Townsend plan cannot help arriving at the conclusion that it is comparable to the fantasy of the "Mississippi bubble." When the Mississippi bubble broke, not thousands but millions were disillusioned, if not utterly destroyed, and their economic future, so glowingly painted, was completely wrecked.

The Townsend plan which contemplates payment of two hundred dollars per month to the indigent is one of those things that develops invariably in periods of economic distress. It is distinctly a product of hard times.

When people are out of work and without resources; when they are suffering, they are always prey to any and all argument offering them relief. The conditions exact even a greater toll, a toll leading to crime. Only a few days ago the chief of the secret service, W. H. Moran, told me that it was a characteristic of hard times that counterfeiters of currency were more active. Idle hands will find something to do and the clever crook will take advantage of the situation. While every one who has talked with Doctor Townsend recognizes his sincerity, his earnest desire to accomplish relief for the aged and indigent population, I believe it is an indisputable fact that Doctor Townsend's plan would not get to first base except for the fact that this country now has millions of citizens who are almost if not quite without food.

The point I am trying to make is that Doctor Townsend's scheme, idle dream that it is, has been put forward at one of the few times in this nation's history when it is possible to amass a following of political importance. It is only in times such as these that people would pay attention to it. It will die down and his organization will crumble sometime in the future but this will not happen until it has caused plenty of grief, until it has wrecked political fortunes of countless scores of men and women who guess wrong and until probably it has produced a burden of taxation upon this nation the like of which never has been seen before.

In the forthcoming campaign, I believe we will see numerous political candidates, otherwise sound in their thinking, affirm the validity of the Townsend plan. They will commit themselves to its support because political maneuvers will force them into that position. Some of them, probably more than we now imagine, will be elected to congress and they will bring a gigantic headache to Uncle Sam who must foot the bill.

Townsend plan supporters in all of their preachments have consistently talked of their proposition from its beautiful side. It is susceptible of that because it is easy to point out what a blessing it would be to have each aged person receive a monthly check of two hundred dollars from the government.

But there is another side to the picture. It is basic. Where will the government get the money? Townsend spokesmen have figured out a visionary taxation scheme to raise the amount of money required but the thing they do not discuss is the fundamental fact that by their taxation scheme they will depreciate our national currency and will load upon those who are willing to work such a burden of taxation that soon there will be a clamor from three out of four of the population for some kind of a government payment. The end then would be obvious because after all

government as such produces nothing. All that it pays out must be taken from those who produce.

In advertising to the Townsend plan as I have done, I have attempted to set forth in a manner what I believe to be one of the greatest dangers of the present day, namely, the absence of clear thinking. In the Townsend plan, as in many other problems that confront the nation at the moment, individuals seem prone to jump at conclusions without analyzing what conditions actually are and without considering what the ultimate effect would be.

It seems worth while to consider another national problem which, though of an economic nature and less sensational in its outward appearance, is nevertheless very real. This problem concerns our transportation system.

Shortly after President Roosevelt took office we were deluged with argument that amounted to propaganda favoring government ownership of the railroads. There was a reaction against this idea. The reaction was so strong that few politicians dared to unloose their demagoguery in favor of government ownership. Yet, it is perfectly evident that those who favor perpetuating private enterprise which is always more efficient and less wasteful than any government are in danger of being lulled to sleep. Crack pots and misguided theorists in great numbers still favor government ownership of the railroads. They are still working. The government ownership problem is not dead. It is only concealed from the eyes of most of us for the time being.

Certain developments of the past several months confirm the statement I have just made. Taken singly, these developments appear insignificant. Collectively, they are very important.

I have heard it charged that government ownership advocates have a well-laid plan to wreck private ownership in the rail industry. This charge goes further. It asserts that those who seek to destroy our profit system are proceeding, piecemeal, to load a burden of charges upon the railroads so that in the end it will be a physical impossibility for the railroad corporations to earn a profit. Indeed, it is alleged that the scheme contemplates eventual burdening of the rail lines to the extent where they cannot make their expenses.

Obviously, if that end were attained, bankruptcy would follow. Then, there would be no alternative but legislative action placing the railroads in government ownership. Our wartime experience ought to be sufficient to demonstrate how the costs mount when the government operates the railroads. It means more taxes on every one of us who has income whether it be large or small.

But to get back to the developments mentioned earlier. Whether there exists an actual plan to drive the railroads into bankruptcy or not, the developments certainly are subject to that surmise. One of the items of expense, a new burden of cost that is proposed to be loaded on the railroads, is the rail pension law. I have seen some statistical calculations which were convincing to me at least that the charges proposed to be levied upon the railroads by the law will not work out in the manner their proponents claim. The bill would assess each rail corporation 3 1/4 per cent of its payroll and each worker would contribute a proportionate amount of his salary toward his pension when he retires. Like the Townsend plan, no one can argue against the fine spirit actuating a move to protect the retired workers.

But to go behind the figures at the start one finds certain astonishing facts. Almost any way, almost any method, one uses to calculate this cost, forces the conclusion that after eight or ten years the pension system will have expanded to such an extent that the railroads will be carrying an annual charge on their payroll of not 3 1/4 per cent but approximately 15 per cent. I think it goes without saying that no industry can bear such a tax.

In addition to the pension proposition, labor unions, aided by their catpaws in congress have kept up a steady machine gun fire, demanding first one thing and then another from the carriers. For instance, one of the current demands—and it is likely to succeed in some form—is the movement for shorter hours for practically the entire list of railroad employees. Of course, the railroads cannot justify working their employees longer than eight hours except in an emergency. It is possible that a seven-hour day might be practiced. But even a seven-hour day would mean that the railroads must add to their operating costs, and any item added to operating costs reduces the chance of the corporations for an even break between income and outgo.

There are a number of other such demands or movements under way or in the offing. Each one means a new burden, a new tax on the railroads.

Bushmaster Is Deadliest Serpent in Two Americas

The bushmaster, deadliest snake in the two Americas, is also one of the most delicate. Attempts to keep it in captivity have so far failed.

Really a species of pit viper and related to the fer-de-lance and the rattlers, the bushmaster is found in South America about the Amazon and in the Guianas, sometimes ranging north to the Panama canal. It often reaches eight feet in length, and a specimen 12 feet long has been measured.

Light yellow in color with brown markings on its back, it has the rudiments of a rattle on its tail. Its poison usually causes death within ten minutes.—Washington Post.



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