

# Washington Digest

## Labor Draft FDR's Bid For Support of Veterans

Legislation Would Signify Full Backing of War Effort; See Servicemen as Powerful Political Group.

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"If the President really intends to crack down and jam this national service bill through congress one thing is certain—he doesn't intend to run for a fifth term."

That statement made by a seasoned old-timer who is a very good political weather prophet started me off on a journey of exploration which disclosed a number of interesting observations concerning the President's plans for the next four years which can be reduced to four main points:

1. Whether or not the President believes he owes a debt to labor for the activities of the CIO Political Action committee in the last election, he doesn't intend to pay such a debt.

2. He has found a "better 'ole," and he intends to make use of it if he can, namely, another much more important pressure group which will probably be getting up steam long before the next election, but—

3. Mr. Roosevelt is not interested in the next presidential election—for himself, because—

4. He has much larger fish to fry before and after 1948, and something's cooking right now.

How can the President afford to overlook the support of labor (point 1) and hunt a "better 'ole" (point 2)?

Because the most powerful pressure group the country has ever known is now in the making, the veterans of World War II.

### Election Indicates

#### Vets' Influence

It is still too early for the men and women in the military service to wield much direct political power, but judging from the vote cast in the last election and the efforts made both to prevent and to obtain it, the pre-discharge importance of veterans cannot be entirely overlooked.

Already, there are a number of very clear signs of the stirring of tremendous potentialities of the veteran in the postwar political world. At present, three hundred thousand have already joined the American Legion. We are not allowed, because of security reasons, to print the number of men already discharged, but as of some five months ago it was a million and a half. The Legion does not take any but those with honorable discharges and that would mean that World War II discharges are joining up at about the same rate that World War I veterans became legionnaires.

The Legion has nearly a million and a half dues-paying members out of the three-million who served in the last war. If the same proportions were maintained we can envision a future veterans' organization (either the Legion or a new group) numbering at least five million persons. And that calculation is based on the armed forces as of today. By the time the war is over the number of those who will have served will be much greater.

That is looking at the potential strength of the World War II veteran pressure solely in terms of numbers. Another highly important factor must be considered. There is much evidence indicating that the present day fighting man is much more politically conscious than we were in 1917 and '18. This is seen in the discussion ("orientation") groups which are carried on by the army and navy all over the world, by the tremendous amount of news which reaches the troops even in remote corners of the world, by their constant call for more, and by their very emphatic and continued gripes about how the civilian front is being run.

I have talked with one of the editors of the present Stars and Stripes, with the head of the legislative division of the American Legion and with a member of the Veterans Administration who keeps in close touch with current veteran affairs. All agreed emphatically to the thesis that the men and women in the fighting forces will come back with a keen interest in how the country is to be run and with a firm intention of seeing that they are going to have their say in the running. This feeling is paralleled by the demands in every liberated country by the people who carried on the resistance against the enemy, who

in every case demand strong representation in the new governments.

### Vets Demand All-Out Effort

We can see that any man with his eye on the political future will have to woo the veteran. And that brings us back to the National Service bill.

Now one of the chief gripes of the serviceman is the fact that he is drafted to fight where and when he is told but the men who work in the war plants do not have to take orders from anybody. The sorest spot on the G.I.'s soul is the strike of the miners last year. Naturally, he thinks a labor draft law should be passed.

That is the kind of news the President wants to get out. That is one of the reasons why he wants a national service bill passed. He knows its importance to the morale of the fighting men as well as to the production of supplies. That is why he is willing to risk the anger of labor pressure against the measure. He knows that the morale of those boys now will affect their attitude toward the government when they return and their confidence in the leaders of the country.

But where, then, does point 3 (Mr. Roosevelt is not interested in the next presidential election) come in? The answer is in the "Bigger fish" he has to fry (point 4).

When an American reaches the presidency it is usually considered that he has hit the ceiling and from there on there is no place to go but down. True, the United States is a pretty big outfit to boss, but what about the United Nations? Bigger.

Whether or not the United States puts its weight behind a United Nations organization to prevent future wars will depend on the verdict of the men who know more about war than anybody else in the world, the men who are fighting this one.

And anyone who champions this undertaking, whether he is finally chosen as its leader, or whether he merely goes down in history as the man who made it possible, he will have to have the confidence and the support of the veterans, whose opinions on the subject will receive general acknowledgement, it is conceded.

Incidentally, another Roosevelt figure in one of the most ambitious efforts at international organization for the preservation of peace, "Teddy" having prompted Czar Nicholas II of Russia to call the second Hague Peace Conference of 1907.

Here is a little human interest story that will interest you if you have a boy in the service or if you are a psychiatrist.

My friend joined me in the club. He was obviously feeling very proud and happy about something. He told me he had just had a telephone call from his boy who was training to be a paratrooper. It is something to be allowed to take the training—all are volunteers. It is a lot more to make good.

Well, the boy had made his first jump from a plane. It was, he had phoned his father, just like riding on a roller-coaster. The real hard jumps, he said, were the first at about 35 feet from a tower with a cable attachment. And the fifth jump from the plane. That is the one that ends a lot of careers. Some of the toughest-fibered boys can't make that one, even if they have gone through those preceding, including the first tower jump. Then they are "washed up" as the saying goes, and they disappear.

But a lot disappear after the first jump. Men who have come back with medals for bravery in action sometimes stand there, the tears streaming down their cheeks because they just can't dive off into nothing.

But my friend's boy said it was like a roller-coaster. And as the father sat there you could see that that meant a lot to him and at last he revealed why.

"I couldn't help remembering," he said, "when the boy was about five and his older brother had just climbed up on a chair and jumped off. He got up on the chair but he just couldn't make the jump. . . now he's done it."

## BARBS . . . by Baukhage

The Italian Boy Scouts had their first rally in 20 years. What a lot those kids will have to unlearn. Just what would a good deed be, Fascist style?

It was recently reported that Fala, the famous White House aborigine pup, was to have a "wedding." Query: Is another marriage in the Roosevelt family news?

Eggs are reported \$46 apiece in Jap-occupied Shanghai. However, shells are much more plentiful in Tokyo, 'tis avered.

If it weren't for the OPA, even the Pullman berth-rate would increase.

You couldn't make an honest dollar—if it were really honest.

## Supplies for Luzon Invaders



Supplies are being landed on Luzon from LST which was under fire from Jap artillery at the time. Now that regular supply routes have been opened to Luzon, the invading 6th army will be able to continue their rapid advance into the enemy territory leading to the recapture of Manila and the rest of the island.

## The Fourth Term Inauguration



Photo shows ceremonies on south portico of White House as President Roosevelt takes the oath of office from Chief Justice Harlan F. Stone. Charles Cropley, clerk of the court, is holding the old Dutch bible. Col. James Roosevelt, in uniform, stands with his father for the fourth time during inauguration ceremonies.

## Tea, Poi and Spaghetti Bowls



Unable to attend the Rose, Cotton, Sugar or Orange bowl football classics, members of the armed forces abroad had their own classes. Lower, cheer leaders at Spaghetti bowl, Florence, Italy. Upper left, action during the Poi bowl classic at Pearl Harbor. Upper right, the Tea bowl game at London. On sidelines are Dagenham girl pipers along with benched 8th air force men.

## Snow Insulated G. I. Foxhole



Yankee ingenuity is called into play and this "insulated" foxhole is evolved on the Belgian "bulge" front. Hay and straw provide insulation against the weather. A blanket covers the door into the improvised shelter. Shafts of a hayrack provide roof supports. The tenant is 1st Sgt. Albert Luis, Manchester, N. H.

## Old Feud Renewed



When President Roosevelt announced the appointment of Henry Wallace (above) as Secretary of Commerce, Jesse Jones (below) renewed their old feud and told congress that Wallace was unsuited for the job.

## G.I.'s Teeter-Totter



This G.I. just couldn't resist the temptation to stop and teeter-totter with these three Filipino girls in the town of Dagupan on Luzon in the Philippines. General Krueger and his 6th army had just taken Dagupan.

## Burmese Temple Rest



At Tonkwa, Burma, in the shadow of a Burmese temple, a U. S. soldier pauses at the grave of an American killed in action when the Mars task force met the enemy in this vicinity. A plot has been cleared for the American cemetery. It will be landscaped.

## Underground War!



Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker has warned of a long underground war by both Germany and Japan after Allied victories. He has visited all fighting fronts.



**BRITISH AID IN PACIFIC**  
Ex-Representative Norris Poulson of California, Republican, returned from London recently and refused to be quoted in the press on what he had learned there about British aid to the U. S. A. against Japan. Finally, confronted with the detail of a conversation in which he had participated, Poulson admitted that he had discussed the Pacific war with two influential members of the British parliament.

"Just what sort of help can we expect from you people once Germany is knocked out?" Poulson asked them.

"Well, we've got an army of over 7,000,000 Indians," one of the two Britons replied. "You can have them."

"But you know perfectly well we cannot rely on them," Poulson said bluntly. "You'll be lucky if they don't fight against you; let alone fight for you against Japan."

The Britisher admitted he, too, was worried about the Indians, but added, "At any rate, there's a large army of Australians and New Zealanders."

"In other words," countered Poulson, "you people here on the island are going to pull out just as soon as you can, leaving to your colonials the responsibility for any aid we get in the Pacific."

"That's about right," was the reply. "We've had five years of war here. That's enough."

Note—Despite congressional concern, some high U. S. navy men are not enthusiastic about either British or Russian help against Japan. They feel U. S. forces can do the job themselves.

When the British wanted to send a naval force to cooperate with the American fleet in the Philippines, Admiral King objected and the President virtually had to overrule him.

## BRITISH TROOPS PROTECT GREEKS

For some reason the news was suppressed in the United States, but a very significant event took place in Salonika, Greece, during the trouble between the British and the EAM-ELAS Greeks.

When the British ordered troops in Salonika to suppress the Greeks, the troops sided with the Greeks and refused to fire on them.

The troops were a garrison of the British Indian army. The Indians threw their weight on the side of the Greek organization which bitterly opposed the return of King George, and which Churchill claims to be communist. There was no rioting or bloodshed. The Indian troops simply cooperated with the Greeks.

Simultaneously Krishna Menon, secretary of the India league, made a speech in London attended by several members of the British parliament in which he praised the Indian troops in Salonika and said: "They go in their landlords' cars and vote against him."

The incident is considered extremely important not only as it affects Greece, but as it affects India and the Far East.

General Stilwell, when in the Burma theater, was reported by U. S. Ambassador William Phillips as considering British-Indian troops mercenaries who would not put their hearts into any battle as long as India was not given its independence.

But more than anything else Truman has the same brand of Coolidge political luck. The lightning hit Cal first during the Boston police strike, later when the party bosses in the smoke filled room at the Blackstone hotel wanted a good composite vice president to go with Harding.

The lightning struck Truman when his investigating committee hurled him to fame, later when the Democratic bosses dining at the White House decided that he was the compromise candidate to replace Henry Wallace.

That is the man who has assumed the life insurance duties of vice president of the United States. He will be worth watching.

## CAPITAL CHAFF

When Allied troops entered a little Belgian town for the first time the local church warden climbed to the carillon tower of the church and the bells started to ring out "The Star-Spangled Banner." Next came "God Save the King" and, finally, "Swanee River."

John Danaher of Connecticut, who failed of reelection to the senate in November, may get back here even though he lost out to Brien McMahon. Connecticut law requires a four-month notice before an election to replace the late Francis Maloney can be held, and Republican Governor Ray Baldwin may name Republican Danaher to serve in the interim, with Danaher also running in the election.

Burma engineers have coined a new word to describe jungle trails. A fairly good trail is described as "jeepable."

## CLASSIFIED DEPARTMENT

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Few sources of substitutes for natural rubber have been overlooked by U. S. scientists. In 1943 more than 2,000 varieties of plants were tested for their rubber possibilities.

Rubber-tired vehicles have been mainly responsible for the development of America's 3,000,000 miles of roads and highways—the largest and finest highway system in the world.

Joseph Grant

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You may suffer nagging backache, headache, dizziness, getting up nights, leg pain, swelling—feel constantly tired, nervous, all worn out. Other signs of kidney or bladder disorder are sometimes burning, scanty or too frequent urination.

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