

Congress Sidelights

By Harris Ellsworth
Congressman, 4th District of Oregon

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

The grave concern being generally expressed here regarding the increased spending and decreasing tax income is definitely affecting legislation recently before the House. From my point of view the realization of the federal financial situation has arrived late. Legislation now pending and having the blessing of the President would add billions to an already large budget. Recently a bill to increase the pay of the armed forces was unexpectedly sent back to committee. The fact is a pay increase bill should be passed. Some officer grades have had no increase in pay since before World War I. However, the armed forces committee of the House was too generous. The increase bill they brought in would cost more than \$400 million annually. It was doubtful that even that figure would have passed the House, but on top of that an amendment adding another hundred million or more was adopted by the Committee of the Whole House. So by the time the bill came up for final passage a majority of the membership believed the sum to be too high and the bill was sent back to committee on a recommendational motion—and by a surprisingly large vote.

What happened to the ECA (European Cooperation Administration) appropriation was also due directly to the realization that we are over-extending ourselves financially. The appropriations committee made a 15 percent cut, straight across the board. The House modified the cut somewhat—allowed it to stand but provided that the full amount might be expended during the fiscal year if the Administrator requests additional funds and the President approves. The proviso is clearly for the purpose of meeting unforeseen conditions brought about by crop failures or other disaster. Otherwise cooperation with Europe will be 15 percent less than requested in the President's budget.

The so-called Federal Public Housing bill will soon come before the House. Signs now indicate this bill will suffer a fate similar to the military pay increase bill—if it is not defeated outright.

The Housing bill has very little or nothing to do with making it easier for people to buy, build or rent houses for themselves. It consists solely of the three sections of the big Housing bill last year which was stopped in the

House of Representatives after being passed by the Senate. These three sections provided for public housing, slum clearance and farm housing. It is estimated the total cost of this bill would be \$19 BILLION over a period of years—and by the public housing enthusiasts that is said to be just a beginning.

Under the public housing section of the bill the government would build up to a million housing units and rent them at less than cost—a rent subsidy to people who live in them which would total some \$400 million per year. The slum clearance section of the Housing bill is the best feature in it, but it too would cost into the hundreds of millions. So far as the farm loan feature is concerned, it is generally conceded to be a political move to help the tenant farmer of the south—a little bit—and therefore was designed to get Southern votes. It calls for an outright grant of cash plus a loan to low income or unsuccessful farms.

It seems to me the Housing bill is a very much misunderstood measure. I am sure that many people in Oregon, for example, believe the pending Housing bill would ease the housing situation in some Oregon communities. That is definitely not the case. Public housing will be built in only a few large cities. It will quite likely be used as a patronage bid for increased votes in some city areas. Under a previous public housing bill, Texas received the greatest number of units and Florida was a close second.

At the beginning of this letter I mentioned the adverse financial condition of the federal government. It is serious. Without any increase in income tax payments the President estimated a deficit of nearly a billion dollars if his budget was approved. Since he delivered his budget message it is clear that federal income will be a great deal less than estimated—and the income barometer is falling every day.

The European situation is still deadly serious. We are committed to a program of assistance there which, though costly, we cannot afford to abandon—particularly while the foreign ministers are endeavoring to establish a basis for actual peace. We cannot make much of a cut in our defense program because to do so would indicate weakness and invite attack. We cannot eliminate the cost of carrying out commitments made to veterans. These three items account for three-fourths of our budget. Substantial cuts in the remainder of the budget should be made but there is no indication that such cuts will be made. Our country is almost in trouble without embarking upon any great housing, socialized medicine or other spending idea running into billions. At least that is the way I feel about it. Our first duty is the protection of the financial solvency of our country.

Truman Opposes Making Federal Loan To Spain

WASHINGTON, June 3.—(AP)—President Truman came out Thursday against making a government loan to Spain. He told a news conference he does not favor it, but did not elaborate. Spain has made an informal bid for a multi-million dollar loan from the government's Export-Import Bank. The bank reportedly has rejected the request on the grounds that Spain's economic condition makes her a poor credit risk.

Bridge Painters Save 3 Youths From Drowning

HARRISBURG, June 3.—(AP)—A crew of bridge painters rescued three Harrisburg youngsters from the Willamette River Wednesday. Dick Tweedt, 17, was taking his small sister, Theresa, and her playmate, Thelma Geidt, for a boat ride when the boat struck a bridge pier and capsized. The boy grabbed both girls and held them to a tree swirling in the water. Painters working on the bridge above, saw the accident, lowered a motor boat into the river, and pulled the children to safety.

Salem-Newport Bus Line Folds Up After Week

SALEM, June 3.—(AP)—The Salem-Newport bus service folded up Thursday after it had operated only for a week. John Ratzlaff, Albany, owner of the line, advised Public Utilities Commissioner George H.

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OUT OUR WAY BY J. R. Williams

Conscience Spurs Unnecessary Confession Of Crime

PORTLAND, June 3.—(AP)—A 33-year-old Portlander walked into the police station here to confess a year-old robbery that police had never heard of before.

The man told police he wanted to clear his conscience of "robbing" a drunk in a cheap hotel a year ago, and make restitution to the robbed man.

He said his roommate lured a sailor into their hotel room, robbed him of \$24, and split the cash. Now, said the Portlander, he is "going straight" and wants to return the money.

Police listened to the story and checked through their files. No

such robbery had ever been reported.

Capt. William Browne told the conscience-stricken Portlander to go home and contribute the money to charity. "The seaman who was robbed apparently never reported the robbery," Browne said, "and we would not be able to get the money back to him."

Names were withheld by police.

DOG-GONE GOOD IDEA

LEBANON, June 3.—(AP)—High School Principal Burleigh Cash is having trouble with his mail because he gave a diploma to a dog.

The trouble: A heavy shower of letters from all parts of the country. It seems that an Associated Press wirephoto of the dog getting a diploma last week after five years of regular attendance, was seen by people who like dogs.

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Plane Crash At Airport Fatal To Two Occupants

BREMERTON, Wash., June 3.—(AP)—Two Bremerton men were killed when a light plane in which they were riding crashed on the Kitsap County Airport Thursday.

They were identified as John W. Driver, 26, a Navy veteran who has been taking GI flight training, and Francis Berg, a Bremerton used car dealer.

The airport listed the plane, a single-engined Cessna 140, as belonging to William Lewis of Bremerton.

Sheriff's deputies said the plane was taken without Lewis' permission. They said the plane was demolished, and that it was impossible to tell which man was piloting it.

Peanut Business No Good, Tries To 'Drown' Machines

PORTLAND, June 3.—(AP)—Richard T. Meredith wants no part of the peanut business.

He was stopped by police from dumping four vending machines into the river. At police headquarters, after establishing the fact that the machines were legally his, he said he had been "suckered" into paying \$25 for them. He hasn't been able to make any money in the peanut business and wanted to throw them away and forget it rather than cause someone else the same anguish.

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