

SEEN-HEARD around the National Capital

By CARTER FIELD

Washington.—Grave concern is felt by high administration officials over the lack of eagerness of so many people, all over the country, to get off relief rolls, even when fairly good jobs are offered. It is impossible to obtain accurate figures about this phase of the situation, all the bureaus, administrations, agencies, etc., being very much publicity shy about this disturbing development.

It is known, however, that reports from all over have been received, and that President Roosevelt's hopes of getting everybody off the relief rolls as speedily as possible have run up against a very stiff resistance.

In many cities young men eligible for the CCC camps are refusing to take the examinations. In one large city families are insisting they do not want their boys to be trained as soldiers—that they bear beer is sold at the camps—that their boys would have to associate with low characters.

Professing entire ignorance of the situation in that city, the CCC officials here insist they do not believe the objections cited by the parents are genuine. They say that the talk about military training was very widespread when the camps were first started, but that it broke down of its own weight a short time ago. They believe the sole and only reason is unwillingness to get off relief rolls.

In other cities, in fact in most cities, enrollment in the CCC camps has been way below what was expected, and the answer is believed by officials here to be just unwillingness to get off relief. But in every instance officials say to inquiring reporters from the city in question: "Please don't mention that you talked to me about this."

Incidentally the Veterans' bureau has been having its trouble along the same line.

A Real Problem

The whole question brings up the point whether the United States is now going through what England went through a few years back. In England the dole brought some interesting consequences, and, as they occurred before the depression hit this country, there was quite a self-righteous feeling in this country that Britain was bringing her troubles on her own head by pampering the dole collectors.

Then came the depression, and the New Deal. Whereupon it became progressive in this country to insist that it was the duty of the government to take care of the cold and hungry, and reactionary to point to Britain's troubles on the same sort of problem.

Now it is being realized that it is a problem involving fundamental traits of human nature, and that the United States is not very different in the character of its people from Britain. No one, not even the most bitter critic of the administration on Capitol Hill, is advocating that people should be allowed to starve or freeze. But a very interesting mental transformation is becoming apparent in New Deal circles.

For example, a high official of the Federal Emergency Relief administration was told that his agents in a large middle western city had threatened to take families off relief if they refused to permit their sons to go to the CCC camps, or if able-bodied men in the families refused to take jobs which were offered.

"I have not heard about that," he said shortly. "You see it is a purely local problem. The man on the ground handling the relief situation has authority to handle the matter in any way he sees fit."

"You mean if he turns families off the relief rolls for such reasons as that, it is entirely up to him?" he was asked.

"Exactly," he replied. "Would the local officials make a report to headquarters here about it?" the questioner persisted.

"Nothing of the kind need be reported," he replied. "And his whole manner indicated, what some of his underlings told the writer in confidence, that he did not want any such reports!"

Cut Huge Fortunes

President Roosevelt's objective is the reduction of all large fortunes to a maximum of \$7,000,000—all large incomes to a maximum of \$60,000 a year. He said this in a conversation a few days ago with a very rich Democrat, who incidentally had been a big campaign fund contributor, and the gentleman is still sputtering about it.

In another most interesting conversation with a Wisconsin man who had backed him when Roosevelt really needed backing, in the pre-convention days, the President advised his caller to "go back to Wisconsin and make your peace with the La Follettes. They are our kind of people."

Which of course is purely corroborative of what the President has been saying about his tax program—that it has two objectives, a better social order, as well as revenue.

Meanwhile business men as a whole are agitated at the prospect for they see in the drive against bigness almost surely further boosting of the rates to reply against all

corporations which have big earnings. Most business men do not agree with the wisdom, entirely aside from their selfish interests, of this policy. Most of them admit that there is some merit in the contention so often made in private conversations by Justice Brandeis against bigness in privately owned corporations. Frequently, they admit, many of the faults which characterize all large scale government operations creep in when a corporation attains unwieldy size. They even admit that instances can be cited where the mere size of the corporation increases the cost of whatever unit it may manufacture, or the item of service it may render.

Take the Automobile

But they insist that for the most part these instances are the exceptions, and not the rule. A favorite illustration of the reverse is the automobile. Anyone who knows anything about manufacturing admits that if the automobiles of this country were produced by say 300 manufacturers of fairly even size, the cost per automobile to the purchaser would be more than double.

The best illustration of this is the Ford car now manufactured by a fairly good sized plant in Strassburg, France. That car costs the purchaser in Paris about \$1,700. This is not due to the protective tariff, for the car is made in France. Actually, of course, if the cars were made in the big Ford plant at Dearborn, they would pay 100 per cent tariff and still save the purchaser a good deal of money. It is the French quota system on imports which forces their manufacture on a small scale at Strassburg.

Manufacturers contend that if Ford cars were produced by separate plants of small size in this country, each owned by a different owner and operated independently—in short if the policy desired by the administration in this use of the taxing power against bigness were forced into effect—the cars would cost purchasers in this country more than the \$1,700 charged in France. For it so happens that wages in the Strassburg plant are lower than in the Dearborn plant.

All of which helps to explain what some critics of the plan mean when they insist it is a "distribution of poverty" not a "distribution of wealth."

One Real Danger

Only one phase of the huge "share the wealth"—level off the big fortunes and "pass prosperity around"—taxation program of President Roosevelt seems in any real danger. This is the sliding scale tax aimed at big corporations. There seems no doubt whatever that the big levies on inheritances, and the boosts in the upper income tax brackets, will be approved by congress, substantially as desired by the President.

Already a trickle of protests has begun arriving from holders of common stocks in the big corporations. A few of them have already realized that heavier taxes on the companies in which their savings are invested hits them, and them alone. For the bondholders, and the preferred stockholders, will continue to get their interest and dividends, if they are earned. Additional taxes will hit the equities, not the debts, of these corporations.

If the big companies should do anything like as thorough a job in rousing their stockholders as the utilities did, there is little doubt that this phase of the program would be in serious danger. For there is nothing like the spontaneous appeal to this levy that there is to the proposal to tax big fortunes, both when in estates and in incomes.

Some lawyers are contending, however, that the big inheritance taxes are unconstitutional. They contend that the object of the tax is not to raise money for the needs of the government, but is purely social in character, with the object of leveling off fortunes. This, they contend, runs counter to the Constitution.

Not much attention is apt to be paid to this by the senators and representatives. "Sock the rich" has always been a popular slogan, politically, and the theory that it is good politics to vote for such legislation is strongly held.

Question of Politics

Lots of men in both house and senate will vote for these levies who do not really approve of them. Hence the comparative certainty that they will pass. Opposition to them might prove very hurtful at the next election.

The opposition is based chiefly not on any theory that it is a bad idea to cut down the big fortunes—though there are a few who insist that many big fortunes have proved far more beneficial to the public at large than if the same amount of money had been spent by the government—but on the old Mellon theory of efficiency.

Andrew W. Mellon, when secretary of the treasury, frequently contended that lower percentages of taxes of the high brackets would bring more money into the treasury than higher percentages. He pointed to the fact that every time taxes were reduced on big incomes, receipts from big incomes increased. Critics of the Mellon regime always insisted that the reason for this was merely because it occurred during a rapid rising tide of prosperity.

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Skyscrapers May Give Way to Oil Wells



Oklahoma City's new zoning law permits oil wells to be drilled in the heart of the business district as shown here. The day may come when tall buildings are torn down to make room for the skeleton-like towers.

Gets \$25,000—the Lucky Dog!



Nothing to be sniffed at was the \$25,000 willed to Pet, this Eskimo spitz, by his late mistress, Miss Margaret McDermott of Chicago, who asked that he be placed in the home of a woman who loved dogs. Pet is now the charge of Mrs. Hulda Rhode and her grandson Lawrence Dennis, shown here, who were friends of Miss McDermott.

Taxidermist for Defunct NRA Dodo



Meet Frontis J. Coonley, upon whom has been placed the charge of making the dead NRA assume something of a lifelike appearance. Mr. Coonley was code administrator of the old National Recovery administration.

He has been advanced to the position of director of the new division of business co-operation, in an attempt to revive the more noteworthy phases of NRA.

New Troops for Italy's Ethiopian Front



Fresh Italian troops and small tanks manned by Italians and natives, ready to wage Mussolini's proposed four years war in Africa, shown as they passed in review before Gen. Rodolfo Graziani (left, on the stand) in Italian Somaliland.

MAP WOMEN'S AID



Mrs. Ellen S. Woodward, assistant program director, who is busy in Washington with plans for employing 500,000 women with part of the President's \$4,880,000,000 work-relief fund.

WAR IN Africa, Says Duce, Will Certainly Come by OCTOBER

Premier Benito Mussolini goes right ahead with his plans for beginning a four-year war against Ethiopia in the fall. Italy, now overpopulated, needs more room to expand, says Il Duce, and now is the time to do it.

Efforts of Haile Selassie, Ethiopian emperor, and of other nations have failed to effect a compromise, and new troops and military equipment are arriving in Italian Somaliland almost daily.

Great Britain, through its Capt. Anthony Eden, journeyman attendant of John Bull's League of Nations affairs, offered Italy a generous slice of British Somaliland as a concession if he would guarantee peace in Ethiopia. Mussolini flatly refused.

Il Duce has also threatened to "remember" the nations which have offered to supply Ethiopia with arms.

RULES CHERRY FETE



Genevieve Pappas, Manistota blood, was chosen from western Michigan's future to reign as queen over the national cherry festival at Traverse City, July 27, 28 and 29.

Careful reading of translations of American Indian texts in the Mohawk, the Onondaga and the Oneida languages by J. N. H. Hewitt, ethnologist, has revealed, says the annual report of the bureau of American ethnology, that many historical deductions previously made from these writings are incorrect.

In writings of many historians of the tribes of the Iroquois there is a constant occurrence of the term "tribe" at such intervals of time that it is almost impossible to trace the true lineage of the people from one generation to another. It is not surprising that the eldership of the Iroquois tribes or nations or political groups among the Iroquois people has quite a different significance, the term being courteous forms of address of an institutional nature, which bars completely the historical inferences or deductions so frequently made from them.

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