

Washington Digest

President Maintains New Deal Policies

Year-End Check Shows Some Change of Faces but Not of Any Principles; FDR Intimates Remain in High Posts.



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Sufficient time has elapsed since President Truman went into the White House to warrant a year-end inventory of his reconstituted federal setup, and the result adds up to many changes in personalities, but little switch of fundamental policies.

In its numerical aspect, the changes wrought by the President suggest more of a shakeup than actually has taken place, for there still are many intimates of FDR in high positions, some of them promoted by Mr. Truman.

James F. Byrnes, secretary of state and top man in the Truman cabinet, was lifted out of the relative obscurity of a "career senator" from the southland by Mr. Roosevelt. He came within reach of his present eminence under the guidance of the late President, who appointed him to the United States Supreme court, made him war mobilizer and economic stabilizer, and took him to international conferences which built him to the point where he was a "natural" for the state portfolio when Edward R. Stettinius Jr. was moved out by political party considerations. Byrnes was schooled in the Roosevelt ways and he continues along those paths.

Henry Morgenthau probably would have remained as secretary of treasury had the President who appointed him lived on. But while he was more a personal friend, he was less a political associate of Mr. Roosevelt than was Fred Vinson, the present secretary. And again, it was FDR who brought Vinson to the forefront—made him a federal judge, then took him into the White House to share Byrnes' multiple functions and burdens. He had little more than passing acquaintance with Truman, and his present post was a promotion for a "Roosevelt man."

Robert E. Hannegan, postmaster general, was slated for that office before Mr. Roosevelt passed away. It is political custom to award that plum to the winning party's national committee chairman, whether the Democrats or the Republicans win.

Robert Patterson, secretary of war, came in during the Roosevelt administration as assistant to Henry L. Stimson, creating a team of Republicans in the top spots of the department. He was advanced by President Truman when Mr. Stimson retired, although there were strong representations made to the White House on behalf of other candidates, practically all of them Democrats.

Original Roosevelt cabinet members retained by Mr. Truman are James V. Forrestal in navy, Henry A. Wallace in commerce, and Harold L. Ickes in interior.

Anderson Took Off 'Heat' on Food

Clinton P. Anderson, the secretary of agriculture, won White House entree during Roosevelt days by taking the heat of the administration with a food investigation. Labor Secretary Lewis B. Schwelb has been described as "more New Deal than Roosevelt."

Continuing, it was President Roosevelt who brought Tom C. Clark, the present attorney general, into government service, placing him in line for the advancement which Mr. Truman gave him. Paul V. McNutt, who left recently to become high commissioner in the Philippine islands, was originally a Roosevelt appointee.

Even in the intimate surroundings of the White House will be found several "hold-overs," notably scholarly William D. Hassett, a presidential secretary whose typewriter has turned out many of the lyrical speeches delivered by the late President, and whose skill can be detected by Washington newsmen in Mr. Truman's more formal addresses.

J. A. Krug remained at the head of the War Production board until it went out of existence, although the new President was often critical of WPB when he was presiding over the senate committee which bore his name.

Almost every move made by Mr. Truman in organizing his official family had underlying it a record of Roosevelt association. There has been only one notable discernible

departure from the administrative status quo so far as fundamentals go, and that was the appointment of John W. Snyder as chief of the office of war mobilization and reconversion. Snyder was a friend and military buddy of the President for a quarter of a century. But Washington hears that the OWMR director is being sidetracked, that the President is taking counsel with Secretary Vinson on subjects that rightly fall into Snyder's bailiwick and that a resignation has been offered.

There is nothing in the Truman appointments to indicate whether the President is turning to the right or the left of center—using FDR as "center." Mr. Truman is franker than most public figures and commentators — he says he frankly doesn't know what "center" is, imagines he's about the same as his late chief.

Opinion is growing in the capital that the government is "reconverting" too rapidly and that the force of speed without direction will have harmful results.

Except for a few generalized thrusts, the White House has shown no disposition to come to grips with the wage-price dilemma, hasn't attempted to develop a comprehensive program to eliminate the element of chance, and, in the opinion of critical congressmen, is simply trusting that things somehow will work out all right in the end if left to their own devices.

There is a striking example of the haphazard system which has been followed, and that is the retention of OPA while permitting the National War Labor board to go virtually out of existence. WLB exercised a fair degree of control over wage and salary levels, and with wages the largest single item of production costs, there is today no agency effectively operating in that field. Both management and labor agree the President's radioed speech on the subject clarified almost nothing. The result has been to cut the ground from beneath OPA in its efforts to maintain price ceilings.

Another example is the War Production board, which was permitted to go out of existence on November 3. Odds and ends fell to the newly created Civilian Production administration, but there is today no raw materials allocation plan and efforts are being made to create out of export licensing a means by which domestic industry might have its needs fulfilled. The theory is that refusal of export licenses for needed civilian materials will back those commodities onto the market here. But its effort upon restoration of foreign trade is making congress unhappy.

There still are agencies in Washington "winding up" the business of World War I, and it seems entirely possible that history will repeat after World War II is officially over. That day will be fixed by President Truman unless he carries too long and congress steps in to do the job. Dissolution of the Office of War Information may supply an insight into what happens when bureaus which came into existence since Pearl Harbor cease to exist. Except for changes in the top positions and discarding of the domestic branch, which always was a minor part of the operation, OWI seems to be a very live corpse.

Blanketed into the state department may be upwards of 5,000 OWI payrollers. They will continue, and expand, a worldwide plan of information dedicated to the purpose of teaching other nations more about this country, its people, their aspirations, their accomplishments. About 2,000 more have gone into the bureau of the budget to continue their present assignment, which is publication of the United States government manual. Closing of the domestic branch actually affected fewer than 200 jobs in Washington.

Larger, actually, than OWI's foreign branch will be the informational office of the state department, for it will include also the public relations section of the office of coordinator of Inter-American affairs, which beams its material to points south of the Rio Grande and which heretofore functioned independently of OWI.

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

DREW PEARSON

FINDING MEN FOR FEDERAL JOBS

WASHINGTON.—Few people realize it but President Truman spends a lot of time these days trying to persuade people to take important federal appointments.

An illustration was the tussle he had with 40-year-old Wilson Wyatt, mayor of Louisville, Ky., just appointed federal housing czar.

Wyatt was first offered just about every job in the book. Postmaster General Hannegan tried to get him to serve on the important civil aeronautics board, also to accept the job Jim McGranery wants to resign as assistant to the attorney general, one of the key spots in the justice department.

The civil aeronautics board job really tempted Wyatt, and he asked for a few days to think it over. Next day he got a phone call.

TRUMAN PLEADS.

"This is the President calling," said a voice at the other end of the phone.

"Mr. President, I've been thinking," Wyatt said, "and I'm afraid I'm going to have to turn down that civil aeronautics job."

"That's swell," replied the President. "I have a more important job for you. Please come back here right away."

Next day, Wyatt appeared at the White House, where Truman told him about the tough job of coordinating housing.

"I consider this housing situation the most important problem confronting the country today," explained the President. "If we don't solve this one, we'll really be in trouble in a year and a half."

"But, Mr. President," said Wyatt. "I'm afraid I can't afford a federal job. I want to go back home and practice law. I need the money."

"I know you want to go back to your law practice," Truman said. "I know you want to make some money. But I don't like being President either. However, I feel I have to do it, so I'm doing it."

Then, staring at Wyatt sharply, he said, "How can I do a good job if fellows like you aren't willing to come up here and help me?"

This made a deep impression on Wyatt. Next day he called at the White House for five minutes. Walking into the executive office, he said, "Mr. President, I've come in to surrender."

Ordinarily it is the work of a cabinet officer to tender a man a job. But now Truman finds he has to phone men personally and beg them to work for the government. The other day, Truman who resents criticism of his numerous Missouri appointments, told one visitor:

"People complain about all these Jackson county (Kansas City) appointments. But whenever I try to appoint someone else, they are too busy making money. At least the Jackson county boys are willing to take the jobs."

NOTE—Actually most top federal appointees can get jobs paying twice as much outside the government. Wyatt received only \$5,000 a year as mayor of Louisville, could be making \$50,000 a year practicing law.

TRUMAN'S FIRST SENATE SESSION.

Gen. Dwight Eisenhower went over big at his first meeting as chief of staff with members of the senate military affairs committee. It was an off-the-record affair, for which the senators went across the Potomac to Eisenhower's office in the Pentagon building for luncheon.

Sitting over coffee and French brandy which he had just brought back, Eisenhower spoke frankly about Soviet Russia and other matters, including co-operation with congress in running the army. Discussing his experiences as the chief U. S. representative on the Allied control commission in Germany he declared:

"If the American people had a chance to study the Russians at close range, and vice versa, I am certain there would be a fine mutual understanding and respect between the two people. I rubbed elbows with Marshal Zhukov and others and have a high regard for them. We enjoyed splendid co-operation. I was always able to get along with them."

"What most people don't realize is that the Russians are a good deal like us. They enjoy life like we Americans, are full of fun and have a fine sense of humor."

The general said he held no fears about future amicable relations between our own country and Soviet Russia. There will have to be some give-and-take in our relations, he said, but eventually things will work out well.

Regarding his own relations with congress, Eisenhower declared:

"This is a people's army and I intend to run it like one, along democratic lines and in close accord with congress. I am especially anxious to get along with the military affairs committees of both houses."

NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS

By PAUL MALLON

Released by Western Newspaper Union.
ADAMANT ATTITUDE WILL GIVE US MORE POWER

WASHINGTON.—Sec. of State Byrnes goes to Moscow! He says the Iranian government will make the trek also. So both Mohammed and the mountain go to Moscow.

The senate, as all knowing individuals here, is worried. Realizing this, before his departure, the state secretary took both the senators and the press into his confidence in off-the-record meetings.

The attitude of the worried senators and individuals is this:

The Truman-Byrnes foreign policy has been working well, by comparison with the appeasement policy of the Roosevelt administration, designed to goad the Russians to ever greater war against the Nazis.

We have not established much except our position in China. We have lost in Iran. The Russians are in the process of conquering that country.

But at least we have not lost abjectly. We have won and lost, by defending our position, the Roosevelt Atlantic charter, against make-believe freedom.

We ceased our losing because we had an adamant attitude, for what we believed was right. Does Mr. Byrnes' trip to Moscow mean we have abandoned that attitude?

ATOMIC BOMB MAY BE USED AS APPEASEMENT

Frankly, the senators think it may. They think generally appeasement of Britain (with money) is to be followed by appeasement of Russia (with atom bombs, concessions, eye-blinking regarding Iran, China and similar pretensions that conquest of Europe and Asia by Russia is unthinkable).

The mere fact that Mr. Byrnes goes to Moscow with atom bomb in hand reminds them of Chamberlain at Munich. That also meant "peace in our time." Remember?

Their understanding is reinforced by two facts which I think have been unpublished, certainly have not been mentioned prominently:

(1) Mr. Byrnes dropped his adviser Jimmy Dunn for the Moscow trip (Dunn had been charged by Moscow enthusiasts as being Fascist, Catholic and otherwise unsympathetic with Moscow causes), and (2) Mr. Byrnes is taking in Dunn's place Freeman Mathews, a butterfly diplomat, who has skipped around the world in his assignments, yet never got the reputation of being against Russian interests.

Mr. Byrnes is also taking John Carter Vincent, head of the far eastern division, which Pat Hurley said was sabotaging American foreign policy (the Democrats sure stopped Hurley, didn't they, Senator Connally?)

In answer and apology to this line of thought, Mr. Byrnes' people explain a crisis of the United Nations organization is now at hand, due to Russian lack of co-operation. If UNO is to be saved, Mr. Byrnes must save it at Moscow, they say.

Unless Molotov shows up at the January 7 meeting of the assembly in London, it will mean Russia has turned thumbs down on the Roosevelt formula for world peace.

REGULAR MEETINGS OF FOREIGN MINISTERS

The meeting has been advertised as a routine assemblage of the foreign ministers, as promised by Stalin to Roosevelt and Churchill at Yalta. My inside information is that Mr. Byrnes went to his office on a recent Sunday and began reading the Yalta agreements. They say he found the agreements calling for meetings of the foreign ministers every three months. (They also called for independence of Iran.) These meetings had not been held.

The publicity men may claim that the San Francisco conference came in April (against Yalta's January) and Potsdam came in July, and London in September—but these were not meetings of the foreign ministers as prescribed. The only one which was what was prescribed was the London gathering in September, and it broke up in complete failure, due to Russian opposition.

Mr. Byrnes thought, my departmental informants tell me:

How about another foreign ministers' meeting? He got Russian consent first (he needed it after the straight Moscow rebuff of his Iranian note requesting early Russian withdrawal of troops from Iran).

In the face of the President, Mr. Byrnes asserted the White House had confused the distinction between colossal Big Threes (Truman, Atillee and Stalin) and ordinary Big Threes (Molotov, Bevin and Byrnes).

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ASK ME ANOTHER?

A General Quiz

The Questions

1. How many crimes are actually mentioned in the Constitution?
2. What is an eleemosynary institution?
3. How did Stephan Decatur meet his death?
4. If a President of the United States were impeached, what body would try the case?
5. In what year were the women of the United States given the right to vote?
6. In South Africa what is a kraal?

The Answers

1. One, treason.
2. An almshouse.
3. In a duel.
4. The senate.
5. In 1920.
6. A village of natives.

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BARBS . . . by Baukhage

The British tried paying a head bounty for every rat killed in rat-ridden Hong Kong. They gave it up . . . the enterprising Chinese started rat breeding farms to make more money.

The Japanese women's federation suggests that every Japanese woman give up her kimono to raise funds for food imports. Strip for warmth.

It is the boast of the Koreans that it was through them that Chinese culture reached the Japanese and led them out of the Dark Ages. The Japanese idea of repayment was to return the Dark Ages to Korea.

Faver Castle in Nuernberg was "modernized" by a rich wife. Now, during the Nuernberg trials, 300 guests share the three bathrooms.