

Washington Digest

National Topics Interpreted
By WILLIAM BRUCKART
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Washington.—Two actions of sections of the congress lately deserve more than ordinary attention. One of these was probably as courageous a position as any group of senators ever has taken. The other action—by majority of the house—was shot through with the utmost cowardice and selfishness.

Lately, a group of senators, nearly all Democrats, took their political lives in their hands and delivered to the senate a report from its judiciary committee advising defeat of President Roosevelt's proposal to add six new justices of his own choosing to the Supreme court of the United States.

In my time in Washington, I believe I can say without qualification, there never has been a committee action in the house or senate in which the President, as the leader of the dominant party, received such a castigation on a legislative proposal as was given Mr. Roosevelt by Democrats who constituted the majority of the senate judiciary committee. They did not mince words in any respect. What- ever may be the merit of Mr. Roosevelt's proposal to add six justices of his own choosing to the highest court, the majority report of the judiciary committee left no stone unturned in disclosing objections to the proposal as opponents of the court reorganization scheme see them.

Almost on the same day that senate Democrats were, in effect, breaking or revolting from the President's leadership, the Democratic majority in the house killed off a proposal for new taxes in the District of Columbia that would have resulted in taxing the salaries of representatives and senators and their office staffs. They were brazen about it. They were not going to vote an income tax upon themselves and they made no effort to conceal their reasons for refusing to accept the recommendations of a special tax subcommittee which was acting for the permanent committee in the house of the District of Columbia.

The District of Columbia committee, examining the budget for the seat of the federal government, was confronted with a deficit in the district finances and instructed its tax subcommittee to develop new sources of revenue in order that the District of Columbia might not get into debt. Among the taxes proposed was a tax on income of residents of the District of Columbia, which is synonymous with Washington, and it provided for taxing earnings here whether the person who earned the income was a resident of the capital city or not.

That was too much. The majority in the house of representatives just could not take it. They voiced their objections openly and, being superior in numbers to those who believed that income in the District of Columbia should be taxed, they forced the tax bill back to the District of Columbia committee for revision. Indeed, they went further. The line of criticism of an income tax that would touch the sacred salaries of congressmen and senators was such as to have the effect of forcing the committee to bring in a tax bill that would increase the tax on property in the federal area. Now, it is a fact that few members of the house and a very small number of senators have bought residences in Washington. They usually live in apartments or hotels or lease homes for the period that congress is in session. Consequently, a real estate tax will not concern most of the representatives and senators.

The indictment brought against the President's court plan by the senate judiciary committee was quite unusual in many respects.

In the first instance, it was approximately fifteen thousand words in length; being in that regard probably the longest and most comprehensive analysis that any congressional committee ever has made of a piece of legislation. Certainly, it is the most extensive examination to be included in a committee report in the last quarter of a century.

Every argument advanced by the administration in support of the plan was picked to pieces and held up to public gaze; every possible reason for expansion of the court by the addition of six new justices was scrutinized and denounced and, then, the committee put forth some of its own ideas.

"It applies force to the judiciary," the committee said in a sentence that constituted one paragraph and thereby was emphasized.

"The only argument for the increase which survives analysis," the report added, "is that congress should enlarge the court so as to make the policies of this administration effective."

The bill was found by the seven Democrats and three Republicans who constituted a majority of the senate judiciary committee, to be "a needless, futile and utterly dangerous abandonment of constitutional principle." It charged that the "American system" of independence of the courts would be violated and that if the bill were to be enacted into law, "political control" over the judiciary branch of the government would pass into the hands of the President.

With the presentation of this terrific attack on the bill to the senate, a second unusual circumstance developed. Those Democrats who were opposed to the President's proposal decided to go about the job of fighting the measure on the floor in a manner seldom seen in the congress. These opponents from the Democratic ranks got together and chose Senator Wheeler of Montana as leader of the Democratic opposition to the Democratic President's court revision program. They gave him full authority to act, including the selection of a steering committee, a committee on strategy, to aid him.

Thus, in the senate now we have three major leaders. Senator Wheeler will speak for the court opposition; Senator Robinson of Arkansas as the leader of the Democratic party in the senate will lead the fight for passage of the court bill; and Senator McNary of Oregon will head up the Republicans as usual. Since all of the Republicans and Independents excepting only Senator La Follette, Progressive, of Wisconsin, are opposed to the court revision plan, Senator McNary and Senator Wheeler are working hand in glove against the regular Democratic line-up headed by Senator Robinson.

It appears that the President is going to be badly defeated on this piece of legislation, but it is too early to be sure. Mr. Roosevelt is a powerful figure and he has political knowledge that must be described as remarkable. He has with him in the senate some exceedingly able political strategists. It is thus a battle of wits.

Mr. Roosevelt has said several times that he will accept no compromises. There is a very definite feeling at the Capitol, however, that the President will be glad to have a compromise if he can get one and save the bill from complete wreckage. On the other hand, Senator Wheeler and his strategy committee have announced in no uncertain terms that they will defeat the bill or any compromise that is offered. Time alone can answer the question of what will come out of the President's proposal. At this writing, the odds certainly are against the President on the proposition.

Speaking of taxes and the selfishness that was evident in the house action, as mentioned earlier,

Hunt Tax Eviders
The joint house and senate committee that is now under way. This committee, made up of five representatives and five senators has begun a search to find out how taxpayers avoid taxes or reduce the amounts they would otherwise have to pay by various trick schemes. The committee has been given fifty thousand dollars with which to make the investigation and it is receiving able assistance from Under Secretary Roswell Magill and other Treasury experts on taxation.

Contrary to the outlook when Mr. Roosevelt released a vicious attack on tax dodgers and tax avoiders, this committee is getting down to real business and there is every reason to believe it will be able to recommend to congress changes in the law that will stop some of the schemes and tricks to which large taxpayers have resorted.

I have sat in on a number of the hearings thus far, including the opening session when Secretary Morgenthau made the opening statement and disclosed to the satisfaction of everyone that he was not conversant with the problem at hand. Like the President, Mr. Morgenthau attempted to place the tax problem confronting the government on moral grounds. His statement did not click with the committee at all. With two or three exceptions, the committee members recognized the problem as purely a question of law and Senator Pat Harrison, Democrat of Mississippi, vice chairman, said that there was no point in making the investigation "a Roman holiday." Therefore, the thing settled down very quickly to an earnest study of cases where men have resorted to various kinds of subterfuges of law, to reduce their tax liability.

In this connection, it seemed to me that too much credit cannot be given Under Secretary Magill who apparently is anxious to get to the bottom of the problem.

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what Irvin S. Cobb thinks about:

The New NRA Bill.
SANTA MONICA, CALIF.— They do say the new NRA bill, as drawn by the Gallagher and Shean of the administration, Messrs. Corcoran and Cohen, is more sweeping than was the original NRA.

Even Gen. Hugh Johnson, once as conversational as Mrs. Astor's parrot, but lately exiled amid the uncongenial silences, crawls out from under a log in the woods with lichens in his hair, but the lower jaw still working smoothly in the socket, to tell how drastic a thing it is.

Critics assert this legislation will cover business like a wet blanket over a sick pup, and point out that the number of sick pups benefited by being tucked under wet blankets is quite small. However, these fussy persons belong to the opposition and don't count. Anyhow, they didn't count much at the last election except in Maine, Vermont and one backward precinct in the Ozark mountains.



Irvin S. Cobb

Friendly French Visitors.
IT SEEMS we were cruelly wrong in ascribing mercenary motives to those French financiers who've been dropping in on us lately. They came only to establish more cordial relations. Of course, there's a new French bond issue to be floated, but these visits were purely friendly and altruistic.

Still and all, I can't help thinking of Mr. Pincus, who invaded the east side to invite his old neighbor, Mr. Ginsburg, whom he hadn't seen in years, to be a guest at Mrs. Pincus' birthday party.

He gave full directions for traveling uptown, then added: "Were we lif now it's von of dose swell walk-up flats. So mit your right elbow you gif a little poosh on the thoid button in the doorjam downstairs and the lock goes glick-glick and in you come. You go up two floors und den, mit your other elbow, you gif one more little poosh on the foist door to the left und walk in—und vill mommer be surprised!"

"Vait," exclaimed Mr. Ginsburg. "I could get to that Bronxix. I got brains, ain't it? But also I got fingers und thumbs. Vot is de pooshmit-elbows stuff?"

Murmured Mr. Pincus gently: "Surely you vouldn't come empty-handed!"

Visiting Ancient Ranchos.
UNDER the guidance of Leo Carillo, that most native of all native sons, I've been visiting such of the ancient ranchos as remain practically what they were before the Gringos came to southern California. You almost expect to find Ramona weaving in a crumbly patio.

What's more, every one of these lovely places is lived on by one of Leo's cousins. He has more kin-folks than a microbe. They say the early Carillos were pure Spanish, but I insist there must have been a strong strain of Belgian hare in the stock. When it came to progeny, the strain was to the Pacific coast what the Potomac shad has been to the eastern seaboard. It's more than a family—it's a species.

And a mighty noble breed it is—producing even yet the fragrant essence of a time that elsewhere has vanished and a day when hospitality still ruled and a naturally kindly people had time to be mannerly and the instinct to be both simple and grandly courteous at once.

Privileges of Nazidom.
THE German commoner may be shy on the food rations and have some awkward moments unless he conforms to the new Nazi religion. But he enjoys complete freedom of the press—or rather, complete freedom from the press. And lately another precious privilege has been accorded him.

He may fight duels. Heretofore, this inestimable boon was exclusively reserved for the highborn. But now he may go forth and carve and be carved until the field of honor looks like somebody had been cleaning fish.

This increase in his blessings makes me recall a tale that Charley Russell, the cowboy artist, used to tell:

"The boys were fixing to hang a horse thief," Charley said. "He only weighed about ninety pounds, but for his heft he was the champion horse thief of Montana. The rope was swung from the roof of a barn. Then they balanced a long board out of the loft window, and the condemned was out at the far end of it, ready for the drop, when a stranger busted in.

"Everybody thought he craved to pray, but that unknown humanitarian had a better notion than that. In less'n a minute he came inching out on that plank and there wasn't a dry eye in the crowd as he edged up behind the poor trembling wretch and slipped an anvil in the seat of his pants."

IRVIN S. COBB.

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NEWS NOTES OF THE NORTHWEST

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

SALEM, Ore.—Possibility of postponing the 1937 state fair until late September was discussed here when the state board of agriculture met to draw up preliminary plans for the event.

HOOD RIVER, Ore.—Definite results in the eradication of mosquitoes have been attained in a campaign at Hood River in which city, county and residents co-operated. Evening picnics are to be revived.

ONTARIO, Ore.—The shepherds of Malheur county are expecting a boom in the lamb market. Lambs are now selling at \$10 to \$12 a hundred. A lamb of average weight will bring around \$8, a profit of about \$1.

DAYTON, Wash.—The new well at Dayton, in a test, has yielded between 500 and 650 gallons of water per minute. The community is jubilant over the prospect of a plentiful supply during the canning season.

EUGENE, Ore.—Travel over the summit of the Cascades from Eugene to Central Oregon may now be made by way of Odell lake, according to forest officials. This is the shortest route from Eugene to Klamath Falls.

DAVENPORT, Wash.—John F. Lynn has bought for cash from Simon M. Reinbold, a stock ranch of 705 acres near Davenport. The orchard of Lynn, at Peach, has been purchased by the government as part of the Coulee Dam project.

COULEE DAM, Wash.—From a place of usual quiet, Coulee Dam, the engineers' model town, suddenly has become noisy. Thirty magpies are responsible. Children of engineers took young birds from nests in nearby canyons and adopted them as pets. Residents report the noisy creatures can be heard on nearly every street.

PASCO, Wash.—Construction of two new 160,000-gallon gasoline and oil storage tanks has been begun at Attalia by the Tidewater Transportation company, owners of the boat Mary Gail, which transports motor fuels up the Columbia from Portland for distribution. The new tanks will replace two 47,000-gallon tanks built several months ago by the same company.

WILLAPA HARBOR.—In the future, don't order raw Pacific oysters in hope of finding a lustrous pearl inside the shell. Coast oyster growers now subject the oysters to a fluoroscope test before they are marketed to determine if the shells contain pearls. During the spring 30,000 cases of oyster seed from Japan were planted in Pacific waters. The tiny spats will grow into full-fledged oysters in 18 months.

RAYMOND, Wash.—According to local observers hardly a seagull has been seen in Raymond in the past four days, all of them having left for the seashore. The reason for this is that thousands of crabs have been washed ashore on the Oregon coast from the bottom of the ocean and the gulls have gone to dinner in a royal fashion. Observers say that machinery dragged along the ocean bottom in search of deep-sea fish have caused the death of the crabs.

PASCO, Wash.—Sea gulls that flew from the Pacific Coast this week-end to join farmers of the region in their battle against advancing hordes of Mormon crickets, have been augmented by an almost equal number of black ravens. This year the pests are being fought along a 35-mile trench and are eaten by those who come after them. Under the direction of Arthur Chase, State college entomologist, 35 men are working daily with spray guns and poison, spraying both crickets and the vegetation ahead of them. The poison kills the crickets but not the birds.

SALMON ON WAY UP RIVER
STEVENSON, Wash.—Thousands of salmon, held in the Bonneville dam forebay pending completion of the fishwalk, are on their way upstream to their spawning grounds. The fish were released by raising of the stop logs.

BIG SOLE HAULS MADE
ASTORIA, Ore.—Trawlers operating off the Columbia river report excellent hauls of sole, according to Louis Beverino, manager of the International Fish company of San Francisco. The company sent two trawlers north this spring to try fishing in the ocean banks off the Columbia river. Hauls as high as ten tons a day are being made. The fish is iced and sent to San Francisco.

ARLINGTON, Ore.—Tourists a long way from home have passed through Arlington. According to the license plate on the car, they were from Greece. The car of Grecian make, differed from American cars.

SALEM, Ore.—The state land board has announced the sale of 24,374,000 board feet of timber in Klamath county to the Crater Lake Box & Lumber company at a cost of approximately \$97,000. Money derived from the sale will go into the state common school fund.

The Star Spangled Banner



UNDER the starry flag that waves over this fair land, every citizen is a king, and there is no avenue to wealth and fame, position and power, that is not open to every child of the Republic.—W. A. Prossner.

THE Star Spangled Banner was designated as the national anthem by an Act of Congress, approved on March 3, 1931. It was written by Francis Scott Key after he had witnessed the British bombardment of Fort McHenry in Baltimore, in 1814. The words of this stirring song were sung to the tune of "Anacreon in Heaven" and immediately became popular and it was regarded as the national anthem though it was not made legally so until 1931.

LIBERTY, one of two treasured BELLS



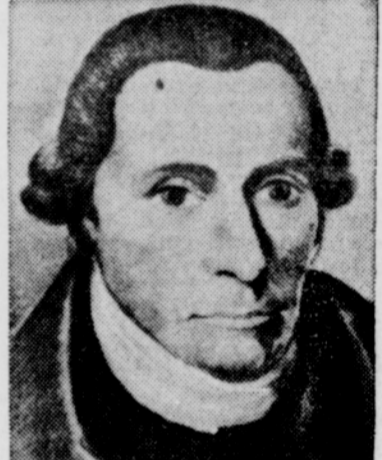
TWO of the bells which played important roles in early American history—pealing warnings or glad tidings during the nation's battle for survival—are treasured by Philadelphia, observes a Philadelphia United Press correspondent.

Most valuable of the two from historical standpoint is the world-famed Liberty bell, which was tolled when first public announcement was made of the Continental Congress' adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.

The bell had pealed for anniversaries and festivals until 1835, when it cracked while being rung for the funeral procession of Chief Justice John Marshall of the United States Supreme court.

Other bells identified with America's struggle against foreign encroachments are the chimes in the steeple of Old Christ church. During the Revolutionary war they were removed and secreted to block possible attempts of English soldiers to melt them for ammunition.

The Orator of the Revolution

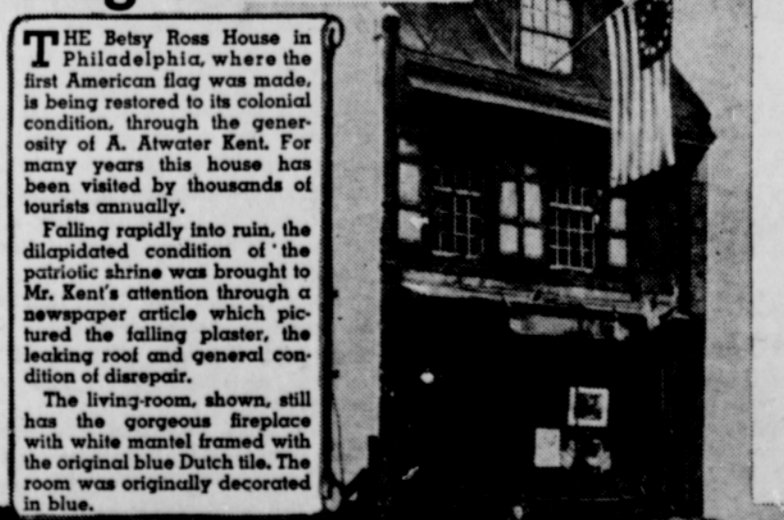


"Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death."—Patrick Henry.

"FORBID it, Almighty God!" thundered Patrick Henry in the Virginia Convention at Richmond, in 1775, in a speech typical of "the explosive temper of the time"—"I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!" The orator of the Revolution had been found. It was Patrick Henry who established before the American people that government was a contract between King and people and that the violation of such contract by the King was truly an illegal act.

TRANSCRIBED DECLARATION
NEITHER Thomas Jefferson nor John Hancock was the penman who transcribed the Declaration of Independence. The actual work of transcription was done by Timothy Matlack.

Where First American Flag Was Made



THE Betsy Ross House in Philadelphia, where the first American flag was made, is being restored to its colonial condition, through the generosity of A. Atwater Kent. For many years this house has been visited by thousands of tourists annually.

Falling rapidly into ruin, the dilapidated condition of the patriotic shrine was brought to Mr. Kent's attention through a newspaper article which pictured the falling plaster, the leaking roof and general condition of disrepair.

The living-room, shown, still has the gorgeous fireplace with white mantel framed with the original blue Dutch tile. The room was originally decorated in blue.

