

Washington Digest

National Topics Interpreted
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Washington.—Farm leaders have gone before congress again to press a new agricultural program. Like several that have come through in the last half-dozen years, the new proposition is based on a subsidy. The current program, like the old AAA, is predicated on agreements by which farmers will not do something and be paid for not doing it. To obtain the subsidies from the federal treasury contemplated in the new farm legislation, farmers will have to sign contracts agreeing to curtail their acreages up to twenty per cent of their average cultivation for the last several years. If they fail or refuse to sign these contracts, the legislation describes them as not co-operating and, therefore, they would be denied the right to obtain loans from the federal government and they would not have a guarantee of "parity prices," as a penalty. Moreover, those farmers who failed or refused to co-operate in this manner would be subjected to prohibitive taxes on the sale of products grown in excess of limits on totals to be prescribed by Secretary Wallace of the Department of Agriculture.

The announced basis of this new program is for "conservation of the soil." Further, its sponsors contend that it will mean a gradual upbuilding of the fertility of the soil so that, in the end, fewer acres will have to be cultivated to produce the same volume of corn or cotton or wheat or whatever other crop is grown. But I think there are few individuals who will say that the above reasons honestly constitute the basis for this new farm legislation. I think it must be admitted that the plan is only a subterfuge; that, while it may help some farmers by giving them cash, it is pure politics with cash as a sop.

I am not one equipped to say that agriculture does not need a subsidy even though prices of farm products are now almost double what they were in 1933. It is entirely possible that farmers throughout the nation still need help in the form of cash. It may be the better part of wisdom to vote such payments as are contemplated in this new legislation. On the other hand, however, if there is that need then let us be honest about it. President Roosevelt lately has signed a new law which provides subsidies to shipping companies in order that America may have its own merchant marine, but those payments are to be called subsidies. They are not disguised nor concealed. It seems ridiculous, therefore, that the farm leaders should not be frank with the members of their organizations. If they feel that a subsidy is needed, why not put it up to congress that way so that those farmers who believe in subsidies as well as those who want to see agriculture left alone for awhile can understand what is going on.

I imagine that the farm leaders who are sponsoring the new legislation could scarcely have chosen a presentation of their program. I mean that, in presenting this type of legislation when congress is undergoing a wave of economy, the program is likely to receive scant consideration. It always has been the case that legislation goes through several stages of hauling and filling in congress with the result that after much debate a bill satisfactory to the majority emerges. In presenting their program at this time, therefore, the farm leaders are not doing a very good job of leading. There will be much agitation on the part of the farm leaders that will get just nowhere at all because of conditions in congress.

Edward A. O'Neal, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, recently was quoted as saying that the new plan would not require any payments direct from the treasury; that is, it would pay its own way through the medium of taxes if it "works perfectly." That is the rub. I find doubt in nearly all quarters that the plan can "work perfectly." It is so complex and requires such a bureaucracy for administration of it that to expect it to "work perfectly," is virtually to expect that legislation will control the weather. I think everyone will agree that congress and the administration has not yet been able to find the formula for controlling the weather.

I believe it can be said fairly that many farmers are dissatisfied with the soil conservation program adopted as a substitute for the AAA which the much criticized Supreme court held unconstitutional by a unanimous vote. Even those officials of the Department of Agriculture who are frank to admit that the soil conservation is not an effective means for controlling production. It does have merit as far as it goes in conserving the soil. But there is another phase: It has been pointed out too often almost to need repetition here that the soil con-

servation law, as occurred under the AAA, results in millions of dollars being paid to individuals and corporations who are in no way participating in conservation activities.

Now, while Mr. O'Neal thinks that the proposed law can be operated without expense to the federal treasury, there is yet the conviction in some quarters that it probably will cost about six hundred million dollars a year to pay the subsidies and pay for administration of the law. Six hundred million dollars a year is a large sum at any time and it bulks much larger at a time when there is a nation-wide cry for a balanced budget for the federal government. It is a sum that, if the budget of the federal government otherwise were balanced, would be sufficient to frighten thousands of holders of United States bonds.

It would seem then that the farm leaders ought to take into consideration the status of the federal government's financial affairs if they want to develop a program that will live. I have heard from many students of agricultural problems that the remedy for farm conditions is not an expensive new system of farm subsidies. They assert that it will be impossible for Uncle Sam to continue annual payments to some three million or more farmers and they are convinced, further, that most farmers themselves objected to being placed in the category of relief clients. An argument is also advanced that more and more farmers believe federal policies that cause money to be handed out free to farmers will, in the end, destroy the independence of agriculture. However that may be and however the majority of the farmers feel about receiving money gratis from the government at Washington, it cannot be said that agriculture is being placed on a sound footing by politicians and political farm leaders whose sole objective is to loot the treasury. Farmers would not permit it to happen to the governments of their states or their counties but a considerable number of them apparently have been persuaded that the government at Washington is something else.

The Department of Commerce which has supervision of airplane traffic has announced that it will not permit American pilots to participate in an air race that was proposed for this summer. The race was to have taken place from New York to Paris, but the Department of Commerce has vetoed the plan unequivocally because it considers the race as nothing more than a stunt.

It may occur to some that such a ruling by the Department of Commerce constitutes an interference with private business beyond reason. I cannot share that view. The experts have been unable to find in this proposed race any possibility of benefit for aviation nor any experimentation that would lead to more scientific flying. It has taken the position that there is too great a danger involved for those pilots who are foolhardy enough to undertake the three thousand two hundred mile flight across the ocean. Its position is further fortified with the argument that if any of the pilots should lose their lives in that type of aviation, it will cause many thousands of persons to lose faith in the airplane as a means of transportation. In short, the department thinks that there are only disadvantages and no advantages in the prospect.

While many persons may disagree with the position the department has taken, it is heartening to those of us who like to see private business encouraged, to know that a responsible federal agency charged with supervision of a private industry is again functioning as it was intended to do. For several years, the Department of Commerce, with particular respect to its aviation division, has been in a state of turmoil. There were wide differences of opinion and in consequence little in the way of permanent development was sponsored from Washington for the aviation industry.

In criticizing the government's inactivity, no observer would be fair unless he also called attention to the frailties and the failures of the industry itself. It is true that some of the larger lines lately have made sensational improvements in the equipment they use in the air and in the operations part of flying. It is true that larger and better planes have been built and are building. But it is likewise true that a number of airlines have adopted penurious, penny pinching policies and have refused to replace worn out and obsolete planes because they did not want to invest additional money. Until the air industry awakens to the necessity for spending money and until the Department of Commerce becomes a smooth functioning supervisory agent, the air travel of this country will not even approach the limit of its capacity.

NEWS NOTES OF THE NORTHWEST

A Brief Summary of Events of Special Interest to Oregon, Washington and Idaho Communities.

UNITY, Ore.—The first water from Burnt river has run through the tunnel at the Unity dam. The tunnel will take the flow through the fall while the dam is being constructed.

CHLOQUIN, Ore.—The city of Chloquin has transferred to the Klamath county school district an entire city block, which will be developed into an athletic field for Chloquin schools.

LA GRANDE, Ore.—Union county will send the largest delegation of 4-H boys and girls to the annual summer school at Oregon State college in its history. Forty-one will attend the courses.

MEDFORD, Ore.—Medford's water commissioners have warned that unless the usual waste of water is avoided this summer, service by meter impends. City homes are now charged a flat rate.

PASCO, Wash.—A program to extend over a period of years the improvement of the Columbia river beach at Pasco is planned by the Kiwanis club. The club's recent carnival brought \$620, which will form the nucleus of a fund for the improvement program.

GRANDVIEW, Wash.—The cherry growers of the Grandview district predict a fair crop, probably larger than last year's, providing the fruit is not damaged by rain. The crop is reported spotted, some having good crops, others virtually none, due to poor pollination weather.

TWIN FALLS, Ida.—Efforts are under way to have the toll charges eliminated from the Twin Falls-Jerome intercounty bridge, or to have the state purchase the bridge to permit improvement and reconstruction of United State highway 93, which crosses on the span.

BANDON, Ore.—Cheered by official report that Bandon's municipal debt was reduced \$211,800 between September 30, 1932, and May 15, 1937, Bandon's city council and rebuilding commission have raised their federal RFC loan application for rebuilding to \$407,500.

MARYSVILLE, Wash.—Six years ago, civic leaders of Marysville, organized their first strawberry festival. This year they are expecting a crowd of more than 4000 townspeople and visitors to join in the celebration set for June 17. The full day will be devoted to a parade, sports of all kinds, a baseball game and a dance at night.

MILTON, Ore.—P. J. Burk & Sons have established a new cannery here by leasing the cannery section of the Western Cider Vinegar works. Work has already started with canning of asparagus. Burk was operator of a cannery last year for the Burk Canning company, Milton, sold recently to large growers near Athena and Pendleton.

PRINEVILLE, Ore.—About 30 per cent of the total area of Crook county is forest land which supports a total of 5,315,990 board feet, log scale, of saw timber, according to an inventory of forest resources of the county made as part of a national survey. Thornton T. Munger, director of the Pacific northwest forest experiment station has announced. The inventory was written by Harry M. Wolfe and presents the extent, location and ownership of the forest lands; the volume, character and ownership of the standing timber, and the nature of the vegetative cover found in the county.

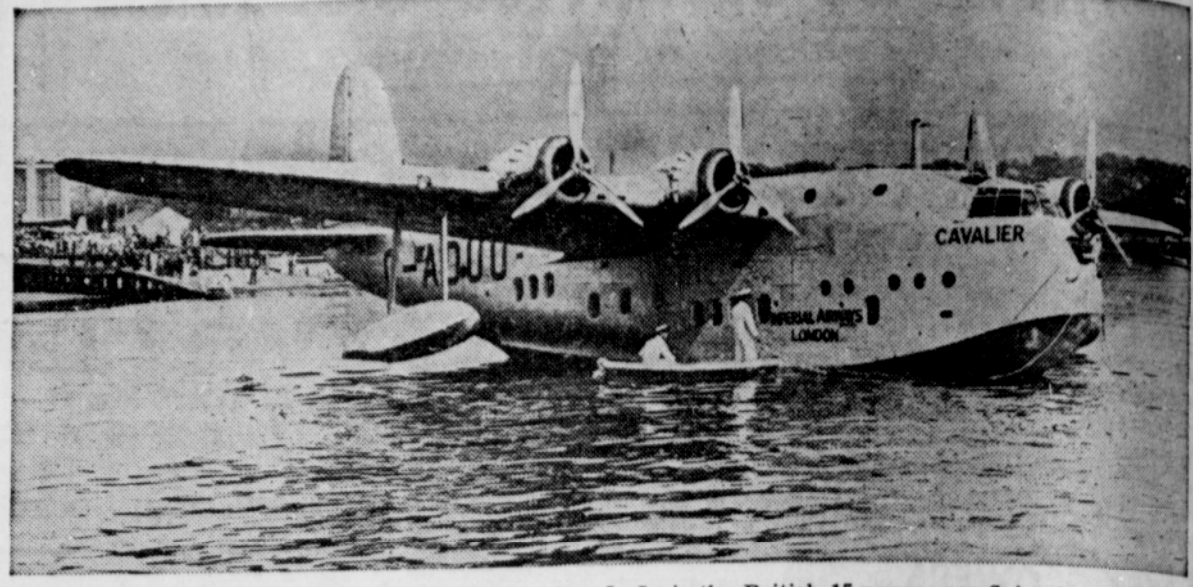
WANT SEALS SLAIN
TILLAMOOK, Ore. At a meeting of a committee of fishermen with the Tillamook Chamber of Commerce last week, the chamber was asked to lend support to some plan for extermination of seals in Tillamook bay. It is claimed that about 1000 seals are exterminating fish faster than fishermen can catch the fish. A plan suggested was bombing the seals, which lie on the spit, from an aeroplane.

LIKES TAXI TRAVEL
BELLINGHAM, Wash.—Another trip across the continent in a taxicab was under way last week by Katherine Bruen, who came here last week to get her brother, James. She found him ill in the county hospital, but he was able to start the return trip with her to Brewster, N. Y. John Prisco of Brewster is driving the taxi by the way of Lincoln highway. Miss Bruen said she chose a cab because she likes to travel in one.

PULLMAN, Wash.—Remodeling of the ground floor of Stevens hall, women's dormitory at Washington State college will be done this summer. The kitchen and dining room will be converted into living rooms to provide additional housing space.

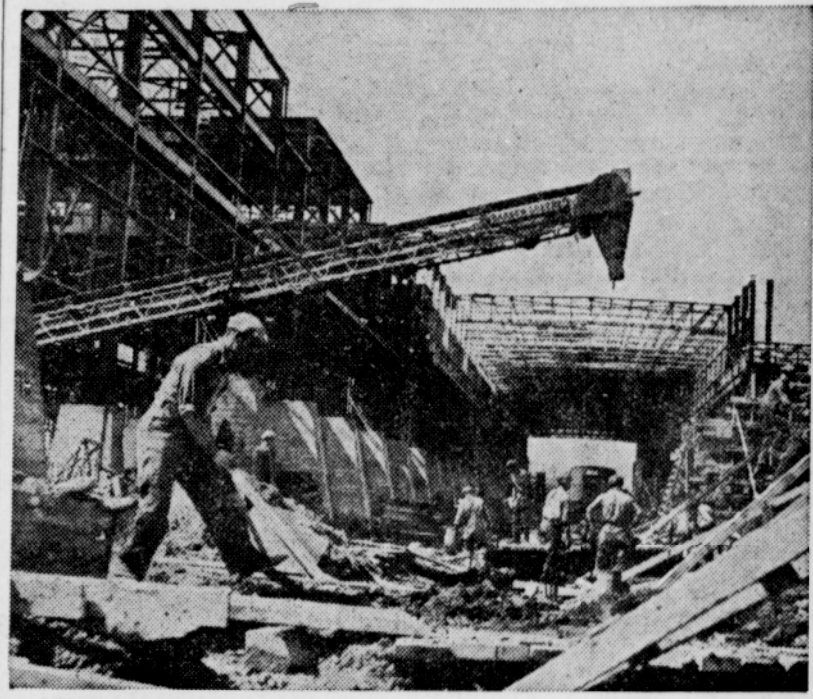
GOODING, Ida.—A pageant, covering the history of the town from 1907 down to 1937, was the principal feature of the commencement program of Gooding high school. No outside speaker was present and the whole class took part in the pageant.

British Plane Blazes Trail for Overseas Line



Pictured at the airway base at Port Washington, L. I., is the British 15-passenger flying boat "Cavalier" after completing the first east-west survey flight from Bermuda. These survey flights are in preparation for the eventual trans-Atlantic passenger service which will be jointly operated by the Imperial Airways and Pan-American Airways. Simultaneously with the Cavalier's flight, a Pan-American Sikorsky clipper made the west-east flight to Bermuda.

Ohio Will Have a "Little Ruhr"



A new "little Ruhr" is rising seven miles up the Cuyahoga river from Cleveland, Ohio, which will mark it as America's meeting grounds for iron ore and coal. The development is part of the Republic Steel corporation's program of expansion. A \$15,000,000 plant, shown above, is under construction, which, when completed, will be the world's most continuous strip mill.

BREAKS NARCOTIC RING



Miss Joyce McAllister, twenty-seven-year-old former Santa Barbara, Calif., college student, whose under-cover detective work is credited with leading to the arrest of seven Chinese and a veteran federal agent in raids on night clubs in the Chinese quarter of Reno, Nev. The sheriff's office and the federal narcotics bureau provided her with \$1,000 with which she bought narcotics, thus obtaining information leading to the arrests.

BLIND LECTURER



Miss Hazel Hurst, blind lecturer, shown being led up the gangplank of an Atlantic liner by her "seeing eye" companion, "Babe." Miss Hurst, with the aid of "Babe," was en route to France.

Mariner Plans Sea Cruise in Tub



Ernest Biegajski of Buffalo, N. Y., evidently believes in safety first, for he has put on a life preserver before hoisting sail and moving out into Lake Erie in his remodeled pickle barrel schooner in which he plans to go to Europe this summer if present experiments prove successful. This is the second such boat he has built with his soldier's bonus money. The 1936 model leaked so badly that only the timely arrival of the coast guard prevented its maiden voyage from turning into a tragedy.

Sons of Diamond Daddies Good at Baseball



These four stalwarts of the University of Florida baseball team ought to be pretty good at the national pastime—if there is anything in the theory of heredity. All are sons of famous major league fathers, whose names were household words a few years ago. Left to right are Ed Manning, twenty, son of Ed Manning, former pitcher for the St. Louis Browns; Lee Meadows, Jr., nineteen, son of Lee Meadows, old Pittsburgh Pirate; Jimmy Shotton, seventeen, son of Bert Shotton, a former St. Louis Cardinal, and Wilbur White, nineteen, whose father once played third for the Chicago White Sox.