Echo of Bombs Induces Science Aid

Scientists for Unhampered Freedom in Research Work

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The bomb which leveled Hiroshima and has since been echoing in the Pacific did something to congress that could not have been done before the explosion. It induced the senate to loosen the public purse strings to the extent of voting to subsidize a national scientific research foundation.

Scientists don't have many votes, so the persuasion couldn't have come by way of a lobby. The public imagination had been stirred. Suddenly the layman realized that science was a powerful factor in war. He realized too that perhaps men who could smash the atom and make it smash the enemy, might learn how to use the powers of the sleeping giant—atomic energy—for the good as well as the ill of mankind.

At this writing congress has not completed action of the bill but probably will have done so by the time these lines are read. The idea of a national research program seemed very good to me. Therefore, I was somewhat surprised to hear a pharmacological authority of my acquaintance say that passage of this legislation "would be as destructive in the field of science" as the bomb was in the midst of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He made the observation in a group, several of whom were scientists. His hearers appeared to echo his sentiments—sentiments which I later learned he had set forth in the recent Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors. He (Dr. Theodore Koppanyi) said: "In an analysis of the bill, a basic wrong immediately leaps to the eye. This is the assumption that scientific research can be 'initiated' or 'prescribed for.' If this assumption could be grounded, the natural sequel to a national research foundation would be federal foundations to 'initiate' and 'prescribe for' the composition of music, the painting of pictures, the writing of poems, and the establishment of social controls and education, for science is probably the most personal and individualistic of all human endeavors. No agency, however authorized and directed, can develop a national policy for scientific research."

Difficult to Pass On Projects

The theories and ways of thinking of scientists, Dr. Koppanyi explained (and his colleagues agreed), are as diverse as the world itself.

"How can we set up a court with the power to pass on what is good and what is not good for science?" he asked, and then he turned to me with this question: "Would you approve of having a member of your profession—a commentator or newswriter—appointed by a President of the United States, as head of a similarly selected group of your colleagues who were made privy to private government information, which was barred from other speakers or writers?"

Naturally I said: "No." (That would be the end of the freedom of the press and radio.)

Then Dr. Koppanyi concluded: "You can spend a lot of money and get no return. But if you trust in human ingenuity, motivated by desire of public service, the love of science, recognition, and maybe selfish aims alike, you will have done more for basic science than you could ever do with billions of dollars of federal money."

Social Science Study Lags

Spokesmen for the so-called social sciences (the study of people, of individuals and groups) were loud in criticizing the omission from the bill of provisions for research in this field.

An engineer spoke for the social scientists in these words: "We've gone miles ahead in our study of inaminate things, in physics, chemistry and the other sciences that deal with inorganic matter, compared to our advancement in the study of human beings—why they act the way they do under given conditions, their relations to other individuals and to groups, and the action of the groups in relation to each other."

He spoke of the recent pogrom in Kielce, Poland, where the Jews were attacked and killed. It all started from a false rumor, a planted rumor. The very same thing, the engineer pointed out, touched off the riots three years ago in Detroit. Those are known facts but there is very little public knowledge of what causes such action, how it can be prevented.

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Possession Is Law to Russ

Russian expropriation of Austrian property and her delaying tactics in the setting of the peace conference date seem to be predicated on the theory: Why start any discussions of who gets what if you can operate on the old theory that possession is nine points of the law?

Possession is an important factor. Take the recent experience of a Philadelphia horse. Around midnight one night a horse walked into a residential district and began devouring gardens of dahlias, morning-glories, snapdragons and other flowers. The infuriated householders tried to shoo the horse away, but he kicked at them and went right on expropriating the bourgeois blooms. However, in the good old American tradition, a policeman appeared with a rope and lassoed the beast. He was removed to the police stables where he couldn't exercise a veto on this purely procedural process.

This subversive tendency in the animal world was revealed in another part of Philadelphia at about the same time. Returning from a week-end, a householder and his family who had started a counter revolutionary campaign against what they thought to be a harmless mouse, found a large-sized rat in the trap they had set. The rat with the trap attached as a minor incumbrance went right after the family which climbed tables and chairs. This time when the cop came he felt aggressive warfare justifiable and finished the rat with his reactionary night-stick.

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Congress' Work Is Never Done

Congressmen invariably come to work January 14 brisk of step, bright of eye, confident they'll have all the bills passed, all the necessary business disposed of by July 1 at the latest, so they can go home to their fences.

The old timers, of course, know they are just kidding themselves.

Business is never completed by July 1, though they work from sun to sun for, like woman's, congress' work is never done. Consequently, fishing trips, motor jaunts, and important electioneering have to be postponed while house and senate members labor in Washington heat to complete last-minute legislation.

This year, it was the OPAgony that fevered congressional brows late into July. Debate was so furious, night sessions were so frequent that I wasn't surprised when I heard a man in the visitor's gallery of the capitol ask: "Why did they wait so long to get at the OPA bill? Seems to me they always have a lot of stuff left to do at the end of a session that they could have taken up earlier. Do they always let it go so long that these closing days sound like a rowdy jam session?"

I reported this remark to a man who knows Capitol Hill, as you and I know the short-cut home.

"There are no jams in congress," he answered as he inhaled another tablespoonful of the famous senate restaurant bean soup.

"Not even on OPA?" I modestly needled.

"No," he said, "but I'll admit they came to a near-jam when they had to work like the dickens to get the bill to the President before the OPA expired. But they did get it to him (he was talking about the first OPA bill)—and it was better than a lot of people had expected. That was no jam."

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Chester Bowles has passed from the Washington scene, his head bloody but unbowed, and full of thoughts of further battle. We'll see what happens in the next senatorial elections in the Nutmeg state.

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Want to know how to live with the atom? You can rent a cartoon film that will panic you (in both senses of the word) from the National Committee on Atomic Information. Write this column for details.

PROTEST STRIKES . . . In protest against soaring prices following end of OPA controls, buyers' strikes were planned throughout the nation under instigation of unions, veterans' groups, consumers councils and other organizations. Typical is this scene showing St. Louis housewives picketing a dairy in protest against the entire dairy industry in St. Louis, where milk prices have risen 15 per cent and butter 23 per cent.

NEWS REVIEW

Wheeler, Veteran Senator, Defeated; Talmadge Wins

POLITICS:

Beat Wheeler

Political observers studied the campaign in the Democratic senatorial primary in Montana for a clue to the cause of defeat of the veteran Burton K. Wheeler, with a variety of reasons appearing to contribute to his downfall.

Since the rugged veteran led the non-interventionist cause before Pearl Harbor, the Japanese attack on the U. S. and the swing of American sentiment toward effective world co-operation were seen to have acted strongly against him. But because of the closeness of his defeat, the CIO-PAC fight against him, the opposition of the powerful railroad brotherhoods and the diversion of the main strength of the Democratic organization to his opponent, Leif Erickson, could have weaned enough votes away from him to spell defeat.

Winding up 24 years of senatorial service, Wheeler said: ". . . . The people of Montana have been very good to me. . . . Those who voted in the Democratic primary have relieved me of a great responsibility and a lot of work. . . . Probably I have lost many supporters because I did not go along blindly with a Democratic administration in the last few years, but I could not sacrifice my principles. . . ."

Return Talmadge

Georgia's gubernatorial election shared the national spotlight with Montana's senatorial race, with fiery, red-suspendered Gene Talmadge making his bid for a fourth term on a platform of "white supremacy."

Despite the fact that his No. 1 opponent, James V. Carmichael, rolled up an impressive popular vote, Talmadge took an early lead in the decisive unit voting in which winners are determined by the number of counties they carry.

Against a background of a U. S. Supreme court decision opening Democratic primaries in the South to Negroes, and another court ruling forbidding segregation on interstate buses, Talmadge conducted a vigorous "white supremacy" campaign. With Georgia's state administration under retiring Gov. Ellis Arnall making no effort to curb the colored vote, more than 100,000 Negroes flocked to the polls, separate booths being set up in some election stations.

INVENTORIES:

Hit Hoarding

Hitting at the withholding of merchandise from the market in anticipation of higher prices, Civilian Production administration drew up stringent inventory controls on manufacturers of electrical appliances and other scarce goods.

At the same time, CPA disclosed that exports may be limited if shippers move out a flood of goods at high prices to badly depleted foreign markets. Restoration of OPA price control would make such a step unnecessary, it was said.

Under CPA regulations, inventories of finished goods would be restricted to 30 days. Included are refrigerators, furniture, washing machines, electric ranges, sewing machines, vacuum cleaners, cameras, asphalt and tarred roofing, insect screen cloth and galvanized ware.

JUSTICE:

Free Spy Suspect

The jury had just returned a verdict of not guilty on five charges of spying against 30-year-old Nicolai Redin, Russian naval lieutenant. Elated by the finding, the stocky defendant rose to his feet, crossed to the jury box and shook hands with the seven men and five women.

"Ladies and gentlemen of the jury," he said in heavily accented tones, "I want to thank you for the fair trial I have received here in America." Then shaking hands with Judge Lloyd Black, he declared: "The friendship between our two countries has existed and will exist."

Redin's acquittal followed Judge Black's censure of the prosecution for building up the international aspects of the case, with their implications of U. S. and Russian differences. Arrested in Portland, Ore., last March as he was about to board a ship for Russia, he was charged with obtaining and attempting to transmit secret plans of the new 14,000-ton destroyer tender, USS Yellowstone.

NO LEFT-OVERS . . . Food is where you find it, and in famine-stricken Europe it is a rarity to find even one can in a refuse heap that is not entirely empty. The slim chance that someone inadvertently might have left a bit of food prompted this hungry Viennese to stop during his lunch hour to investigate.

SET-ASIDE TERMINATED

Wheat Sale Requirement Ends

Producer wheat set-aside requirements, under which it was mandatory for wheat farmers to sell half the grain from the 1946 crop that they took to elevators or warehouses for storage, have been terminated by the government. The set-aside provision had been inoperative since June 30, final effective date of grain ceilings.

Action to eliminate the requirement preceded final vote on the senate version of the new price control bill, which as it now stands, makes it mandatory for the government to issue certificates protecting producers forced to sell their grain through a government order against a price rise in the next nine months.

Favors Revision.

No announcement was made regarding other provisions of the set-aside, contained in an amendment to war food order No. 144, and overall wheat control regulation. However, it is known that officials in the department of agriculture favor changing the set-aside to the terminal level in place of country level if congress returns ceilings to wheat.

The set-aside became effective last May, and unofficial estimates place the amount of wheat purchased prior to July 1 under this procurement plan at about 37 million bushels.

Ends Obligation.

Removal of the producer part of the requirement automatically removes the department from obligation to any congressional directive guaranteeing farmers against a price rise, while retaining the machinery for siphoning off 250 million bushels of wheat for the export program as it is marketed.

If price control on wheat is eliminated, the government will have to set up new procurement machinery, officials admitted, but said that there is no change in the heavy export goal.

The Washington MERRY-GO-ROUND

By DREW PEARSON

IRATE OVER PROSTITUTION

WASHINGTON.—Admiral Nimitz is trying to hush it up, but a hot row has broken out in the navy's chaplain division over alleged discrimination against chaplains with combat records, some of whom have been denied admission into the regular navy and others transferred to minor posts.

Four well-known chaplains already have resigned as a result of the dispute. They are:

Capt. William A. McGuire, Catholic chaplain of the 11th naval district at San Diego—a 29-year naval veteran who served as fleet chaplain at Pearl Harbor at the outbreak of the war.

Capt. Maurice Witherspoon, Presbyterian, former All-America football star at Washington-Jefferson college and one of the most popular chaplains in the navy.

Capt. William W. Edel, Methodist, who also chalked up a fine record as a combat chaplain.

Capt. Raymond Drinan, Catholic, former chaplain of the battle-scarred airplane carrier Enterprise.

In addition to the claim of combat chaplains that they are being relegated to minor roles while their non-combat colleagues get the top commands, many also are sore over the navy's failure to crack down on prostitution in Japan.

A number of Protestant and Catholic chaplains who served in the Pacific contend that the navy is abetting the growth of prostitution in Tokyo by an indifferent policy in regard to the Yoshiwaras.

These chaplains further charge that those who have fought prostitution in Tokyo have been disciplined for their efforts — among them, Comdr. O. B. Cook, who was transferred from Tokyo to Guam.

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PAUL PORTER A-BOMBED

Chester Bowles, who stepped out of government after tough years of battling inflation, is a close friend of Paul Porter. The two fought side by side—Bowles as economic stabilizer, Porter as administrator of OPA. When Bowles resigned, Porter, left to fight the inflation battle alone, wrote a note.

"I now feel," Porter told his former chief, "like a native whom the navy forgot to remove from Bikini just before the atom bomb exploded."

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FILIBUSTER AGAINST A-BOMB

It's Southerners who have the reputation for filibustering, but three northern Republicans are conducting a filibuster more secret and just as skillful as that of any Dixie Democrat. It's against the atom control bill—vital to the nation.

They know the house will pass the senate-approved McMahon bill for control of atomic energy if it comes to a vote; so for two weeks three Republicans have kept the bill bottled up in the military affairs committee by stalling at every turn.

The three filibusters are Parnell Thomas of New Jersey, Forrest Harness of Indiana and Charles Elston of Ohio.

Many committee members gave up an evening for a special session in order to complete the bill and give the U. S. a policy to back up Barney Baruch in the United Nations.

Half an hour after the time set for the meeting they lacked a quorum, and Ohio's recalcitrant Elston would not let them proceed. Only one more member was needed.

Finally Congresswoman Clare Booth Luce of Connecticut phoned that she was on her way to the committee room from her office five floors above. But while she was in the elevator, Elston grabbed his hat and left so there still would be no quorum.

Thus a dozen conscientious congressmen were forced to waste more than an hour, and Bernard Baruch was left high and dry before the United Nations with no law on the statute books to back him up.

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IRKED OVER PALESTINE

It wasn't announced, but Prime Minister Attlee sent a confidential message to President Truman informing him that British troops had taken repressive measures against Jewish elements in Palestine. However, the message arrived only after British troops already had moved in.

Attlee asked Truman for a public statement of support, but the President was so irked at the way Attlee acted first and advised him afterward, that he phoned acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson and told him to issue a statement keeping American skirts clear of the British move.

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MERRY-GO-ROUND

John Snyder kept bobbing into the cabinet room during drafting of Truman's OPA veto message. He wanted to lend a hand in writing the speech but nobody gave him any encouragement. The speech was written largely by OPA Boss Paul Porter, Reconversion Czar John Steelman and Judge Sam Rosenman. . . . The FBI already is digging into large-scale hoarding. Some very big manufacturing concerns may be implicated.

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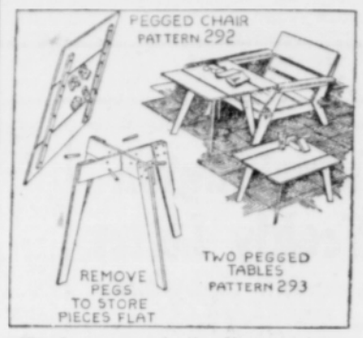

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