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CURRENT EVENTS IN REVIEW

By Edward W. Pickard

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TVA Held Valid on All Points at Issue

SCORE one for the New Deal; and a big one. The Supreme court in its long awaited decision ruled that the Tennessee Valley Authority act is valid, on all points at issue in the suit brought by the stockholders of the Alabama Power company. Under the ruling the administration is free to go ahead with its power program in the Tennessee valley actually under way. The decision was read by Chief Justice Hughes and was concurred in by all the associate

Justices except Justice McReynolds. He read a dissenting opinion. Because of circumscribed limits the decision was much narrower than most of the New Deal findings of the Supreme court. It was limited strictly to the terms of the contract on which the suit was brought, namely, acquisition by TVA of a transmission line to convey power from the Wilson dam.

Certain phases are still open for possible legal contest in the future, and only Wilson dam, not Norris dam or any other dam constructed or projected on the Tennessee river was involved in the court's finding.

The legal right of the federal government to acquire and own transmission lines to a market for surplus energy—never before directly passed upon by the United States Supreme court—was ruled upon in the affirmative. Unanswered is the question of what constitutes surplus power.

Among the chief points in the majority opinion were these: The government had full authority to build Wilson dam—keystone of TVA.

Congress has undisputed power to order disposal of electricity developed at the dam.

The government acted legally in building or obtaining through purchase from private companies certain transmission lines to transport power to a wider market.

The government has the same right to dispose of surplus power as it would have to dispose of copper, gold, and minerals on public lands.

Justice McReynolds in answer to this said:

"If under the thin mask of disposing of property the United States can enter the business of generating, transmitting and selling power, as when and wherever, some board may specify, with the definite design to accomplish ends wholly beyond the sphere marked out for them by the Constitution, an easy way has been found for breaking down the limitations heretofore supposed to guarantee protection against aggression."

Chairman Frank R. McNinch of the federal power commission said the TVA decision "settles all questions of constitutionality of such federal projects as Grand Coulee, Bonneville and Fort Peck."

Military Revolt in Paraguay Succeeds

REVOLUTIONARIES, mostly military and led by Colonels Smith and Recalde, veterans of the Chaco war, took possession of the government of Paraguay after some fighting in the streets of Asuncion, the capital. The government forces surrendered to the rebels and President Ayala took refuge on a gunboat. It was believed a new government would be formed with Col. Rafael Franco as its head. He is now an exile in Buenos Aires.

Italians Win Big Battle With the Ethiopians

DELAYED dispatches from the Italian fieldquarters in northern Ethiopia tell of a six-day battle, the fiercest and most important of the war so far, in which the forces of General Badoglio, about 70,000 in number, defeated and routed 80,000 Ethiopians, including 10,000 of the emperor's guard under Ras Mulugheta, war minister, and 70,000 warriors under Ras Kassa and Ras Seyoum. The Italians were left in full possession of the fertile and strategic Enderto region and in control of the passes in the Tembien region. After six days of encircling opera-

tions, during which torrential rains bogged the field of battle and heavy clouds enabled the Ethiopians to make invisible movements, the March 23 division of blackshirts planted the Italian flag on the mist-veiled high summit of Aradam, completing that particular operation. They then had a clear path to Amba Alagia, 18 miles further south, and it was presumed that the taking of that mountain would mark the cessation of activities because of the coming March rains.

It was estimated that in this battle more than 6,000 Ethiopians had been killed and many times that number wounded. The Italian casualties were not announced but they undoubtedly were not light. Only white Italians participated in the fighting.

Substitute Farm Bill Passed by Senate

TEN days of hot debate in the senate culminated in the passage of the administration's substitute farm bill by a vote of 56 to 20, and it was hurried over to the house with the prospect of quick approval by that body.

Attacked by Republicans as a subterfuge to get around the Supreme court AAA decision, and frankly conceded by Democrats to be a measure indirectly continuing control of farm production, the soil erosion bill would accomplish its objective as follows:

The secretary of agriculture would be empowered to make benefit payments to farmers who voluntarily cooperate with the government's suggestions on retiring certain land from production to conserve its fertility. Payments would be determined on four factors:

1. Acreage of crop land.
2. Acreage of soil improving crops.
3. Changes in farming practices.
4. Percentage of normal farm production which equals that percentage of normal national production of farm commodities required for domestic consumption.

This arrangement would be limited to two years. It would be replaced by a system of 48 individual state AAA's to regulate production, with the federal government apportioning funds to the states.

Senator Black's Inquisition Creates Resentment

SENATOR HUGO L. BLACK of Alabama and his lobby investigation committee are creating a flood of resentment among American citizens that is likely to do

vastly more harm than good to the New Deal. Quite without concealment Black is using the committee in a way that thousands of people do not like. He sent out a questionnaire to individuals and organizations known to be opposed to the New Deal, demanding information on their relations with all organizations and their corporation and other investments. Many refused to answer the questions, and they are supported in this position by the American Liberty league, which has challenged the right of Black's committee to compel answer under oath to the queries. In effect, the league dares Black to cite for contempt of the senate those who refuse to reply to the questionnaire.

Senator Black's only reply to date was that it was "a little difficult to believe that the league would attempt to intimidate or coerce its own members to keep their mouths shut until the du Ponts say they can talk."

House Passes the Huge War Department Bill

THE War department bill, appropriating approximately 545 million dollars for "national defense," was passed by the house. For purely military purposes the sum of \$376,806,333 is allotted. The remainder, \$168,359,985, goes for rivers and harbors projects, generally classed as "pork."

An attempt to put back into the bill a \$29,000,000 appropriation for carrying on such projects as the Passamaquoddy tidal power experiment in Maine and the Florida ship canal was suppressed firmly. The military budget provided by the bill will be sufficient to maintain an average army of 147,000 men during the coming year. By 1939, according to the War department, the maximum of 165,000 permitted by congress should be reached.

Gen. Badoglio

Germany Warned to Keep Troops Off the Rhine

FRANCE believes Hitler is just waiting for a favorable opportunity to announce that Germany will re-arm the Rhineland, contrary to the terms of the treaty of Versailles, but she does not intend to be caught napping as she was when he sprung his announcement of compulsory military service for the whole German nation. So Premier Van Zeeland of Belgium was summoned to Paris and he and French Foreign Minister Pierre-Etienne Flandin issued a warning that the re-militarization of the Rhineland would bring immediate reprisals.

The exact nature of the reprisals agreed upon between Flandin and Van Zeeland was not revealed, but it is declared they have been worked out to the last detail and will be applied automatically and simultaneously by the two countries. It is believed in Paris that Great Britain has agreed to support action contemplated by France and Belgium, and that meanwhile Belgium will complete her system of border fortifications.

Four Moslem Nations United by Treaty

DISPATCHES from Istanbul say that four Moslem nations, Turkey, Iraq, Persia and Afghanistan, have concluded a treaty of friendship and nonaggression and that it will be signed soon either at Teheran or Bagdad.

It is considered of the greatest significance that these four independent Moslem countries have for the first time united on their own initiative and agreed to patch up minor differences which have embittered past relations and to seek friendly co-operation in the future.

Russia and Japan Agree to Investigate Clashes

ACCORDING to an official communique issued at Moscow, the Soviet and Japanese governments have agreed in principle to the appointment of a mixed commission to investigate clashes on the Soviet-Manchukuan border.

The offer of the Japanese government to enter into such an arrangement was communicated to the foreign office by Japanese Ambassador Tamekichi Ota. G. S. Stomonakoff, Russian vice commissar for foreign affairs, pointed out that the Soviet government frequently has made similar proposals in Ethiopia.

The Soviet government ordered its consulate at Mukden, Manchukuo, closed, but an official spokesman declined to connect the order with recent clashes between Japanese-Manchukuan and Outer Mongolian troops on the Outer Mongolian border.

Norway Wins Winter Olympic Games

PILING up a total of 146 points, the Norwegians won first place in the winter Olympic games at Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. Germany was second with 117 points, and the United States came fifth with 35½. Norway's speed skaters and ski jumpers were invincible. The only title won by Americans was in the two-man bobsled event captured by Ivan Brown and Alan Washbond of Keene Valley, N. Y.

Newton D. Baker Heads Special Bar Committee

PRESIDENT WILLIAM L. RANSOM of the American Bar association, with headquarters in Chicago, announced that Newton D. Baker, former secretary of war, has accepted the chairmanship of the association's special committee on co-operation between the press, radio and bar against publicity interfering with fair trial of judicial and quasi-judicial proceedings.

The creation of this special committee to define standards to be recommended to lawyers, newspapers and radio broadcasters in the matter of publicity as to court trials, said the announcement, is an outcome of the incidents arising in the course of the Bruno Hauptmann trial and various proceedings before governmental boards and bodies.

N. D. Baker

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Pan-American Parley on Peace Proposed

LETTERS have been sent by President Roosevelt to the heads of the Latin-American governments inviting them to participate in a Pan-American conference, probably in Washington, the purpose of which will be to organize the peace machinery of the western hemisphere. Our State department says that the meeting will endeavor to provide means for adjusting international disputes by peaceful means. The conference may bring up the Monroe Doctrine for a new definition through multilateral endorsement.

Italy Feels the Pinch of Sanctions



Oil! The precious fuel shown gushing forth from the earth at the right is the biggest need today of Mussolini, shown in inset. How young Italians take pride in turning over their valued private possessions to the government to help it beat the pressure of sanctions may be seen at the upper left. Lower left are Romano and Anna-Marie, children of the dictator, turning over their personal jewels to the government.

By WILLIAM C. UTLEY

CAN oil sanctions stop the war? The answer seems to be "yes" if the League can succeed in cutting off all oil shipments to Italy. Estimates of the experts recently assigned by the League of Nations to make a survey of the situation indicate that six or seven months of a complete oil embargo would bring Il Duce to cease his operations in Ethiopia.

Many qualifying factors may alter the situation. As a matter of fact, the longer the League of Nations ponders the advisability of applying oil sanctions—the longer the delay—the longer Italy will be able to hold out after sanctions begin to be enforced. For she is reported to be storing oil at a rapidly-increasing rate; the way in which American oil shipments to Italy have more than doubled normal proportions is an indication of what is happening between Italy and other nations. Even Rumania, one of the staunchest supporters of the sanctions idea, is increasing her petrol shipments to Italy.

Normally, Italy uses 1,500,000 tons of oil annually. With the war operations now going forward in Ethiopia, she now is burning it up at the rate of 2,500,000 tons. Of her normal importations of 1,500,000 tons annually, Rumania furnishes about 35 per cent, Russia 22 per cent, Persian sources (controlled by Great Britain) 12 per cent, Latin-American sources (also controlled by Great Britain to a large extent) 14 per cent, the United States 10 per cent and all other sources 7 per cent.

During the past year, when Italy imported 2,500,000 tons, Rumanian shipments leaped to 41 per cent of the total; Russia shipped 16 per cent, Persia 15 per cent, Latin America, 15 per cent, the United States 6 per cent and other sources 7 per cent.

Because of the delay in the application of oil sanctions, it is believed that Italy can go along through the rainy season and pick up her military operations in autumn.

Fresh Supplies Are Problems. The temporary let-down in fighting will make possible the saving of considerable oil, and will thus stretch out the period of Italy's "reprieve" a few more months. How long after that time Mussolini can keep going depends upon his success in securing fresh supplies.

The answer to this lies largely with the nations who are not members of the League. The United States has not yet made up its mind whether its new neutrality act will contain the provision that exports to belligerent nations must not exceed their normal proportions. One of the things holding up the League embargo, of course, is the fact that member nations are waiting until it can be determined what kind of action will be taken by the non-member nations.

If Italy can keep buying oil from non-member nations, the members will face the possibility of losing a good share of their oil business for a long time to come, if not permanently.

Italy is attempting to ameliorate its own situation through the adoption of substitutes for oil, and the building of new factories, installation of transformers, and similar preparations are well under way. The process, even when it gets moving well, is a costly

one, however, and it is doubtful whether Italy's solution to the problem of oil sanctions lies in that direction. Some estimates place the total annual saving in oil by that means could be only about 110,000 tons at the most.

Limit U. S. Export. If the United States does adopt the kind of neutrality law advocated by President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull, the League could then be assured that Italy would not receive more than about 200,000 tons of oil annually from American producers.

If American shipments are unlimited, the League has another card which it could play, however. Most of the oil tankers in use are owned by British and Scandinavian interests. American shipments might be materially cut by denying the United States the use of these tankers.

Meanwhile, Italy has been adding to her own fleet of tankers. According to the League transport sub-committee's estimate, Italy now has 82 ships which total approximately 350,000 tons. There are tankers in the Italian navy which might be included, and which would add another 70,000 tons. It has been estimated that Italy might herself be able to transport some 2,000,000 tons annually from ports on the Gulf of Mexico.

Undoubtedly, if sanctions on oil are declared, the League would declare a prohibition on the sale of tankers to Italy, thus preventing her from building up her tank fleet any more than she has already done. Also, it is probable that the League would forbid the movement of tankers sailing to Italian ports. To accomplish this and to prevent the shipment of oil in containers carried by other types of vessels, it would probably be necessary to declare naval blockades. This is too much like war, and the League is exceedingly wary about invoking the blockade.

There is little likelihood that new tankers will be purchased by American interests to carry on a wartime trade with Italy. The policy of the administration is too clear against aiding a nation at war at any time.

The usual amount of regimentation of a people under a dictatorship has multiplied many times since the 53 nations declared economic sanctions on Italy.

The government has declared import monopolies on hundreds of items, from meat and fish to things like moving picture films. To protect the gold reserve the National Institute for Foreign Exchange was authorized to control all transactions involving the precious metal. Citizens or corporations may not sell or exchange gold until they have offered it to the government, which agrees to return it in the same amount and quality within a year, with interest at 5 per cent.

Royalty Sets Example. Italy's king and queen set an example by sending their wedding rings to Mussolini and the populace quickly took up the idea, thousands upon thousands of persons turning over their own gold rings and receiving iron rings in exchange, in colorful and, indeed, pitiful ceremonies throughout the country.

After the depletion of the gold reserve to a point somewhat under \$400,000,000, the Treasury department has insisted that it has maintained most of that reserve through increased tax-

ation, the floating of bond issues, the wedding rings, new loans, the conversion of government credits and the realization of foreign credits held by private citizens.

Prices of foods and other items in common use skyrocketed after Italy had felt the pinch of sanctions for a little while. Gasoline rose from 85 cents to \$1.20 a gallon; wheat went up 20 lire a quintal. Coal, soap and textiles followed. Factories shut down because there were no raw materials.

Appeals were made to the emotions of the people. Boycotts were declared on goods coming from sanctionist countries. Great engines of economy and conservation of sanctioned articles were set in motion. There were—and are—plenty of the meanness days and wearisome days that we Americans knew during the war, except that the Italians probably observe them more rigidly and more frequently. The populace was encouraged to eat more fish and poultry, that beef, pork and mutton could be conserved or sent to the boys in the African trenches. Newspapers and periodicals even refused to accept any more contributions from authors of the sanctionist countries, and textbooks from those countries were removed from the schools. To meet the needs of the poorer people, who were hardest hit by the rising prices which followed the application of sanctions, commissions of doctors and dieticians issued pamphlets and began educational campaigns on the maintenance of proper diet and living conditions under the difficulties.

People Get Bread. The people were not to be denied bread, for the fine wheat harvest of 1935 was 21 per cent greater than that of 1934. In the last five years the total area sown in wheat has been increased by about 400,000 acres. Another 150,000 acres were added during 1935.

It is not in foodstuffs, but in raw materials that Italy faces the most dangerous threats of sanctions. Italy imports nearly 2,000,000 quintals of cotton annually—three-fourths of it from the United States—as against a production of only 9,000 quintals at home. She also imports five times as much wool as she produces, but much of this import can be canceled by the substitution of silk, rayon and other materials. The nation imports practically all of its requirements in seeds, rubber and, of course, oil. The home production of oil probably does not exceed 1 per cent of her normal needs.

Italy's needs in timber are not facing any serious threats, for she can still import practically all she needs from Austria. Austria is also helping in fortifying Italy against the pressure of sanctions on minerals. Needs of scrap iron are diminishing as the result of national drives to corral all the old iron in the nation. Italy's own production of iron ore can be increased about two-thirds its normal needs. With other minerals it is not the same. Italy must import all of her tin and nearly all of her copper, from sanctionist countries. Aluminum may be substituted for some of these products. The nation is fairly rich in aluminum. She imports about half of her lead—she must import about ten times as much coal as she produces, about half of the total import coming from sanctionist countries. Her own coal is of poor quality.

Glasses of Eternal Spring. Prettily much all over the country there seems to be general complaint about the weather. People are saying the trouble with this winter is that there's so much winter to it. But there's a philosophical way of regarding climatic unpleasantness. My friend, Ed Borein, the western painter, knew an aged chief on the Crow reservation up in the Northwest who, when the first freeze came, went to the agency and bought a pair of green goggles. There didn't seem to be anything wrong with the old Indian's sight—he had an eye like a captive hawk—so Borein asked questions.

"I'm no longer young," answered the ancient, "and I don't like the snow and ice. Now, wherever I look, I see only green things and it makes springtime in my heart."

Maybe once in awhile we could learn something from the lowly Red man.

IRVIN S. COBB

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what Irvin S. Cobb thinks about:

A Texas Front Yard.

HOUSTON, TEX. — Because the Texas rangers merged with a prosaic highway patrol, thereby losing their entity as perhaps the finest fighting force for law enforcement that America ever knew, they're saying romance has suffered a death blow.

But I wouldn't go so far as to say that—not about Texas. There's romance in her scope; raw drama in her business. Superlatives grow on trees out here and distance lives up to its name. We may not always fall in love with the fat lady in the sideshow, but her size commands respect. And sometimes, as in this case, there's beauty along with bulk. Take the famous King ranch—the mightiest domain in the hands of a single family in all the world, probably. There is a saying—and a true one—that it's ninety miles from the front gate to the front yard. Think of trying to shoo the chickens out of that front yard!

Praising Charles Curtis. DURING his active life, there was a general journalistic tendency to deprecate Charles Curtis' larger achievements and laugh at his little vanities. Now that he's gone, the newspapers, without regard to their politics, are printing tributes to the distinguished career and fine citizenship of this man who went from an Indian lodge to the second highest elective office in our gift.

Since to criticize our leaders is an almost universal instinct, wouldn't it be fine if we reversed the rule about speaking no ill of the dead and praised a deserving fellow-creature while he could hear what we said—but saved up the scoldings until he'd passed on?

I could elaborate on this text, but must stop to try to think up some small gibe at the expense of some prominent man.

The Yellow Peril.

THEY'VE taken the Japanese war scare from the old cedar what-not and shaken the mothballs out of it and are waving it in the breeze as a signal to the citizens of Los Angeles to remove the women and children to a place of safety and a warning to the folks in Seattle to start building street barricades. Thus we have the annual revival of a time-honored custom.

To be sure, there's a racial difference to be reckoned with. We're a breed of opportunists, the Japanese are a breed of fatalists. The American soldier wants to go home when the mess is over and see if he can get his job back from the lad that smuggled into it while he was at the front; the Japanese craves to rejoin his ancestors instead of his family. So naturally a fellow who'd prefer to go on living is at a handicap fighting a gentleman who thinks you're doing him a personal favor by killing him.

White Folks' Melodies. LEAVING California, I said: "I'm fed up on the kinds of singing that you hear so much of out here. No matter what a Mexican song starts out with, it winds up with something about a dove. And the trouble with Hawaiian singers is that they're always telling you good-by but they never go. Thank goodness, I'll soon be listening to the stuff I was raised on—spirituals pouring gloriously forth from velvety African throats."

But I hear now the distressing news that, even here in the deep South, some of the black people are getting so self-conscious or something they want to sing the white folks' comparatively thin and pithless hymns instead of their own rich, glowing melodies.

Glasses of Eternal Spring. Prettily much all over the country there seems to be general complaint about the weather. People are saying the trouble with this winter is that there's so much winter to it.

But there's a philosophical way of regarding climatic unpleasantness. My friend, Ed Borein, the western painter, knew an aged chief on the Crow reservation up in the Northwest who, when the first freeze came, went to the agency and bought a pair of green goggles. There didn't seem to be anything wrong with the old Indian's sight—he had an eye like a captive hawk—so Borein asked questions.

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