

THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON

Washington, January 7.—The 74th Congress which has just convened for its second and final session is trying to pick up the loose threads of its unfinished program and tie some of the knots more securely, while considering what is required in the way of new legislation.

A great deal of the action of this session will be taken with one eye on the Supreme Court. If all of the laws of the last two years whose constitutionality has been challenged could be passed on by the Supreme Court at once, it would save the Senators and Representatives a lot of time and worry.

As Congress met there was a long list of measures on which there has been no final adjudication by the High Court. Most eagerly awaited was the decision on the A.A.A. Secretary Wallace has a bill already prepared to offer to Congress in the event that the Supreme Court rules that the processing taxes are illegal. It is the firm intention of both the Administration and of Congress to continue benefit payments to agriculture, whether the funds are derived from processing taxes or from some substitute form of excise taxes, or are merely paid out of general revenues.

There is a general agreement, among those who keep a close eye on the effects of Washington's actions upon business trends, that there will be an increase in the buying of farm products following the Supreme Court's decision, whichever way it goes.

Await Many Decisions

A more important Court decision will be that on the Guffey soft coal regulation act. The expectation is that this will be held unconstitutional, on the ground that the tax imposed upon coal producers who do not conform to the terms of the law is a penalty rather than an excise tax. It was on exactly that ground that the Supreme Court some years ago declared the Child Labor Law unconstitutional.

Uncertainty as to the Court's ruling on the Guffey Act is expected to delay action by Congress on other regulatory measures affecting business.

The Supreme Court also has before it questions of the constitutionality of the Tennessee Valley Act, the Social Security Act, the Wagner Labor Relations Act, the Railroad Pension Act, the PWA Slum Clearance program, the Potato Control Act, the Tobacco Control Act and the Bankhead Cotton Control Act. Some of these will be passed on between now and June, some will not get to the point of a Court ruling until Autumn. Therefore it is possible there will be no clear-cut Constitutional issue of which either party can take advantage in the coming Presidential campaign.

Amendments Up Sleeves

It is known that a dozen or more members and Senators have Constitutional amendments up their sleeves ready to offer if the Administration should decide it were worth while to put up a fight at this time for the liberalization of the Constitution in the direction of giving broader powers to the Federal Government to regulate industry, but it now seems questionable that any of these amendments will have sufficient weight behind it to get very far.

Much more concern is being expressed over old age pensions than on any other one question. The Social Security Act, which provides for a contributory system of old age pensions, to be paid out of a fund provided by taxes on employers and employees, does not meet the widespread demand for immediate pensions for every person over 60 or 65 years old.

Pensions provided for in the Social Security Act are not big enough to please either the Townsendites or the even more radical element which is putting on pressure for old age pensions payable immediately out of general funds; also too many people who want pensions right now will have passed on to their final reward long before they could possibly be beneficiaries of the Social Security Act.

The feeling openly expressed on Capitol Hill is that something must be done and done quickly about old age pensions on a bigger and faster scale. It is entirely unlikely that anything like the Townsend plan of \$200 a month for all aged persons will be voted but the pressure group of Townsend Clubs which have

been organized all over the country has more voting strength behind it than even the Bonus. Its method of organization and its tactics are very similar to those of the old Anti-Saloon League.

Just before Congress met, the Townsend organization demanded expressions from all members of Congress and announced that it had 39 pledges of support, 14 replies from members who said they had not yet made up their minds, 2 who declined to answer and only 5 who stated that they were definitely opposed to the project. And that was only the first fruit of the early pressure which all of the members are beginning to feel.

Long Session Forecasted

The President is said to have expressed the desire, if not the belief, that this session of Congress will adjourn by Easter. It can be set down right now as a fact that nothing of that sort will happen. The boys will stay in session until the nominating conventions and perhaps after that. There are too many political issues coming up in this most political year since 1932, and every member and almost every Senator feels that he has to make the best of this opportunity to strengthen his position with the voters of his district or state.

Senator Borah's open and avowed candidacy for the Republican nomination has focused attention on his record in respect to the New Deal. On the 17 major New Deal bills Mr. Borah has supported the Administration eleven times and has been lined up with the Republican Party six times. And on that record rests the opposition from within his own party, of which former President Hoover is the spearhead.

HIGHLIGHTS

Washington, Jan. 3.—Here are the highlights of President Roosevelt's message to Congress:

The temper and the purposes of the rulers of many of the great populations in Europe and in Asia, have not pointed the way either to peace or to good-will among men.

A point has been reached where the people of the Americas must take cognizance of the growing ill-will, of marked trends toward aggression, of increasing armaments, of shortening tempers—a situation which has in it many of the elements that lead to the tragedy of general war.

The United States and the rest of the Americas can play but one role: Through a well-ordered neutrality to do naught to encourage the contest, through adequate defense to save ourselves from embroilment and attack, and through example and all legitimate encouragement and assistance to persuade other nations to return to the ways of peace and good-will.

I suggested in the spring of 1933 that eighty-five or ninety per cent of all the people in the world were content with their territorial limits of their respective nations and were willing further to reduce their armed forces if every other nation in the world would agree to do likewise.

That is equally true today, and it is even more true today that world peace and world good-will are blocked by only ten or fifteen per cent of the world's population.

I recognize that these words which I have chosen with deliberation will not prove popular in any nation that chooses to fit this shoe to its foot.

Such sentiments however will find sympathy and understanding in those nations where the people themselves are honestly desirous of peace but must constantly align themselves on one side or the other in the kaleidoscopic jockeying for position characteristic of European and Asiatic relations today.

Efforts to reduce armies have

thus far not only failed but have been met by vastly increased armaments on land and in the air. Even efforts to continue the existing limits on naval armaments into the years to come show little current success.

Among the nations of the great western hemisphere the policy of the good neighbor has happily prevailed.

x x x At no time in the four and a half centuries of modern civilization in the Americas has there existed a greater spirit of mutual understanding, of common helpfulness, and of devotion to the ideals of self-government.

In the United States, as in the world at large, popular opinion is at war with a power-seeking minority.

You, the members of the legislative branch, and I, the executive, contended for and established a new relationship between government and people.

After thirty-four months of work we contemplate a fairly rounded whole. We have returned the control of the Federal Government to the City of Washington.

To be sure, in so doing, we have invited battle. We have earned the hatred of entrenched greed. x x x They seek the restoration of their selfish power. They offer to lead us back around the same old corner into the same old dreary street.

They steal the livery of great national constitutional ideals to serve discredited special interests.

They seek—this minority in business and finance—to control legitimate and highly honored business associations; they engage in vast propaganda to spread fear and discord among the people—they would "gang up" against the people's liberties.

Let action be positive and not negative. x x x Let them propose to this Congress the complete repeal of these measures. x x x The way is open in the Congress of the United States for an expression of opinion by yeas and nays.

Their weapon is the weapon of fear. x x x Let these challenges be met.

The carrying out of the laws of the land as enacted by the Congress requires protection until final adjudication by the highest tribunal of the land. The Congress has the right and can find the means to protect its own prerogatives.

Based on existing laws it is my belief that no new taxes, over and above the present taxes, are advisable or necessary.

We can look forward to a reduction in the number of those citizens who are in need. Therefore, also, we can anticipate a reduction in our appropriations for relief.

Dr. H. B. Mann, fertility agronomist of the North Carolina Experiment Station for the past 15 years, has resigned his position effective January 1, to become affiliated with the American Potash Institute with headquarters in Atlanta.

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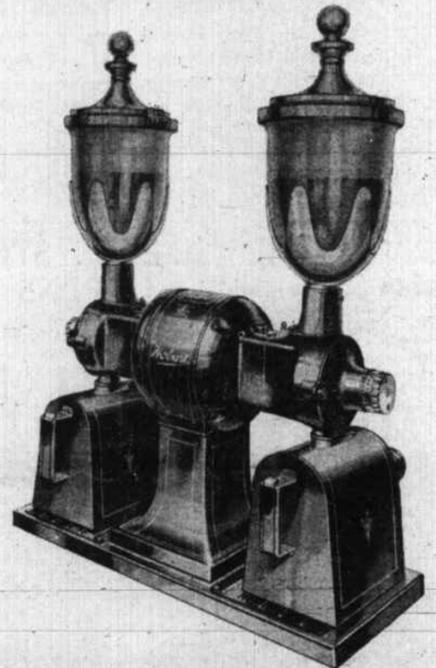


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