

Washington Digest

National Topics Interpreted
By WILLIAM BRUCKART
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Washington.—It appears that another session of congress will go by without the congress and the administration doing anything serious in the way of cutting down government expenses. There is nothing that can be done now toward carrying out the expressions made by President Roosevelt in his message last January when he told congress that he wanted to cut federal expenses and take important steps toward balancing the federal budget. The reason that federal spending is due to go on for another year at the extraordinary rate of the last four or five years is because a majority in congress, under the lash of the White House, refused to require states and local governments to bear a percentage of the relief costs. In other words, federal spending will go on because congress and the President have lacked the courage to start taking the federal government out of the relief work and gradually restore it to the care of those folks in the various communities who know where relief is needed.

There had been a very determined movement in congress to compel the states to share in the gigantic relief burden. It took on various forms and had various sponsors. But the end and aim of all of them was to divide the cost in equitable fashion.

The proposal that had the best chance of getting through was one offered by Senator Robinson of Arkansas, the Democratic leader in the senate. He offered an amendment to the relief bill which would have required the states to contribute one-fourth of the amount expended in each state, with the federal Treasury supplying the remainder. When that amount was offered, it was something in the nature of a compromise between proposals that the states should bear 40 per cent and that they should bear none of the cost. With the White House operating through the President's lobbyist, Charles West, and Senator Barkley of Kentucky, the administration was able to force defeat of the Robinson amendment.

Now, Senator Barkley is assistant Democratic leader of the senate and so we had the spectacle of one of Mr. Roosevelt's spokesmen being on one side and a second one on the other side. The one who was spurred on by the President was victorious.

I am not sure that the Robinson proposal would have resulted in an appreciable reduction in the federal outlay for relief. Of course, it would have cut the total somewhat but not by the full one-fourth that appeared on its face. It was valuable as a piece of legislation, however, because it would have required the states again to assume some of the burden which only a few years ago they carried in its entirety. It was a principle for which Senator Robinson fought and it was a principle upon which he was defeated because Harry Hopkins, relief administrator, objected and still objects to returning any part of the relief obligation to the local authorities.

I suspect that Senator Robinson's activities on the relief proposition will not help his relations with the White House but I think it ought to be said that Senator Robinson demonstrated again his capacity as a statesman. He demonstrated as well that he recognizes the dangers confronting the United States Treasury which at the end of the current fiscal year—June 30—had an outstanding debt in excess of \$36,000,000,000.

From among some of the senators I gained the impression that there is considerable worry about the government's spending and they wanted to see the Robinson amendment prevail because they recognized it as a move that would eventually bring federal government spending within control. Also, senators of that school of thought maintained that if states were called upon to bear some of the burden of relief, it would bring home forcefully the fact that all of this spending must sometime be made up out of taxes. People do not like to pay taxes and they cannot be blamed for their attitude. Unless they realize, however, that borrowed money is being spent and they and their children and children's children are to be taxed to pay off the loans, they will not be in favor of reducing national, state or local expenses.

The debate in the senate on the proposition to send some of the relief burden back to the states showed rather plainly that most of the senators are disgusted with talk that hunger and distress will haunt the land if states are required again to take over some of this charity work. The impression I gained from this debate was that a powerful lobby of mayors from some of the larger cities was turning on all of the steam it could muster. Mayor LaGuardia of New York was the boldest of these as he has been bold

constantly in forcing the federal government to pay the relief rolls in New York city and save his own New York city budget.

Another phase of the debate should be noticed. It was the reluctance of congress to reassume its right to direct and control the spending of federal funds. The above-mentioned Mr. Hopkins wants to be free and unfettered in his spending and those policies were the ones he recommended to Mr. Roosevelt. Consequently, with administration pressure on many senators, the Hopkins idea prevailed and so for another year congress must sit back and watch the Hopkins organization spend money virtually any way it desires.

I think there ought to be a lesson in this whole situation upon which the country can look back rather regretfully. The experience gained by making lump sum appropriations certainly shows how a bad habit can be contracted and how difficult it is to cure that habit. Seldom in history until this depression would congress ever vote lump sum appropriations for executive departments to spend as they will. Having contracted the habit, however, it is going to be difficult hereafter to deny any President lump sum appropriations, provided only that he has a substantial majority in the house and senate.

No doubt many persons will wonder why this sort of thing constitutes an important issue. The answer is simple. Governments are wasteful and the federal government, being larger than state or local governments, is just that much more wasteful and unable to handle money carefully. If states and local communities have to bear expenses of this sort out of their own treasuries, they see to it that only those entitled to relief obtain it. Unhappily, the national relief system is caring for thousands upon thousands of men who could get jobs and who could support their families but who will not do so as long as money is given them from Washington.

Since the national debt is at the highest point in the history of our nation, there is a growing conviction at the Capitol that a halt must be called sometime. The present trouble is that there are not yet enough courageous representatives and senators to force a stoppage in such spending.

While the steel strike blazed forth with battle after battle, blood was shed and property was damaged, little attention was paid to a development here in the nation's capital—in the government itself.

While all of the sensational things were happening on the steel front, one Jacob Baker was resigning his job as assistant relief administrator and was accepting the job of chief of a new labor unit to be associated with John L. Lewis and his Committee for Industrial Organization. Mr. Baker's unit is to be made up of government workers themselves, a labor union in the government of the United States.

For some years, there have been minor labor units among government employees. They were affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. Generally speaking, they were impotent and did little more than create a dozen jobs for the officials of the organization.

Now, however, the government workers are to have a "militant, fighting labor union which will get things done for them." Such at least is the press agent word that has been spread under Mr. Baker's direction.

Mr. Baker is familiar with the problems of government service. Undoubtedly he recognizes that he cannot use the same methods in organizing government workers that are used in private industry. If, for example, he would attempt a strike, I think probably it would be the end of labor organizations in the government of the "militant, fighting" type.

The advance notices concerning Mr. Baker's plans seem to indicate that he is seeking members below the grades of official rank. In other words, if the Baker plans are carried out, the new union will be made up of the so-called rank and file. This would seem to be an advantageous arrangement because it eliminates some of the dangers that always develop where bureaucrats and division heads assume too much authority.

There is a danger also in confining the organization to the rank and file because among the less experienced labor leaders there is always a tendency "to flare up." That is to say, lacking experience they may say things or do things which are regrettable or which they have cause to regret later on. The violence that has shown its ugly head in the steel strike proves this point. So Mr. Baker has his job cut out for him in this direction.

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FARM TOPICS

CHOOSE COCKERELS EARLY FOR FUTURE

Base Selection on the Body, Size and Maturity.

By F. P. Jeffrey, Instructor in Poultry Husbandry, New Jersey College of Agriculture.—WNU Service.

It is not too early to begin to select cockerels for next year's breeding pens. A common error among poultrymen is to sell the largest and quickest maturing cockerels on the broiler market and keep the later maturing birds for breeders. Such a practice may mean a few extra dollars now, but in reality it is a very short-sighted policy.

Poultrymen who do not pedigree should keep a large number of the early hatched cockerels. Remember it is essential to retain a relatively large number to insure a good selection later in the year. Selection should be based on large body size and early sexual maturity.

The poultryman who practices pedigree breeding should retain three or four of the best cockerels from each female breeder. It will be impossible to determine the best families until the sisters of these prospective breeders have been laying at least three months. For those who want to reduce the number of cockerels to be held over the summer, the only sensible basis of culling at this date would be hatchability of the dam and livability to date of brothers and sisters.

Roads Bureau Reports on Ways to Kill Weeds

A recent report by the bureau of public roads of the United States Department of Agriculture describes methods used by state highway departments in eradicating weeds along roadsides.

Machine mowing, most generally used, often must be supplemented by hand cutting or by use of chemicals to kill weeds not reached by the mower. Highways of modern design, with slopes that can be reached easily by mowers and side ditches that can be mowed over, make machine mowing more effective.

Burning is used mostly to dispose of cut or killed weeds. Various chemicals are particularly adaptable for use along guardrails, around culvert headwalls, and in other places not readily accessible for cutting.

Improvements undoubtedly will be made in present methods of weed control and new methods will be discovered, say highway engineers, but effective control is possible with the methods now used. Regardless of methods used, they say it is important that eradication be thorough, for small patches of undamaged weeds may reseed large areas and offset work done.

Besides being unsightly, roadside weeds may hide highway warning signs, shorten vision, and hinder drainage. Control of roadside weeds directly benefits farmers. Seeds from uncontrolled roadside weeds are carried to adjacent fields by wind, water and birds. Passing automobiles carry seed to distant points to infest new areas.

The bureau of public roads regards weed destruction as part of a permanent roadside-improvement program.

Here and There on Farm

Many poultrymen use electric hovers for brooding chicks.

The most effective time to spread poison bait for grasshoppers is between midnight and sunrise.

Corn now occupies more land than cotton in the South.

Duck eggs can be used in any recipe that calls for eggs.

The spray residue tolerance on fruit has been announced for 1937 as .018 grains per pound of fruit.

Hens that fail to respond to good feeding and management during the summer should be disposed of promptly.

The average hen egg is 13.4 per cent protein and 10.5 per cent fat.

Chicks that are confined are more likely to develop than those that run outdoors early in life.

Golden Cross Bantam may now be considered the standard variety of sweet corn in New York state.

It is estimated that in the United States 12,000 dozens of eggs are laid every three minutes, day and night, throughout the year.

Although alfalfa adds nitrogen to the soil, it depletes the soil's supply of other plant foods if it is cut for hay.

Vegetation, combined with terracing and other mechanical methods of erosion control, is said to reduce soil erosion to a minimum.

Milk cows in the United States reached a five-year low of 25,040,000 at the beginning of this year but an increase is expected in the next three years.

25,000 Boy Scouts Have \$2,000,000 Camp Party



Gathered from all parts of the world, 25,000 Boy Scouts attended the National Scout jamboree at Washington, D. C. Above, Scouts from Albany and Abilene, Texas, are shown erecting their division sign at the camp close by the Potomac river. The cost of the camp and the expenses of the Scouts en route and back home were estimated at more than \$2,000,000.

Eleven Peaches on One Cluster Is Farm Record

It's a good year for peaches at the home of G. F. Trotter near Wright City, Mo. They come in



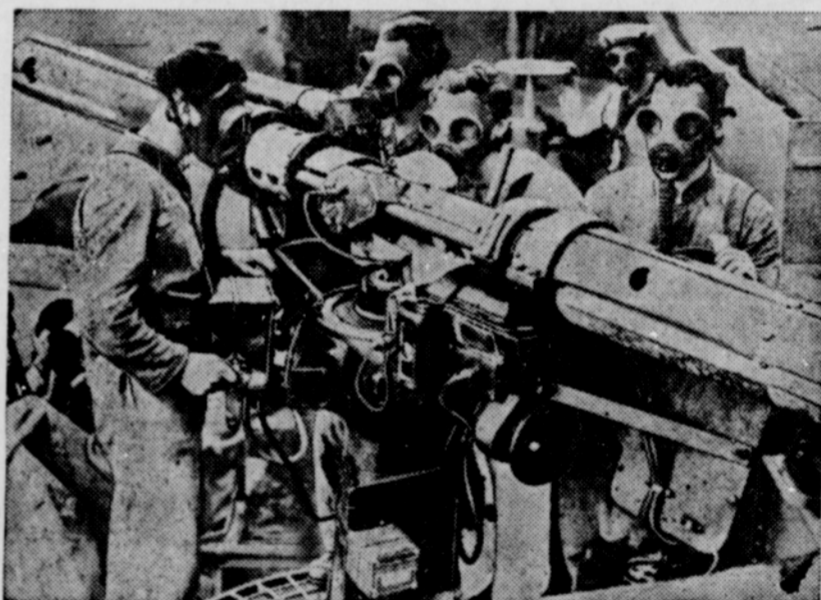
large clusters on his trees, instead of the usual twos and threes. Miss Madeline Uode of St. Louis is shown with a cluster of eleven.

Mush 4,000 Miles to Bright Lights



Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Carroll of British Columbia—the far northern part of the province near Alaska—with their team of Alaskan dogs after their arrival in New York city, recently, by dog sled. Their sled is equipped with both wheels and runners. They have been traveling this way for one year and three months, picking up data for a book they hope to finish soon.

Ready for Action in Mediterranean



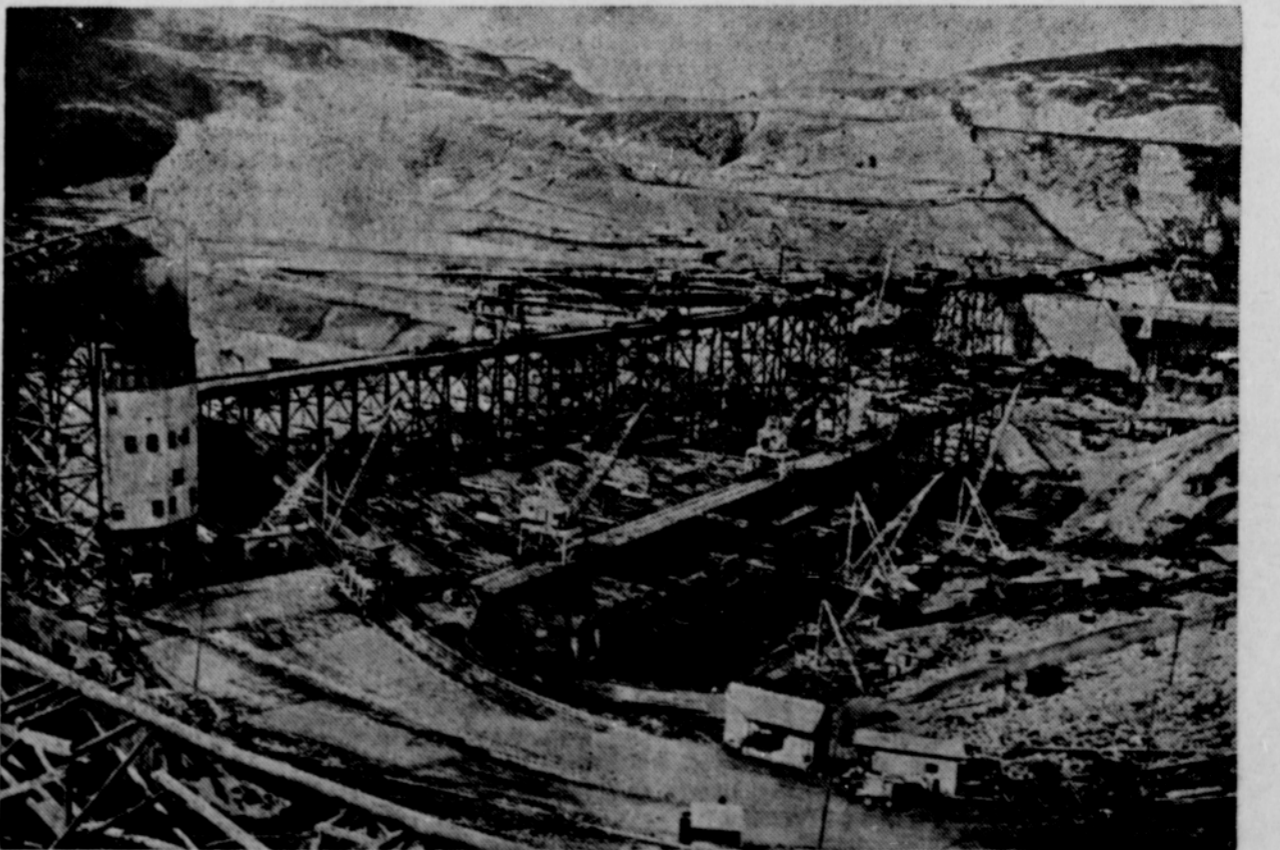
Gas-masked gunners aboard H. M. S. Furious, one of Great Britain's powerful battleships, are shown operating a range-finder during recent battle practice in the Mediterranean. Threats of open intervention by Italy and Germany in the Spanish imbroglio resulted in a concentration of British naval craft in the Mediterranean.

VALUE \$1,600



Robert A. Urian, Jr., of St. Louis with one of the chinchillas he brought back from Chile. Urian spent seven months in South America acquiring five of the animals whose fur, because of their rarity, is extremely valuable. He hopes to raise them commercially and estimates their value at \$3,200 per pair.

Construction Speeded on Grand Coulee Dam



Work is being speeded on the Grand Coulee dam on the Columbia river in the state of Washington, which will eventually cost more than \$113,000,000. The giant concrete mixer at left and the second on the opposite side of the river deliver concrete to cars which operate on a trestle.