

CURRENT EVENTS PASS IN REVIEW

DEMOCRATS ARE DETERMINED TO
PUSH ROOSEVELT TAX PLAN
TO PASSAGE.

By EDWARD W. PICKARD
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DEMOCRATIC congressmen started the week briskly determined to push through the President's "soak the rich" tax bill at this session. Opposing them with equal determination were a number of the hardest fighting Republicans who insist that consideration of taxation be postponed until next winter and that meantime the question be studied carefully in connection with the budget for the next fiscal year. These Republicans are urgently calling for an early adjournment of congress. Senator Hastings of Delaware has introduced a resolution setting August 10 as the day for quitting and was trying to have it brought up for consideration before passage of the tax measure. Senator Vandenberg of Michigan, often mentioned as a Presidential possibility, also demanded postponement of the tax legislation until January, and he gave out a statement denouncing the administration's plan as a "sterile political gesture" which would raise "only a little extra pocket change" and declared that "we chatter of taxes in millions to offset known deficits in billions."

"The pending tax bill, as it is being developed," said Senator Vandenberg, "will not produce appreciable revenue for Uncle Sam. It will not pay the President's deficit even for the period while the bill is under consideration. As a contribution to the public credit, it is as grim a hoax as was ever perpetrated on the country. As a 'distributor of wealth' it is a mere vagrant flirtation with this left wing idea."

Nevertheless, it appeared probable that the tax measure would be enacted before adjournment, for the administration leaders had promised this to Senator La Follette and other "liberals," and besides that, they have no desire to pass a taxation bill in a Presidential election year. As produced by the house ways and means committee after great travail the measure embodies an 87 per cent confiscation of large fortunes and increased levies on the rich which would produce perhaps \$250,000,000 of additional annual revenue.

NEEDY teachers and students are to get financial help from the Works Progress administration according to plans being perfected by Dr. L. R. Alderman. The two chief points in his program are:

Establishment of summer schools for 1,200 teachers who were among those who taught reading and writing to 500,000 illiterates last year.

Jobs to be provided for 125,000 college students during the coming school year.

Twenty-five summer schools will be conducted, the sessions lasting six weeks, and the teachers attending them will be paid from \$15 to \$18 a week out of the work relief funds. These teachers will be taught to teach adults in the fall.

Alderman said he already had sent out field agents to aid in setting up courses at New York university, Ohio State university, Purdue university, Olivet college (Michigan), University of Wisconsin, University of Chicago and University of California. The other training schools have not been selected.

ALONG the line of providing help for white collar workers, Harry L. Hopkins appointed four technical assistants to direct the employment of painters, musicians, writers and actors. They are: Nikolai Sokoloff for music, Hallie Flanagan for the theater, Holger Cahill for painters and sculptors, and Henry G. Alseberg for writers.

With \$300,000,000 available for the estimated 750,000 white collar people on relief, scores of surveys, censuses, traffic studies, and similar projects have been provided for those with no particular skill.

OPPOSITION of the AAA amendments designed to strengthen the powers of Secretary of Agriculture Wallace decided to let the basic act go up to the Supreme court, so the administration bill was passed by the senate with only 15 adverse votes.

Both Republican and conservative Democratic foes of the AAA are confident that the Supreme court will hold the basic act unconstitutional and an early test is assured by a senate amendment permitting suits to recover processing taxes that have not been

passed on to producers or consumers. One of the major purposes of the amendments was to close the courts, but the senate rejected this scheme by a vote of 41 to 23. As a result, the Hoosack Mills case, in which the Boston Circuit Court of Appeals held the AAA unconstitutional, will not be thrown out and the highest tribunal will have a chance to pass upon it.

SENATOR GLASS scored perhaps the greatest victory in his long public career when the senate, without a record vote, passed his draft of the 1935 banking act, rejecting the central bank features urged by Gov. Marriner S. Eccles of the federal reserve board and favored by the administration. The doughty Virginian, who was once secretary of the treasury, had fought desperately against the Eccles scheme and his triumph was decisive. There was no demand for a roll call on the final vote, for the fate met by the proposers of various amendments showed this procedure would be futile. Senator La Follette sought to strike out a provision permitting commercial banks to underwrite securities and his proposal was beaten, 39 to 22. Senator Gerald Nye of North Dakota, another radical Republican, offered the central bank plan of Rev. Charles E. Coughlin, radio priest, which would set up a government owned and wholly dominated system. It was voted down, 59 to 10.

The senate bill was sent to conference, for the house passed the measure drawn up on the advice of Eccles and Tugwell.

PARTIAL investigation of the milk industry by the federal trade commission was said to have revealed deplorable conditions and the administration asked for \$200,000 to continue the inquiry. The senate committee in considering the deficiency appropriation bill cut out that item altogether, but when the measure came before the senate Duffy of Wisconsin moved an amendment adding the sum asked. After a hot debate this was approved by a vote of 51 to 18 and the bill was then passed.

WHAT was in the cigar box wrapped in a newspaper? That is what Senator Hugo Black, chairman of the senate lobby committee, wanted to know. Before the committee for questioning was John W. Carpenter of Dallas, president of the Texas Power and Light company. He admitted freely that he and other utility men had hotel conferences, dinners and a trip down Chesapeake bay with congressmen during the fight over the Wheeler-Rayburn bill, and that he himself had centered his efforts on Texas congressmen. But of the mysterious box he could or would tell nothing. Black probed and probed, and finally asked:



Senator Black

"Do you still say that in the morning (of the day before the vote on the utilities bill 'death sentence') you didn't give a congressman a box wrapped up in a newspaper?"

Carpenter replied quietly: "I don't think I did, unless it was a few cigars."

Senate and house conferees met to consider the utility control bill, but there were small signs that they could get together, and one session ended abruptly in a real row. Two administration lobbyists, Benjamin Cohen and Dozier A. De Vane, were brought into the executive session by Senators Wheeler and Barkley and though Representative George Huddleston protested, their continued presence was insisted upon. Whereupon the fiery Alabama congressman and his fellows from the house walked out and broke up the meeting. Cohen is generally given credit for writing the measure and Wheeler has said he knows all about it.

GRAY SILVER, who throughout most of his life was active in the interests of agriculture, died quite suddenly at his home in Martinsburg, W. Va., at the age of sixty-five years. Among the offices he held at various times were president of the United States Grain Market corporation of Chicago; president of the Inwood Fruit Growers' co-operative corporation; president Berkeley Fruit Growers; head of the Easterns' Credit association; director United Growers of America, head of the Federated Growers Credit association; member of the National Bureau of Economic Research, member of the commission appointed by President Taft to study tariff relations to the wool industry, member of the farm bureau federation visiting Europe in 1924, and a member of the commission investigating national unemployment.



Washington Digest

NATIONAL TOPICS INTERPRETED

By William Bruckart

NATIONAL PRESS BLDG.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Washington. — President Roosevelt has settled a controversy by the simple expedient of transferring two men from responsible positions in the Virgin Islands to jobs in Washington.

Settle Controversy
He has taken Paul M. Pearson from the post of civil governor of the Virgin Islands and has made him assistant director of housing in the Interior department and has transferred Federal Director Judge T. Webber Wilson from his post in the islands to the federal parole board here in Washington. Each man has accepted his new appointment and in so far as a current controversy is concerned, the book is closed.

It will be recalled that Governor Pearson and Judge Wilson long have been at loggerheads over Virgin Island affairs. The battle was bitter. It came to a head when Paul Yates, executive assistant to the governor and a former Washington correspondent, resigned his job and came back here with a bag full of charges against his former chief. The Yates allegations ranged all the way from minor charges of poor judgment to gross accusations. He succeeded in getting a senate committee investigation and it was at that time that the Pearson-Wilson feud flared so openly that administration officials here were dragged in and the whole scope of differences aired.

As a matter of fact there is every reason to believe that Governor Pearson was far from a successful executive in the islands.

The President stayed outside of the row until in the course of the senate inquiry Senator Tydings, a Maryland Democrat and usually an anti-Roosevelt Democrat, received a letter from Mr. Ickes. Mr. Ickes accused the investigating chairman with having whitewashed a witness whose testimony was all anti-Ickes and anti-Pearson. The senator flared up in a big way at that letter. His reply is likely to become a classic in official correspondence. He did not mince his words. After voicing his general conception of the attitude exhibited by Mr. Ickes and accusing him of attempting to interfere in the investigation, Senator Tydings informed the interior secretary that he may as well attempt to run the Department of the Interior and let the senators run the senate. He used just about those words.

That was the signal for Mr. Roosevelt to take a hand. It was easy to see that a few outbursts of that kind and Mr. Ickes might have found himself in a splendid position to resign from the cabinet. So the President got the feudists into his office, singly of course, and when those conferences were over the senate investigation into the Virgin Island situation was suspended for two weeks. The transfer of Governor Pearson and Judge Wilson resulted.

One might properly inquire why all of this agitation has occurred about the Virgin Islands.

Why the Agitation?
They are many hundreds of miles from Washington. They lie in the Caribbean sea, considerably out of the usual pathway of ships; they are populated by about 22,000 individuals, 95 per cent of whom are negroes and may generally be described as a "backward" place.

They may have some military and naval value. That has never been fully demonstrated. But the fact remains they are possessions of the United States and if our government is to be their protector, it is responsible for a sane administration of their affairs.

The Washington fight may have had its start in the Virgin Islands, but it has progressed beyond that point and is a domestic battle now. It is safe to say that for 18 years, which is the time the islands have been under United States rule, there has been a dire need for a plan of government suited to those people. Each year congress has been appropriating "thousands of dollars for the island government and each year there has been miserably little in the way of improvement to show for these funds.

Almost as frequently as congress has appropriated money it has made changes in the administration methods in use there. There has never been a long term program laid out and there has been nothing whatsoever done showing the sympathy of a so-called intellectual people as we claim

to be for those down-trodden masses that populate the Virgin Islands.

All of this, it seems to me, shows the woeful need for careful consideration of that situation. It seems to me equally apparent that as long as congress keeps meddling in and as long as politicians from the mainland are sent there purely on a political basis we will continue to have a pack of trouble bundled up in those Virgin Islands.

Several attempts have been made to work out a governmental system worth while but the politicians are not among those who will let plums escape. It is certain, therefore, that the Pearson-Wilson-Ickes-Tydings battle royal is an outcropping of what amounts to a festering sore in American governmental policy.

If congress continues in session past August 15, and it is now apparent that it may run to September 1, it will have been in session 225 days, some two weeks longer than the average of the so-called long sessions of congress.

Long Session Severe Strain
Prior to adoption of the "lame duck" amendment which did away with sessions of unequal length, the shorter sessions of congress averaged about 170 days. The longer terms were around 215 days before final adjournment was taken. Thus, the current session stands in a fair way to be among the list of hardy sessions.

All of which is by way of saying that the current session of congress has worn down its members both physically and mentally to an extent quite unusual. I was talking a few days ago with a veteran senator, a man who has served almost 25 years in the upper house of congress. He is known as a physically strong individual and usually lasts very well through the work that piles up before senators and representatives. I inquired of him concerning the general health of congress and his reply was:

"I regret to say we are just a bunch of debilitated old men, incapable of doing the job that is expected of us and everyone is hoping against hope that we can live through this work and this heat."

As a result of that conversation the thought came to me that here was an answer to the oft repeated declaration that members of congress fail to earn their salaries of \$10,000 per year. I have observed congressional proceedings almost a score of years and it is my mature conviction that few times in that period has congress failed to earn its salt.

There is another reason why congressional sessions should not run so long and should not be carried on in the intense heat of a Washington summer.

When Solons Are Tired
One condition nearly always has obtained near the close of a long session. As the days drag by, persons with axes to grind and individual interests to serve have a way of digging up questionable bills that theretofore had been side-tracked and assumed to be dead. With resistance low, the average senator or representative is unable to fight off legislation which he knows to be bad with the same spirit that accompanied his activities earlier in the session. Likewise, he is unable to battle as successfully as before for legislation which he knows to be good.

This condition opens the way for a revival of lobbies. They are back in Washington in numbers now despite the disclosures being made by the two congressional committees that are investigating the lobbies that operated to defeat, temporarily at least, the legislation killing utility holding companies. One would have assumed justly with the investigations under way after the utility legislation was passed that lobbyists and self-serving representatives would have been frightened away from Washington. Such was not the case. They are here in such numbers that some observers believe Mr. Roosevelt has made a mistake in demanding that congress stay until it has enacted the share-the-wealth-tax bill and the legislation which will prohibit lawsuits against the government for damages resulting from abrogation of the promise in government bonds to pay them in gold. Mr. Roosevelt is insisting on these laws. He will get them. But in the opinion of many authorities he stands a fair chance also of getting some other legislation which he may not want.

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ON THE FLY PAPER

Manager—Where is the Human Fly?

Fat Lady—He got into an argument with his wife and she swatted him.—Answers Magazine.

Numeration

"Remember," said the earnest counselor, "that the hairs of your head are numbered."

"That's not so important in case of a crime wave," said Cactus Joe, "as to remember that every \$20 bill is numbered."

Couldn't Hide It

"The worst of Augustus is that he looks such a fool."
"Yes, it's dreadful when they look it as well."—London Tit-Bits.

