

Looking at WASHINGTON

Says Congress Lacks Fact Finding Facilities

"Congress woefully lacks accurate and disinterested fact-finding facilities," declares Representative Albert Gore, of Tennessee, a member of the House Appropriations Committee.

Mr. Gore calls attention to a handicap that besets Congress when it begins to make appropriations for governmental administration. He does not think it possible for individual Congressmen, in the face of an "incredible volume and variety of duties," to do more than rely on "hit-or-miss" methods and sometimes guesswork in determining the proper size of appropriations.

He thinks that the "outmoded methods" by which money is made available for spending requires correction because "very few members know in detail where the money goes" and he suggests that it is impossible to "know under the present system."

Mr. Gore points out that appropriation bills must originate in the House Ways and Means Committee. This group is overwhelmed by the magnitude of its job and important sums are appropriated on the basis of hearings before sub-committees. Before them, the Department heads come in and make their claims for money. Without adequate means to check up on the work of the Department and very often without adequate information upon which to base a judgment upon the demands for cash, the committee member has to do the best he can.

It should be perfectly obvious that a government, spending more than thirty billion dollars a year, is an intricate and vastly involved business. It appears unreasonable to expect the member of a committee to keep up with the ramifications of such a spending structure. Certainly, it is that the executive officials, backed by the opinions of experts and with ample time to present their claims, are in a better trading position than any individual on the committee.

Mr. Gore proposes to solve the problem in two ways: (1) By hiring qualified technicians on a non-political basis, whose business it would be to keep up with every phase of government and serve as a fact-finding agency for Congressional appropriations committees; (2) that there be some time, say, six months,

between the election of a Congressman and his taking office. This period would be designed to give the legislator an opportunity to study the workings of the Government in order to be familiar with his prospective duties.

We thoroughly approve the first suggestion of Mr. Gore. It is absolutely necessary for Congress to have information, secured by independent investigation, in order to analyze and appraise requests for money. That the fact-finding group should be employed on a non-political basis goes without saying.

In connection with this suggestion, we recall that some years ago, in recognition of the same need of Congress for information, we proposed a plan which, in our opinion, would be extremely beneficial to the Government. It revolved around the idea of a pension for Congressmen, but, instead of granting the retired legislators compensation without requiring them to work, it was our suggestion that every Congressman, upon retirement, become a member of the fact-finding group.

Thus, if a Congressman retired from office, after ten or twelve years' work, he would be available, as an employee of Congress, to keep up with the phase of Government activity with which he became most familiar during his term of office. A member who served on the agricultural committee, for example, would be in a position to check up on the request of officials for cash. He would be thoroughly familiar with the operations of the Department in the past and in a position to give sound and reliable information to the voting members of Congress.

The second proposal of Mr. Gore, that a period of six months elapse between the election of a Congressman and his taking office, would vitiate, in part, the benefits derived from the "Norris Lame-Duck Amendment" to the Constitution. Before the Norris reform, the Congress elected in November of one year did not begin to legislate, unless there was a special session, until December of the following year. This time-lag was not good because, after the election, the next regular session of Congress was controlled by the old Congressmen. It sometimes happened that a change in policy was unduly

delayed by the votes of Congressmen who had been defeated for reelection.

The part of the second suggestion that points out the benefit to be obtained by permitting Congressmen to have an opportunity to visit and study the workings of the Government is extremely sound. It could be put into effect, in part, without postponing the time of taking office. Between November and the convening of Congress in January, there are two months and a newly-elected Congressman, taking advantage of modern travel by air, could get around and see a considerable part of the workings of his Government.

There is no use quibbling about details, however, because the defects in legislating money bills are apparent. It is certainly necessary for Congress to do something about the matter.

It might be possible, for example, to lighten the work of the Appropriations Committees by permitting certain appropriations to be governed by the committees of Congress most familiar with the department or activity involved. Inasmuch as these committees make an exhaustive study of proposed legislation, which is later implemented by an apportionment of effort involved. Of course, the overall appropriation, or the fiscal policy of the Government as a whole, would be subject to some control by the central appropriations committees.

China Decisive Area In Clash With Soviet

Recognizing that the future of the world lies between Communism, represented by the Soviet Union, and modern freedom, represented by the United States, House sub-committee surveys the world and reports that slightly more than one-fourth of its population now live under one or the other of the great systems.

The House group, headed by Representative Francis B. Bolton, of Ohio, says that the one and a half billion people, outside of the two systems, represent a decisive group which may become Democratic or Communist. Consequently, the committee concludes that China is the "decisive area", and that the United States should continue to extend assistance to China despite its commitments elsewhere in the world.

The Committee gives some history in connection with the relations between Russia and China. The Soviet entered into the picture when it declared war against Japan in 1945. The Chinese National Government, hampered by poor transportation facilities and Communist interference, was unable to disarm the Japanese troops and the result was that Japanese arms were taken over by Chinese Communists. They are called one of the strongest Communist parties in the world, with about two million members, an effective army and control of an area that has a population equal to the United States.

The survival of China as a Democratic nation is vital to the safety of all Democratic nations, in the opinion of the Committee, which points out that the internal balance of China is easily overturned by "any substantial intervention". The Chinese National Government, it is believed, needs military assistance in the form of rifles and "other simple and rudimentary equipment". Consequently, to achieve stability, the Chinese Government must have "an immediate shot in the arm."

While it is possible that the Committee is overly-impressed with the probable importance of China in the struggle between the Communists and non-Communist world, there is much to be gained by making sure that the Chinese Government remains outside the Communist orbit.

Talk But Not Action

The Soviet Union now proposes that atomic controls and atom bomb prohibitions come into being at the same time.

This is no advance because the hitch, heretofore, has been the refusal of Russia to accept international inspection which is the world's only protection against the secret development of atomic bombs in some country.

The United States is not expected to fall for the Russian manoeuvre. Our country has insistently stood for adequate controls before the atomic bomb is outlawed. Until this is effective, there is no reason why the United States should give up the protective power of the bomb.

Union County Farmer Has High Corn Yield

A 77-year-old Union County farmer, J. R. Simpson, Washaw, Route 2, is now leading the North Carolina 1948 corn production contest in which an assortment of regional and State prizes will be given, according to Dr. E. R. Collins, in charge of Extension agronomy at State College.

Mr. Simpson took the lead with a yield of 9,981 pounds—almost five tons—of corn on one acre planted to Dixie 17 hybrid. On the basis of 56 pounds per bushel and a moisture content of 15.5 per cent, this is a yield of 136.24 bushels for the one acre.

Mr. Simpson's yield exceeded that of last year's State champion, John Mullinax of Henderson County, by 4.74 bushels. The 1948 contest, however, will not be completed until several more fields have been checked.

Beside the 136-bushel acre, another acre planted to an open-pollinated variety produced only 101.27 bushels. Total cost of Mr. Simpson's corn

seed, labor and fertilizer on the official contest acre was \$75.50. He applied fertilization as follows: April 26, 11 wagonloads of stable manure broadcast; April 29, 900 pounds 4-10-6 fertilizer; May 8 (planting time), 200 pounds 4-10-6; June 3, 300 pounds Cal-Nitro and 100 pounds potash; June 19, 300 pounds Cal-Nitro; July 6, 400 pounds Chilean soda; July 27, 200 pounds soda and 12 pounds potash; August 7, 200 pounds soda and 100 pounds potash.

Some 65 neighbors helped harvest the corn on the Simpson farm. The Simpson daughters, Eula and Cora, who helped grow the corn, served a dinner to the group with the help of visiting women and the home demonstration agent, Mrs. Hilda L. Hudson. In the afternoon, the group of visiting farmers increased to 225.

Worth The Sacrifice

With a sparkle in his eyes, the young fellow walked into the showroom.

"If I bought this car by installments," he said, pointing to a particularly "sporty" model, "how long would it take me to pay for it?"

"That would depend on how much you could afford each month, sir," replied the salesman, cautiously.

The young man scratched his chin.

"Well, I think I could manage

three dollars a month." The salesman's eyes popped. "Three dollars a month!" He gasped. "At that rate it would take you a hundred years." Gazing longingly at the very stream-lined model, the young man said: "So what? It's worth it."

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Some facts on telephone recording

When you hear a "beep"-like sound on the telephone, it means that the person with whom you are talking is recording your conversation on his own recording machine. If you do not want your conversation recorded, ask him to please disconnect his recorder.

Latest government regulations permit recording machines to be connected to telephone lines, only if the "beep" signal is used.

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