

Showdown Seen For Excise Tax Cut In Congress

WASHINGTON—(AP)—A showdown on whether to cut excise taxes appears certain to come in the early days of the session of Congress which starts Jan. 3.

The test is shaping up in the Senate where the first scheduled order of business is action on a House-passed bill to repeal the federal taxes on oleomargarine.

Pending in the Senate is a series of amendments which would slash or repeal the excise levies collected on such items as telephone bills, transportation tickets, jewelry, furs and cosmetics.

At the start the amendments were being pushed mainly by some dairy state senators who are opposed to the oleomargarine repealer.

Veto Possible

They figured that President Truman would veto any bill which provided for a sizable reduction of excise taxes. And they felt quite positive about it after Mr. Truman said he knew of no way to wipe out the federal deficit without a tax increase.

But just last week the President said the treasury and the House Ways and Means committee were at work, with his blessing, trying to find out whether some excise levies could be trim-

med without too big a strain on the federal purse.

Any administration decision to call for lower excises probably would be coupled with a request for off-setting higher taxes from other sources, including new ones.

At the last session, Democratic leaders in Congress were inclined to cold-shoulder proposals to trim excises. But support for the idea has been increasing and the prospects for a reduction now look fairly good.

Some See Difficulties

Some senators who had been lukewarm about a cut say privately it would be difficult to vote against a reduction with congressional elections coming up next year.

The drive for some reduction now has the backing of influential Senator George (D-Ga), chairman of the Senate finance committee. Rep. Doughton (D-NC), chairman of the House ways made it clear he would like to see a cut if a way can be found without increasing the federal deficit.

The Senate finance committee already has approved an amendment which would cut most excise taxes back to 1942 levels—a reduction of 50 percent or more on many items. That amendment was tacked onto a House-passed industrial alcohol bill which the Senate shelved at the last session.

Horseback Riding Cures Man Of Siege Of Hiccups

PUNXSUTAWNEY, Pa.—(AP)—Next time you have hiccups—try next time you have hiccups—try a horse.

That's the advice of Frank Salvaggio, local restaurant owner. He says a horse cured his 21-month case of hiccups.

Salvaggio, who lost 40 pounds during the siege, took up horseback riding after everything else he tried failed to halt the spasms. His doctor had recommended a sport.

The restaurateur says he went riding two hours every day and the hiccups gradually disappeared.

OLDEST PATIENT DIES

TACOMA, Dec. 27. — (AP) — Madigan General hospital authorities announced Friday the death of the oldest U. S. Veterans hospital patient in the nation.

He was 94-year-old Thomas A. Murphy, born in Ireland in 1856. Murphy came to this country and enlisted in the army at the age of 19. During his 10 years as a soldier he served in Oregon, Washington, Montana and Idaho.

Murphy was confined to Madigan in 1947 with a fractured hip. Attendants said death was due to a heart condition.

A daughter, Mrs. J. C. Winecoop of Cheilan, survives.

FARM VOTE AT STAKE

Hot Fight Over Brannan Price Support Program Will Occur In Congress

By EDWIN B. HAAKINSON

WASHINGTON, (AP)—A roaring-ear-splitting argument about farm legislation appeared certain today at the next session of Congress.

Congress comes back Jan. 3 and farm-minded lawmakers already have started the verbal sharp-shooting. At stake are voter of farmers and consumers in the 1950 elections.

The main prize is political control of Congress with all 435 House and 36 of the 96 Senate seats at stake.

Both Republicans and Democrats expect President Truman, who often has called himself a Missouri farm boy, to increase the agricultural discussion next month in his state of the union message to Congress.

He is expected once more to urge Congress to pass the controversial farm subsidy plan proposed by Secretary of Agriculture Brannan.

This same Congress, under Democratic control, flatly rejected the Brannan plan earlier this year. Instead it ground out a complicated farm price-support program intended to continue through the vital 1950 election year the relatively high-level wartime price props.

But all congressmen remember the bitter and successful 1948 campaign in the farm belt staged by candidate Truman and Secretary Brannan against the farm act of the 80th Republican-controlled congress.

Fight Will Continue

Mr. Truman charged that the Republicans "have already stuck a pitchfork in the farmers' back and are now ready to let the bottom drop out of farm prices."

Since then the president has signed the compromise farm support plan that emerged from the Democratic 81st Congress and termed it an improvement over the 1948 GOP program.

But actions of both the White House and Secretary Brannan point to an effort to sell the Brannan plan to farmers, consumers and other voters during the coming year.

Even its sharpest critics admit the Brannan proposals have political appeal. Instead of taking major food products that are perishable off the market with government funds in order to keep prices up, Brannan suggested consumers benefit from lower prices for milk, meats and similar farm products.

If this should reduce farm incomes below pre-determined "fair" levels, Brannan said farmers should get cash subsidies called "production payments."

Blasted By GOP Senators

Two key Republican senators, Taft of Ohio and Wherry of Nebraska, already are guessing that the Brannan plan will be a major issue next session and are sniping at it in almost every speech.

Taft, running full speed for reelection in Ohio next year, has termed the Brannan plan "obviously fraudulent."

Wherry, in a round of speeches that may indicate presidential ambitions, has called it "a swindle" and a "monstrous political scheme" to halt the "votes of consumers, whose grocery purchases would be subsidized with money extracted from the taxpayers."

Taft said it is "obviously fallacious to pay the farmer the

Libel Suit Against Salem Newspaper Ousted By Court

SALEM, Dec. 24.—(AP)—A \$150,000 libel suit against the Salem Capital Journal was dismissed here by Circuit Judge David R. Vandenberg of Klamath Falls.

The suit was brought by former Sheriff Andy Burk, who claimed that he was libeled by an editorial in the newspaper during last November's election campaign.

During that campaign, Burk, who had been sheriff for 12 years

before 1945, was trying to get back into the sheriff's office.

Judge Vandenberg, in throwing the case out of court, said the editorial was not libelous or malicious; it was made when Burk was seeking a political office, and that it was fair comment.

The editorial charged that Burk had failed to do his duty in enforcing laws against gambling and labor racketeering.

LOVERS INTERRUPTED

SEATTLE.—(AP)—A tree fell in Seattle and two couples had to be taken home from a lovers' lane by police.

The couples were parked at Mount Baker bathing beach when some unidentified persons felled two trees across the roadway behind them.

The cars are still parked at the beach—presumably keeping each other company.

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