

White House Needs Business Basis

President of the U. S. Has Biggest Job in the World

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WASHINGTON, D. C.—Once more events bring up the so far unanswered problem, how can the White House be put on a business basis?



Baukhage

The White House executive offices are the headquarters of the biggest organization in the world. The President of the United States is the head of this tremendous administrative set-up. Few people realize the extent of his functions, most of which aren't even suggested in the constitution, and few laws define them. They have grown like Topsy.

We are reminded of the scope of the presidential duties by Willard Kiplinger in his "Washington Is Like That." He points out that the President as leader of his party runs the party policies through the national committee. Some times the party line isn't working. You recall the stew over meat? A meeting of Democratic party leaders, at the moment when the President was preparing to announce at a news conference that he opposed removing the controls on meat prices, passed a resolution asking Chairman Hannegan to confer with administrative officials concerning the removal of such controls.

The President, as the top executive, heads the executive set-up and he appoints the men who run the executive machinery. He can't talk to each one every day. When there is friction a hot-box often develops. There are plenty of examples in history from Ickes and Wallace, back to Lincoln and Seward, and before.

Chief Executive's Task Never Ends

The President issues "executive orders"—which someone has to write for him but which have the force of law—and the President must see that they are properly interpreted. Again there is trouble if these decrees tread on congressional prerogatives.

He has to get bills which he favors passed. Frequently he writes the first drafts of such bills with the help of his legal advisors. He is expected, if necessary, to "put the heat on" to get them through congress. This means a lot of work in conference with congressional leaders on the phone and through his personal agents. A tactless agent can easily upset the applecart. Remember how Tommy Corcoran used to get under the skin of congress? Many others, well intentioned and otherwise, who came and went, might be named.

The President has to make up the budget, with the help of the budget director. If the director makes mistakes or asks for too much or too little, it is the White House that takes the rap. This involves billions.

He appoints the Justices of the Supreme court and federal judges. A bad choice may be fatal, and yet one person can't know the personal history of every likely candidate. In this sense the President forms the legal thinking of his era.

He is not only his own and his party's but also the nation's chief publicity man. A slip of the tongue not only can lose an election, but also could start a war. If war comes, he has to run it, for the strategy in the field is based on broad objectives decided at home. It was by no means merely military opinion which decided when and where the invasion of Europe took place.

These are only a few of the things a President has to think about. We have omitted mention of many minor but time-consuming matters such as whether the architectural beauty of the White House shall be altered with a new wing, or where some visiting potentate shall sit at the table. All full of dynamite.

It was the death of Woodrow Wilson which brought the presidential workload to public attention. He died, as much from overwork as from his disappointment over repudiation of the League of Nations. Serious study of the problem of furnishing a means to lighten the presidential burden began shortly thereafter, but it was not until 1939 that a specific plan was drawn up and submitted to congress. Among other suggestions for various departmental reorganizations, the plan created a presidential staff of "executive assistants."

About all the public knows about this corps of assistants is that they are supposed to possess a "passion for anonymity." The other thing about them, which isn't usually admitted, is that they have never functioned properly. That, at least, is the private opinion of one insider who has watched them come and go

from the beginning. The reason is simple: People who expect a decision on an important matter won't take it from anyone but the President himself.

Must Keep Close Check on Aides

A pitiful example of the breakdown of the White House machinery was the recent Wallace ruckus. The President never need have been placed in the position he was.

It is not a President's job to read over every document submitted to him. No head of a business as big as the government would dream of trying to do that. But somebody should have read both the Wallace memorandum on foreign policy and the Wallace speech and apprised the President of what they contained and implied. Whether it is the President's fault that he didn't have properly experienced hired help, is another matter. That his hired help didn't function, caused the damage.

An explanation, if not an excuse, has been offered in this case. The job of reading over public statements of administration members to see that they didn't conflict was handled by the OWI during the war. Before that the White House machinery had always taken care of such matters. That machinery had not been again set in motion when OWI ceased to function.

The fault was not that the President didn't prevent the Wallace-Byrnes clash, but that he was not prevented from preventing it. I can think of only one similar bad mistake made by President Roosevelt which parallels the Wallace mix-up and it was due to a similar but not the same cause. It involved the highly technical question of the public debt. An "assistant," supposed to be an expert, furnished the figures on which the President based an important public statement. The eagle-eyed financial writers caught it. The "expert" was called to account; he furnished new figures, was wrong again and caught again. The President was forced to make a second public correction.

The duties of a President are simply too great for any one man. So Presidents have always had personal advisors, some times they were given an office, some times they had no official title—like Colonel House in the Wilson regime. Today we hear little about presidential "administrative assistants" but we hear a great deal about a group of "advisors" who have failed to function properly in spite of the fact that unlike the executive assistants they lack authority. These advisors are too "close" to the President. And they have been criticized by other members of the administration for standing between department heads, the congressional and party leaders. They are all old, close, personal friends of the President. They are inexperienced in government.

Whether President Truman's little circle of "cronies" has helped or hindered him is beside the question. No one can dispute the fact that they were chosen because of their loyalty rather than because of their experience. The question is whether presidential duties, as they exist today, can be delegated even to a well-trained, highly capable staff.

They can, is the answer, if such a staff is not blocked by higher authorities who, from motives of love, hate, politics, religion, temperament, taste or previous condition of servitude, use such authority, other than in the public good.

Telephone calls at the rate of four a minute asking answers to radio quiz questions were reported destroying the morale of a Brooklyn library. From now on the line is quizzy.

The President has a new "Sacred Cow." The winged ruminant as it browses in the Washington airport puts the other big transport planes in the calf-class.



VERSION OF NEW GERMANY . . . Baseball, favorite pastime of American youth, now is being played by the younger generation of Germans. American troops direct youngsters in a game of ball in the very shadows of Nuernberg jail, where top Nazi criminals were tried.

NEWS REVIEW

Parley Approves Italian Peace over Red Protest

PARIS: Italian Pact

Following a pitched warning from Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov against the division of the world into eastern and western blocs, the Paris peace conference approved the proposed treaty for Italy.



Molotov

Because it considered the treaty opposed to the interests of its Yugoslav ally, Russia led the bitter fight against adoption of the pact. Championing Yugoslavia's cause, Molotov shouted that Russia would not permit the western powers to dictate to the "new Slavic democracies," and reiterated Lenin's axiom that "a people which takes its destiny into its own hands is invincible."

The Russian bloc's objections to the treaty centered against establishment of a strong, neutral government for the key port of Trieste, and creation of a new Italo-Yugoslav border.

A strong governor would deprive the mixed Italian-Yugoslav population of its self-rule, Molotov declared in calling for a powerful constituent assembly. An alliance of Italian Yugoslav Communists would have given the Reds control of the strategic city.

MEAT: Predict Plenty

In pressing the administration to decontrol livestock, the beef industry advisory committee declared that there were sufficient cattle in the country to meet the requirements of the next 12 months but



WAR ORPHAN . . . Striking a pose of an American child movie actor, 2-year-old Valdemar Gauko is one of 21 German war orphans arriving in United States to be placed in foster homes.

they were being kept from market because of price inequities.

Citing department of agriculture statistics, the committee said there were 80 million head of cattle and calves on farms Jan. 1, of which 40 million were available for meat. Despite heavy marketings this summer, 52 million head of cattle were available for meat by Sept. 24-30.

Estimating that supplies will be fully 15 per cent above requirements, the committee concluded that there would be 72.5 pounds of beef and veal per person from Oct. 1, 1946, to Oct. 1, 1947. This compares with 60.6 pounds per capita in the 15 year prewar base period.

GREECE:

Inflation-Ridden

With goods and "hard" money scarce, inflation is riding high in Greece. A full meal without wine now costs more than \$4 and second-hand clothing sells at \$150 to \$200 and shoes at \$30.

As in all inflation-ridden countries, the dollar commands a premium in national exchange. While the official rate is 500 drachmas to the dollar, speculators offer as much as 6,500 drachmas for a dollar. By selling dollars, then reconvertng their drachmas to U. S. currency again, Americans can make a pretty profit.

Indicative of the Greek government's desire for "hard" money, employees of the American embassy who are paid in gold flow from the U. S. receive 17,000 drachmas per dollar. This is three times the ordinary official rate.

Because there is no food rationing or price control over staple items, Greek white collar workers paid on fixed salaries are especially hit. To procure essentials, they must deal in the black market, make connections with government or business officials, or sell personal belongings to obtain sufficient money for purchases.

WAGES:

Production Bonus

In addressing the American Management association in Boston, F. D. Newbury, vice president of Westinghouse Electric corporation, advanced a new formula for keeping postwar wages and prices within bounds.

Newbury's plan calls for maintaining basic wage and salary rates at their present level and payment to employees of additional income in proportion to increased volume of production, ability to pay and efficiency of the individual organization.

Stating that the proposal could not be called a profit-sharing plan, he said that the bonus payments would be considered as part of operating costs, with employees entitled to the maximum a company could afford to pay. Terming the plan highly flexible, Newbury said that an enterprise could easily readjust its wages if business declined.

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Fruits of Genius Result Of Labor and Thought

Alexander Hamilton once said to an intimate friend: "Men give me some credit for genius. When I have a subject in hand I study it profoundly. Day and night it is before me. I explore it in all its bearings. My mind becomes pervaded with it."

"Then the efforts which I make the people are pleased to call the fruits of genius. It is the fruit of labor and thought."

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OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK

Peak Income Predicted in 1947

WASHINGTON.—Our national income will climb to a peak of 175 billion dollars in 1947 but will start tapering off toward the end of that year, according to a prediction of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

The predicted income would represent an increase of six per cent over this year's estimated 165 billion dollars, which is highest on record to date.

The bureau's 1947 estimates were contained in a report prepared for the agriculture department's outlook conference of farm officials. The bureau said a high level of domestic industrial activity and relatively full employment in most of 1947 will contribute substantially to higher consumer incomes.

It said industrial production, as measured by the Federal Reserve board index, may average as much as 10 per cent higher than this year and close to 85 per cent above the 1935-39 average. This prediction was hedged with the provision that production is not retarded by major labor-management disputes.

The bureau looks, however, for somewhat of a decline in industrial production in the latter part of the year, as a backlog of consumer demand for industrial products becomes more nearly satisfied. Such a downturn in production would be reflected in lower incomes of workers in affected industries.

Farm Income Drops.

While forecasting the rise in na-

tional income, the bureau said the net income of agriculture may be reduced as much as 10 to 15 per cent from 1946.

The farm income forecast is based on: (1) the premise that consumers will devote a larger part of their buying power to industrial goods which have been in short supply and less to food; (2) higher farm production costs.

Income of non-agricultural labor, on the other hand, is expected to increase 10 per cent next year, the bureau said, reflecting higher employment in the major part of the year and higher wages. The bureau said unemployment is expected to be somewhat heavier in 1947 than at present.