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Sweeping Powers Given Wilson When Congress Passed Food Bill

Establishes Government Control and Prohibits Hoarding and Speculation — Provides For One Administrator, Who Will Be Herbert C. Hoover.

FEATURES OF FOOD BILL, NOW A LAW

Establishes governmental control over foods, feeds and fuel. Prohibits hoarding and speculation affecting supply, distribution and movement of foods. Provides for one administrator, who will co-operate with other agencies of the government. Authorizes seizure of hoarded necessities. Prohibits the use of any food materials in the production of distilled liquors except for governmental purposes; provides against importation of distilled liquor during the war; directs the president to take over all distilled liquor in bonded warehouses. Authorizes the president, whenever he considers it necessary in emergency, to fix a "reasonable" price for coal and coke. Provides for a system of federal licenses of production, transportation and distribution. Authorizes the president to fix a minimum price of wheat at \$2 per bushel.

WHEN the food control bill passed the house and senate and was signed by the president it marks the completion by congress of all important war legislation under consideration with one exception—the revenue bill. Leaders assert that when the revenue bill is finally passed there will be nothing to prevent congress from adjourning. However, the debate on this measure is expected to require a long time.

The passage of the food control bill was another victory by President Wilson over his opponents in both the house and senate. In its final form the bill embodies practically everything that Mr. Wilson asked for and omitted all features which he objected to.

Provisions of Measure.
The measure carries drastic prohibition features. Summarized, it makes these provisions:
Forbids government agents from using their influence in letting contracts to concerns in which they are interested.

Declares it unlawful to destroy, waste, permit preventable deterioration, board, monopolize, discriminate, make unfair rates, conspire to limit transportation, production, harvesting, manufacture, supplying, storage or dealing, restrict the supply or distribution, prevent manufacture or production or exact excessive prices with respect to necessities.

Requires licenses to do business under regulations to be made by the president.

Provides that hoarded necessities may be seized and sold by the government.

Authorizes the president to requisition supplies for the army and navy.

Puts Wilson In Business.
Authorizes the president to buy and sell wheat, flour, meal, beans and potatoes.

Authorizes the president to requisition and operate any factory, packing house, oil pipe line, mine or other plant and sell the products.

Authorizes the president to prevent injurious speculation and regulate exchanges.

Fixes a minimum price of \$2 per bushel on next year's wheat crop.

Prohibits use of foods, fruits, food materials or feeds in manufacture of distilled spirits for beverages, leaving to the president's discretion the quantities to be used in beer and wine.

Authorizes and directs the president to commandeer distilled spirits in stock or bond for military needs.

Makes Appropriations.
Appropriates \$162,500,000, of which \$150,000,000 is for general administration of the act, \$10,000,000 is for purchase of nitrate of soda and \$2,500,000 is for sundry expenses.

No person employed under the act shall be exempt from military service under the draft law.

Requires a detailed report from the president the first of each year of the proceedings under the act.

Authorizes the president to assume control of coal mines, fix the price of coal and coke and take charge of and sell the same.

Forbids manipulation or destruction of necessities to limit the supply or affect the market price.

Makes the act cease to be in effect upon proclamation by the president at the end of the war with Germany.

In establishing government control the bill authorizes the president to enter into any voluntary arrangements, create or use any agency or agencies, to accept services of any person without compensation, to co-operate with any agency or person, to utilize any department or agency of the government and to co-ordinate their activities.

To Name Hoover.
In pursuance of such authorization President Wilson plans to appoint Herbert C. Hoover food administrator. Control of other necessities named may be accomplished through other agencies. The house provision for an individual food administrator was enacted only after the president had pre-

Given Wilson Passed Food Bill

With the Exception of the Revenue Measure This Is the Last Important War Legislation Before Congress—Fight Against Act Occupied 100 days.

valued upon the senate and house conferees to eliminate a senate amendment, inserted by two overwhelming votes of 63 to 19 and 60 to 23.

Comprehensive powers are given in the bill, passed as a war measure, to assure adequate supply and equitable distribution of the named necessities, to facilitate their movement, to prevent, locally and generally, scarcity, monopoly, hoarding, injurious speculation, manipulation or private control affecting supply, distribution and movement.

Smoot Amendment Edited.

Other provisions of the bill fix a minimum price for wheat beginning next year at not less than \$2 per standard bushel; provide for coal and coke price fixing, commandeering and government operation of factories and mines producing necessities; for government purchase, sale and requisition of various necessities and for federal licensing of agencies producing and handling them.

The prohibition provisions, a compromise for "bone dry" prohibition proposed by the house, prohibit manufacture and importation of distilled liquors for beverages during the war, authorize the president to suspend manufacture of malt, fermented and vinous liquors or to limit their alcoholic content and "authorizes and directs" the president, in his discretion, to commandeer distilled beverages in bond or stock when necessary for redistillation into alcohol for military or other public defense purposes or to conserve foodstuffs.

Congressional leaders understand the president does not intend to commandeer distilled spirits or to curtail their consumption unless military exigencies require. The so called Smoot amendment, directing federal purchase of distilled beverages in bond at cost plus 10 per cent profit, was eliminated.

Will Control Coal.

Sweeping powers to control coal prices also are provided. The bill authorizes the president, through the Federal Trade Commission or other agency, to fix coal and coke prices at the mines and among wholesalers and retailers, to regulate methods of sale, shipment and distribution among dealers and consumers, and to requisition and operate mines or other coaling facilities.

A system of federal licensing of all agencies related to the production, transportation and distribution of the designated necessities also is provided, and rigid provisions against hoarding, speculation and monopolization established under heavy penalties. Farmers are exempted from the hoarding provisions.

The bill also authorizes the president to requisition for military or public defense needs all necessities named and, to guarantee reasonable prices to producer and consumer, to buy and sell fuel, wheat, flour, meal, beans and potatoes. The bill also authorizes the president to requisition and operate any factory, packing house, mine or oil pipe line, at just compensation, for military or public defense uses.

Regulation of grain and other foodstuff markets to prevent injurious speculation or undue enhancement of prices, is another power conferred upon the food administration through the president.

Another clause, inserted by the senate after much criticism of alleged sale by members of the advisory commissioners of their own products to the government, prohibits federal agents from soliciting or inducing contracts with the government in which they are interested.

Herbert Hoover and his aids are established at their new quarters in the Hotel Gordon, Washington, and Mr. Hoover soon will make public the procedure which he has decided upon. Enough is known of Mr. Hoover's purpose to warrant the statement that he is not going to be content with any merely perfunctory enforcement of the law.

It is palpable that if the law is carried out with the exercise of even half the authority conferred by congress the Hoover food administration soon will find itself battling against the tremendous opposition of the great special interests which so long have fattened on food distribution and manipulation. Also it is obvious that if the public is to get relief the opposition of these interests must be expected, and it would be a waste of time to try to get along with them peacefully.

Public Must Help Out.

Mr. Hoover is going to do a great deal, as he has already done, through the voluntary efforts of the people to conserve food and prevent waste. He also is going to rely to a large extent on the force of public opinion to back him up in the enforcement of the new law. It will be with this in mind that he will give out before long a series of statements covering his plans.

One thing which cannot be overlooked is that while the bill was pending leaders in congress were told repeatedly it must be passed and something must be done to effect lower living cost, because the unrest among the poorer families in the cities was grow-

ing and there would be grave food riots next winter unless conditions were changed.

Examination of the measure as it has passed congress leaves no question that it conveys powers which, if exercised, will redound to the public benefit. At the same time it is important to remember that the country this year has a tremendous crop of foodstuffs—in the aggregate much more than it needs—and that if this is not wasted nor manipulated and is wisely distributed there will be enough for home use and enormous quantities for the allies and American troops abroad.

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If the profits on distribution are held down to moderate figures there is reason to believe that the two desirable results of large shipments abroad and reasonable prices at home can be achieved.

That Mr. Hoover is sincere in his desire to achieve these two great ends is not doubted by those who know him, despite all the attacks made and the current talk that the food control measure will be a disappointment to the people.

The government, by the strict enforcement of the anti-hoarding provisions and by exercising its right given under the bill to buy and sell fuel, wheat, flour, beans and potatoes, to regulate speculation and to license agencies engaged in production, transportation and distribution of necessities, can undoubtedly revolutionize the cost of living in this country, to say nothing of other broad powers which are granted.

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