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Sparta, N. C., Thursday March 16, 1939

No Dodging The Issue Now

We have recently been told by Treasury officials that it is "necessary" to inflate the national debt to $45,000,000,000 this year, but that we needn't worry for this is not the danger point.

Perhaps it is below the danger point. But what is to prevent it going up again next year and the year after—like a snowball, the bigger it gets the faster it grows? The habit of reckless spending is as difficult to eradicate in a government as in an individual. And just where is the danger point? Would it be reached at $50,000,000,000, $75,000,000,000, or $100,000,000,000? And lastly, just what excuse is there for complacently allowing it to reach the danger point?

It's easy enough to alibi excessive spending. It's a great deal harder to pay the bills as they fall due. And the American people, in spite of rapidly increasing taxes, have not yet had a taste of what paying means. We have added and added to the debt, in order to put off the evil day when income must be made to meet outgo. It's an actual fact that if we were at present taxed enough to meet expenses, our tax load would be as much or more than England's.

Reckless spending has been justified in the name of "emergency." But too many years have now passed to further excuse out and out waste in the name of relief.

It's time for straight talk about taxation and government spending. We can't dodge the issue much longer unless we are willing to court national bankruptcy.

Supreme Court Ruling

The decision of the United States Supreme Court that "sit-down" strikes are illegal, in spite of the friendly attitude toward them on the part of the National Labor Relations Board, merely sets the final seal of judicial confirmation on what everybody already believed.

There can be no law or authority under the Constitution which authorizes any person or body of people, whether employees or others, to take possession of someone else's property and use or occupy it against the will of the owner.

That an employer has a perfect right to discharge any employee who participates in a sit-down strike or engages in any other illegal act, such as using violence to prevent those who desire to work from entering their place of employment, is clearly settled by the decision of the High Court. And no employer can be compelled to re-employ anybody discharged for such a reason.

There doubtless will be outcries against this ruling of the court, by people who talk loudly about the superiority of what they term "human rights" over "property rights."

There has been an increasing amount of that sort of talk in the United States in recent years. How far it has been inspired and stimulated by Communist workers, following that group's policy of trying to plant revolutionary ideas in people's minds, we have no way of knowing. But the notion that there is something peculiarly sacred about human rights whenever a controversy occurs between workers and employers is Communist doctrine.

It is not American doctrine. The foundation of the American system is, to be sure, the rights of individuals, but foremost among those rights is the right to acquire and possess property without interference so long as it is honestly acquired.

Far more of the police functions of government in America are devoted to the protection of property rights than to merely preventing citizens from suffering physical harm. The right of property is, it might well be said, a primary essential right of human liberty. The Supreme Court has once more gone on record in defense of that elementary human right.

One of the hopeful signs of American democracy is the fact that, after 150 years, the republic has a few citizens who do not believe that the government should support them.

What Other Editors Say

"All Dressed Up"—
From The Christian Science Monitor

The inventive Mayor of New York has an answer to the private army threat in America. As was recognized at the Bund meeting at New York a few days ago, the right of free citizens to wear military uniforms can be abused. Americans don't relish the idea of storm troopers taking the place of police, ostensibly to preserve order but free to bully citizens.

In more than one European country the path to dictatorship has been pioneered by private armies. Usually their excuse was that government could not protect their political meetings. Their larger purpose was to enthrall the unthinking with color and music or overawe the unorganized with regimented force. But the Bund meeting proved that America is neither so intolerant nor so unable to preserve order as to justify private armies. New York made one mistake, it allowed the Bund boys to police the inside of the hall.

Now Mayor LaGuardia has removed this last excuse for fancy uniforms representing political groups; henceforth owners of public halls are to supply ushers. The Bund boys can forget the Horst Wessel song. The tune for them now is "All dressed up and no place to go"—at least no place where their folderol won't look as unnecessary and foolish as it is.

Is Hitler Nearing The End?
From the Winston-Salem Journal

How long will Hitler last? We don't know. But we do know that Napoleon, a much greater man and a far more powerful dictator in Europe than either Hitler or Mussolini, lasted only twenty years.

If such a leader as Napoleon Bonaparte could not stay in power more than two decades, it is a pretty safe wager that Hitler will do well to last half that long.

There are signs already that the German dictator is nearing the end. One of them is the public statement of a German consul in San Francisco that a successor to Adolph Hitler has already been decided on.

It is hardly possible that an official representative of Germany in this country would dare suggest the retirement of Hitler if he did not know his act would meet the approval of officials higher up in the German government.

Not long ago one European correspondent—we don't recall his name at the moment—virtually quoted Hitler as prophesying his own end within the relatively near future. This would also seem to suggest that in the ruling circles in Germany there is anticipation of and preparation for the early retirement of Hitler.

It is impossible to tell at this distance, of course, what forces are working against Hitler in his own country. But one American observer who has been to Germany every year for the last twelve years, expresses the view that a powerful undercurrent of opposition among the German masses to the Nazi program of suppression and persecution is bringing real fear to the hearts of German officials.

It may be that the Hitler regime is now on its last legs, and that its downfall will not be brought by forces from without, but by an oppressed and disillusioned people within the German nation itself.

An Aid To Employment
From The Christian Science Monitor

Business improvement is now to be the foremost concern of the Roosevelt Administration, according to the most favored oracles. In that direction a most cogent recommendation was made a few days ago by Walter D. Fuller, chairman of the committee on economic security of the National Association of Manufacturers. Appearing before the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee, he urged that the increase in payroll taxs which would go into effect in January, 1940, under the Social Security Act, be postponed.

As the statute stands, the collections from both employer and employee would be raised at that time from 1 per cent to 1½ per cent of the wage. This increase would go to swell the huge old-age reserve fund about which there is so much question—a collection of Government I. O. U.'s, amounting prospectively to $50,000,000,000 in the year 2000. Henry Morgenthau, Secretary of the Treasury, indicated last week that the Administration is willing to study—indeed, is studying—the proposition of going more slowly on this tax. It is a very sensible proposition.

The Low Down From Hickory Grove

Just been reading about the pay-roll of the WPA—the salaries paid the Boys up there around the top. And stranger, up there, they are living on the fat of the land.

And the piece I was reading, it was copied from the Ladysmith, Wis., News, and anybody who has any faint idea that the editors of the weekly newspapers are not awake, they are standing on their feet. And there are big City Editors who can take their hat off to these scribes in the smaller places—away from the elbowing traffic and taxi-cabs—where there is more time to ponder.

And this Ladysmith Ed., he says there are over 27 thousand on salaries greater than 3,000 dollars a year—and they run up to 12,000 dollars a year. As a sample, 78 fellers, each of them, they get between 7 and 8 thousand.

And press-agents—they have 290.

It is not hard to savvy why we are in a mess every few weeks and need another 150 million, and also it is easy to see why the Boys there at the top, they want to make the job permanent and perpetual.

Yours, with the low down,

JO SERRA

"Can Spring Be Far Behind?"

Weekly Washington Merry-Go-Round

(Trade Mark Registered)

by Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen

State Department Probes German Radio Propaganda Sent Through New York; Opposition To Farm Bill Disappears; Plan To Release Government Cotton; Economy Bloc Aims To Embarrass Roosevelt During Democratic Convention; What One Latin American Diplomat Got When He Asked For "Mount Vernon."

Washington—For a long time U. S. officials have been alarmed over German propaganda to Latin America, but now they have found propaganda much closer to home. The Ministry of Propaganda in Berlin is sending new broadcasts to New York, where they are re-broadcast in German within the United States.

Officials of the State Department and the Federal Communications Commission are investigating two agencies involved in this arrangement. One is the Trans-Oceanic Press Service in New York, which receives messages by short wave from Berlin; the other is radio station WBNX, which takes these dot-and-dash messages and re-broadcasts them by voice, in the German language.

WBNX is properly licensed, breaks no law. To suspend its license might create a diplomatic storm. An easier attack, State Department has found, is to proceed against Trans-Oceanic Press Service on the grounds that it has failed to register as agent of a foreign principal, as required by law. Penalty for such failure is $5,000 fine.

Garner's Chances

Vice President Jack Garner may publicly be coy about running for the White House in 1940, but privately he is all ears when the subject is mentioned.

As he ambled past a group of lounging reporters outside the Senate chamber, one of them called: "We were just talking about your chances of being nominated and elected next year."

Garner grinned and walked on, then suddenly stopped and came back.

"Well, boys," he asked seriously, "what d'you think of my chances?"

The newsmen assured him they were very good.

No Farm Bill

Despite all the congressional opposition to the present farm program, it is now clear that there will be no major revision this session.

After the November elections, many Congressmen came to town determined to junk Wallace's farm bill. Some went so far as to say that he would be forced out of the Cabinet. Newsmen crowding into Wallace's press conference about this time asked what he intended to do. He said, in effect, "Let them bring on a bill."

Four months have passed, and it is now too late to bring out legislation to affect this year's crops. Furthermore it has developed that farmers generally prefer the present set-up to any untried measure.

One proposed bill did have Wallace scared. It was the "cost of production" plan, which would have scrapped acreage control, guaranteed farmers a fixed price slightly above the cost of producing their crops, and dumped surpluses abroad.

This is now virtually dead. Chief mourner at the funeral is no member of Congress, but the Man Friday of Father Coughlin, Louis B. Ward of Detroit, who was its chief lobbyist in Washington.

Cotton Salvation

Chief farm action at this session will be on cotton. The cotton bloc is determined to release part of the 11 million bales held under government loan in order to relieve the depressing effect these stocks have on the price of cotton.

This would be easy to do, but expensive. The Government has advanced loans on these cotton stocks at a figure much higher than the present market value. To sell means a substantial loss.

However, some members who are crying loudest for economy, such as Pat Harrison, of Mississippi, want the administration to lose more if necessary for the sake of cotton.

Wallace will not oppose this, will undertake to find foreign markets through subsidy.

He is playing a silent role, definitely surprised that the snowball of opposition rolled up in November has now melted.

Clipper Christening

Mrs. Roosevelt's usual tact and patience were strained to the limit when she christened the 40-ton "Yankee Clipper" which soon will begin Transatlantic air service.

As she started to break the bottle of waters from the seven seas, the news photographers, seeking plenty of time to snap still pictures, yelled, "Hold it, hold it!" while the newsreel cameramen, anxious for action shots, shouted, "Let 'er go, Mrs. Roosevelt, let 'er go!"

Under this crossfire the First Lady became confused and when she finally swung the bottle, hit the ship such a glancing blow that she splashed herself and Postmaster General Jim Farley. The latter grinned and appeared to enjoy the immersion.

Economy War

There is very subtle strategy behind the sudden drive of the economy bloc against further New Deal spending. The immediate drive is to keep Roosevelt from raising the present national debt limit to $50,000,000,000, and this, in turn, is all mixed up with 1940 and presidential politics.

The present national debt limit is $45,000,000,000, which probably will be reached by July 1, 1940, if the present rate of spending continues. That date is just about the time the Democratic Convention will be nominating a presidential candidate, and obviously the last thing Roosevelt wants is an embarrassing fight over raising the public debt a few weeks beforehand.

Obviously, also, nothing would give the anti-Roosevelts, both Republican and Democratic, more joy than to witness such a debt fight at this time. That's why they want to postpone the issue until next year; and that also is why Roosevelt wants to get the fight over with this year.

Furthermore, failure to secure a debt increase this spring would force Roosevelt into a defensive position in preparing the 1940-41 budget next fall. The budget now under consideration will exceed income by at least $4,000,000,000 which means that by July, 1940, the federal debt will be within a few hundred million of the 45-billion-dollar deadline.

This will mean drastic curtailment by Roosevelt when he starts to make up the 1940-41 budget next fall—if by that time the national debt limit has not been raised.

Words, Not Action

The economy bloc also has another idea up its sleeve—or at least some of them have. That idea is to make those among them who talk economy but practice the opposite, toe the line. A lot of Congressmen are good at making speeches on government waste, but when it comes to an appropriation for their districts, or a job for their constituents—that is another matter.

One remarkable phenomenon of the current economy wave is that all the antis are redhot for it, but not one has specified a single item to be cut. So by refusing to raise the 45-billion-dollar debt limit, economies would be compulsory and both Roosevelt and Congress would have to toe the mark.

Pat Harrison Plum

Pat Harrison of Mississippi, one of the most vehement demanders of economy, issued a well-timed blast on this theme the other day. Thanks to the help of a newspaperman from Mississippi who collaborated with him, it made big headlines.

But a day or two before loosing his blast, Senator Harrison was talking with the Treasury Department about continuing the job of Comptroller of Customs at various ports throughout the country. The Treasury long has wanted these jobs abolished, says that the Comptroller does no work, that one comptroller goes to his office only twice a month to receive his check. But whenever the Treasury has urged abolition of these jobs, Congress, with an eye to patronage, has continued them.

This situation was carefully explained to Senator Harrison the other day. And Pat, perhaps remembering that he helps appoint a customs comptroller in Mississippi, replied: "Well, I'm all for economy—but can't you find some work for these comptrollers to do?"

Note—The Comptroller of Customs in Baltimore, Scott Beck, has not been out of his bed for four years.

Diplomatic Language

A foreign diplomat in Washington wanted to find his way to Mount Vernon, but his English was poor. Wherever he stopped his car to say, "Where is Mount Vernon?" he got only a puzzled look and a shake of the head.

Finally, with the air of signposts, he found the shrine of Washington, but later complained, "These people I have asked are not intelligent people. They are yokels, or they would have understood me. My pronunciation is excellent."

When the party returned to a Washington hotel for dinner, the diplomat said to his friends, "I'll wager these waitresses will understand me when I say 'Mount Vernon'." He summoned me, said with a heavy accent, "Have you been to Mount Vernon?"

The girl nodded her head and immediately went to the kitchen. In a moment she returned with a slice of watermelon.

Peace Crusader

Abe (Don't write—phone) Pickus, of Cleveland, who telephones the heads of foreign governments to urge peace, blew into Washington the other day; but all he got was a run-around.

At the White House he was told the President was out of town. Secretary of State Hull sent word he was too busy to see the self-appointed peace-promoter. So did GOP Chairman John Hamilton and Capitol Hill leaders.

Finally Abe made a connection at the Japanese Embassy, but it didn't last long when they learned that all he wanted was to induce Ambassador Horinouchi to sit and "talk things over" with Chinese Ambassador Dr. Hu Shih.

Though Abe's sortie at the Capital was a total loss, he is not discouraged. A pleasant little man of 49 with black, curly hair and unquenchable zeal, Abe explains that his peace crusade is not a hobby but the great passion of his life. The horrors of war in France, where he was wounded twice, inspired his campaign and his blue eyes glisten when he talks about it.

He spent $3,000 last year in overseas telephone calls. Among those he rang up were Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, Chamberlain, and President Lebrun of France.

Abe made one long-distance call while in Washington—to his wife in Cleveland. "Got to keep peace in the family," he grinned.

Merry-Go-Round

Naval officers are keeping mum about it, but there is a sex angle behind their bill against subversive propaganda among bluejackets. Secret service agents discovered that pretty girls were being used to spread un-American doctrines. . . . Economy-minded Senator Pat Harrison proposes to increase federal funds for state public education. Asked if he would cut down his bill in the interest of economy, Harrison said: "Well, that's a mighty good bill." . . . Arthur P. Chew, British-born economist, writes the entire annual report of the Secretary of Agriculture. When he submitted his last report to the Secretary, Wallace changed only two words. . . . The Brazilian Navy has asked for nine places in a special naval construction course offered by Massachusetts Institute of Technology. All other places in the course are taken by U. S. naval officers.

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Wise And Otherwise

Note On Blondes

Brunettes, if a psychologist is to be believed, inspire deeper friendship than blondes. All the same, when a blonde gets into court she can usually introduce some quite friendly letters.—Toronto Star.

Cynical Note

Because a set of WPA false teeth failed to fit, a relief client in the West put on a scene that brought the police. It's bad when you can't bite the hand that feeds you.—Chicago Daily News.

A Western Banker

Years ago, it was way back B. R.—before Roosevelt—a man arrived in a small town in the West of the United States, where there was no bank. So he put up a sign. The first day a fellow came along and deposited a hundred dollars; the next day a man came along and deposited three hundred dollars. And then, so runs the success story of a great bank president, "I got so much confidence in my bank that I put in fifty dollars of my own money.—Hollywood Reporter.

Sour Note

In New York the S. P. C. A. brought a woman into court for choking a canary and a man for leaving an elephant out in the rain. The man pleaded that rain is good for elephants, and possibly the woman thinks choking is good for singers.—Toronto Star.