The Week in Washington

A RESUME OF GOVERNMENTAL HAPPENINGS IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL.

Washington—As forecast in this correspondence a short time ago, the President is choosing the "right" fork of the road to social and economic recovery, rather than the "left." Not by any positive declaration of policy, but by putting the emphasis of matters which appear of more importance to the conservative element of the citizenry than do a good many of the things about which there has been so much talk.

More and more it is being borne in upon those members of the Administration who are keen for reforming everything—and there are a few who are "bugs" on that subject—that until and unless business responds to what has already been put into effect, it would be folly to try to press any more far-reaching reforms upon the nation. The President sees this clearly, and so do a great many members of both houses of Congress. Some of the latter, with the primaries now starting and the election of next November staring them in the face, are wondering whether anything that they can do between now and adjournment will help to restore business confidence in time to do them any good.

Heed Constructive Criticism

The administration and its supporters are receptive to criticism when it comes from sources which they do not regard as self-seeking. They pay little attention to what Wall Street thinks, but they do listen when representatives of constructive and productive business speak their minds, as did the members of the Chambers of Commerce of the United States recently in their annual convention. One result of that criticism is a revision of the Securities Act, with the President's full support, to enable legitimate business to obtain capital in a legitimate way from legitimate sources, without being classed with crooks and highbinders.

It is probably a fair statement that Republican opposition is not worrying the administration any. In the nation as a whole there is nothing that can be called a Republican party today. The Old Guard is reluctant to let go its leadership, yet is calling for young blood to rejuvenate the party.

So far about the only effort to shape up policies on which to go to the electorate next election time seems to be an effort to see how close the Republicans can come to parallelling Democratic ideas. That creates much the same sort of a situation that existed in 1896, when both the Republicans and the Democrats vied with each other to see how much they could grab off for themselves of the platform of the vigorous young third party, the Populists. Between them they killed the Populist party, but its doctrines survived and every one of them is now the law of the land, save only the free coinage of silver; and that seems closer now than at any time in nearly forty years.

The Republican Outlook

There are wise old observers here in Washington who believe that the Republican party has a chance in 1936 only if it comes out frankly and squarely on the conservative side. The radicals have done all the talking for the last couple of years, until one would be tempted to think that there are no conservatives left. Some of the members of Congress who are coming up for re-election know better; there are still a few conservatives left in their home districts who are likely to vote the Republican ticket next November.

Locally, conservative thoug is beginning to express itself. Washington has heard hardly more than echoes from the back country, so far; but some smart politicians believe that if the national Republican party would go on record, not as promising the same sort of things that the Democrats are dishing out now, but almost precisely the opposite so far as Government control of business, and expenditures for social reforms are concerned, it would gather recruits to itself like a snowball rolling down hill. It might not win the Presidential election of 1936, but it would have a good chance in 1940. These same observers give President Roosevelt the odds on a second term.

Brains from the Banks

There are many in Washington who the so-called brain trust is not such a dominating influence as it was. The term, of course, is a loose one, but is used here as meaning the intellectuals who had little practical experience in administering public affairs but were installed here because of their supposed better understanding of public questions than the men who make such matters their life work.

The Administration has learned that there are many men of high scholastic attainments, thorough scholars, and with detailed, practical knowledge of how Governmental things are done, already in the permanent Government service. These men are not party men, but efficient public servants who, for one reason or another, have made public service their life work. Some of them are men of means, who serve because they feel there is more satisfaction in using their talents for the public welfare than in piling up wealth for themselves. Some are men whose tastes are simple and needs few, who get along very comfortably on their Government salaries and who wholeheartedly devote their leisure to the study of social and economic problems in their national and international aspects.

Getting a Hearing Now

These men are now being called into conference, and some of the brain-trusters are discovering that what they have been putting forth as new and original ideas, are old stories to some of these chaps. Some ideas have been tried and didn't work; some of them are just what these permanent government servants have been trying to get a hearing on for years.

That is one of the indications that the running of the great business of governing the United States is now shaking down into order and system; but a lot remains to be done before anyone can say positively just when the policies in effect are in what direction we are ultimately heading.

GOVERNOR RITCHIE SEEKS NOMINATION FOR FIFTH TIME

Baltimore, Md.—Governor Albert C. Ritchie of Maryland, who has served fifteen years as chief executive of his state, Saturday announced his candidacy for the Democratic nomination for a fifth term.

"There are three roads ahead," Ritchie declared in announcing his decision to be a candidate in the September primary. "First I can retire from public life. Frankly, I don't want to do this. Secondly I can run for the United States Senate. Thirdly, I can run for Governor again.

"It so happens that I had rather be governor of Maryland than hold any office within the gift of the people of the State."

Governor Ritchie was a candidate for the Democratic nomination for President at the 1932 Chicago convention where President Roosevelt was nominated.

In running for renomination, Ritchie said he did so against the advice of some of his political friends who urged him to seek the Senate seat now held by Phillips Lee Goldsborough, Republican. They told him, he said, that he would have a much easier campaign.

"If I am taking any risk running for Governor, then I had rather take that risk than the certainty of being elected senator," Ritchie replied.

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