

WASHINGTON WEEK

By Harris Ellsworth, M. C.

In the avalanche of words which the presidential seizure of the steel plants touched off, facts have been obscured and the deadly implications of the act have been generally overlooked.

It is the first time in our history that a president has ignored and refused to administer a specific law, choosing instead to issue an executive order based on undefined "inherent" powers of the president.

When congress passed the "labor management relations act of 1947" it anticipated the situation which developed in the steel industry several weeks ago. Section

206 of the act begins: "Whenever in the president of the United States, a threatened or actual strike or lock-out affecting an entire industry or a substantial part thereof engaged in trade, commerce, transportation, transmission, or communication among the several states or with foreign nations, or engaged in the production of goods for commerce, will, if permitted to occur or to continue, imperil the national health or safety, he may —" and thereafter the full legal procedure for meeting the situation without a work stoppage is carefully spelled out in the law. The president has used these provisions of law successfully at least twelve times previously. He could and should have used this law this time.

Why did Truman go outside the law? That is the serious question — I heard his explanation given in his radio speech but it was no explanation or reason for his action at all. He said in effect that he did not use the law which requires a total of 80 days waiting time because the dispute had already been going on for more than 100 days. That fact had nothing to do with the application of the law.

Why, then, DID the president ignore a law passed by congress and proven by use? Why did he make his own law? I think the obvious answer is that he wants to establish his own way. As the Law! Proceedings have been started which will test the president's order in the courts. If the supreme court upholds his order, broadest possible powers will be thereby vested in the president — as constitutional. That situation could only be changed by a constitutional amendment. The congress could not correct it by law. If and when the court ratifies such board constitutional powers we will then be in almost exactly the same position Germany and the German Reichstag faced when Hitler became dictator of Germany by issuing a series of executive orders which the German constitution gave him the power to do.

Am I merely seeing boogies. Am I too agitated by the danger presented in the possibilities outlined above? I do not think so, and here is why: Although I was

worried by the seizure order, its full meaning did not strike home until a few days later when the president, in reply to a direct question as to whether or not he could seize the newspapers and radio stations, clearly indicated that he considered he had such power if, in his opinion such action was necessary for the good of the country. He made this answer in spite of the fact that such an act is specifically barred by the constitution.

Note the reference to "his opinion." The essence of our free system of government is government by laws written by the elected representatives of the people. We cannot tolerate government by opinion or personal edict. We revolted from that a long time ago.

The congress should now act to crack down on the attitude of mind so clearly revealed by Mr. Truman. Such a tendency toward government by men rather than government by law should be dealt with immediately. These are the reasons why I have publicly stated that the congress should consider impeachment proceedings. Resolutions for this purpose, which I shall support, have been introduced in the house of representatives.

Raymond Reekman AN, USN, write-up in the San Francisco arrived home Friday for a 15-day leave. His carrier, the Antietam, arrived at Alameda last Friday morning after being in the Korean war zone since last September. There was quite a

papers when the Antietam docked as the personnel on the carrier had taken up a contribution of more than \$15,000 which was donated to the Shriner Crippled Children's fund.

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