

Review of the History-Making Events of the World

By EDWARD W. PICKARD

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Supreme Court Packing Controversy Increases

WITH only four votes in the negative, the senate passed the Sumners house bill for voluntary retirement of Supreme court justices at the age of seventy on full pay. The four who opposed the measure to the last were Bridges of New Hampshire, Bulow of South Dakota, Johnson of California and Moore of New Jersey. During the debate Senator Johnson declared that "a Supreme court justice who would retire at this particular time, by virtue of the bait that was held out to him, would not be the sort of individual for whom I would have the greatest respect."



The retirement bill was favored by the President but, as Senator Pat McCarran said, was not a part of Mr. Roosevelt's bill for enlargement of the court. The controversy over the latter measure grew more bitter day by day and to the surprise of the administration, it was found that it was likely to be defeated in the house. Therefore the majority leaders decided to let the senate act first. In that body the decision rested with some twenty-five senators who had not yet announced their position.

Mr. Roosevelt stood firm in his determination to force the bill through congress, and announced he would deliver a radio speech in its defense on March 9, the day before the one set for the start of senate judiciary committee hearings on the bill. The President denied a report that he would make a tour of the country in behalf of his plan.

Senator George of Georgia, Democrat, stepped into the fight with an assertion that the Supreme court enlargement proposal is a repudiation of the party's 1936 platform pledge that it would seek a clarifying constitutional amendment if it could not attain its social-economic welfare program by legislation.

In defense of the measure various members of the cabinet and heads of federal agencies began a speaking campaign.

Vidal Quits as Head of Air Commerce Bureau

EUGENE VIDAL has resigned as director of the federal air commerce bureau and says he will re-enter private aviation. His conduct of the bureau has been subjected to much criticism at times and a committee headed by Senator Cope-land of New York has recommended the reorganization of the bureau. Recently the bureau and representatives of the air transport industry have differed sharply over causes of the series of major air crashes.

Vidal's successor is Prof. Fred D. Fagg of Northwestern university law school. He became associated with aviation during the war when he served as a second lieutenant with the ninety-second aero squadron in France. After the war he returned to the United States and specialized in air law. His assistant in the bureau will be Maj. R. W. Schroeder, also of Chicago.

Hughes and Jean Batten Get Harmon Awards

THE International League of Aviators announced in Paris that Howard Hughes, the wealthy American speed flier, and Miss Jean Batten of New Zealand had been awarded the Harmon trophies as the outstanding man and woman in aviation for 1936. Hughes' land plane records in flights across the United States won the honor for him, and Miss Batten was rewarded for her spectacular solo flight

across the south Atlantic ocean.

The league awarded the special Harmon hero medal to Jean Mer-moz, French airmail pilot who disappeared with his crew after making twenty-four crossings of the south Atlantic, carrying mail to South America.

Ernst Lehmann, chief pilot of Germany's ocean-flying Zeppelins, was voted the world champion dirigible pilot, and Ernst Demuyter, Belgian, world champion for spherical aircraft.

Louise Thaden was voted the outstanding woman flier in the United States, and it was announced that President Roosevelt would present trophies to her and Hughes.

Farm Experts Approve AAA as Co-ordinator

THREE specialists in agricultural economics have been studying the modified Agricultural Adjustment administration as it has operated in relation to such important products as wheat, cotton, hogs and tobacco and their report, published by the Brookings institute, says it is a desirable addition to the nation's economic institutions.

The report concludes that a permanent adjustment agency should prove useful as a central co-ordinating body, or board of strategy, for an occupational group composed of small and loosely organized operating units such as in agriculture. It recommends the continuance of the federal agency in order to assist farmers in adjusting their industry to changing technical and commercial conditions and to cushion the shock of disasters such as drought and flood.

As for crop insurance, the belief is expressed that a system of all-risk insurance under government sponsorship would prove financially sound and beneficial to farmers if premiums and indemnities could be kept on a true actuarial basis. It insists, however, that crop insurance should not be mixed up with the ever normal granary proposal.

To the whole ever normal granary idea in general the Brookings report is unfavorable.

"Peace Before Colonies,"

Eden Tells Ribbentrop

JOACHIM VON RIBBENTROP, German ambassador to London, had a heart-to-heart talk with Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden about Germany's desire to get back some of her lost colonies, and was told plainly that at present British public opinion was against such restoration.

Moreover, Eden said, the question was not one for Britain and Germany to settle alone but could only be dealt with by the League of Nations.

According to informed sources, the foreign secretary then went on to declare that before Great Britain even could consider returning the reich's colonies or yielding League of Nations mandates over former German overseas possessions, the security of Europe must be established by a general accord.

Eden said the question of raw materials for Germany was one in which all the great powers who had control of principal raw materials were interested. In this connection, he said that while the league should settle the colonial matter, he could envisage an alternative method of approach through diplomatic channels.

President Asks State Soil Conservation Laws

IN IDENTICAL letters to the governors of the 48 states President Roosevelt called on the state legislatures to enact soil conservation laws which would supplement

the federal measures designed to lessen the ravages of floods and dust storms.

Along with his letter the President sent the governors a copy of a model soil conservation bill prepared by the Department of Agriculture. This provides for the organization of soil conservation districts to carry on erosion control projects with federal aid and regulations for use of land.

According to the plan the suggested state laws would have no bearing on federal soil conservation benefits, but enactment of state laws would be necessary before a state could receive any federal conservation funds.

Panama Canal Toll Rate Revision Is Proposed

ABOLITION of the dual system of measurement of vessels passing through the Panama canal was asked by the President in a special message to congress, in accord with a report of an advisory committee. Nothing definite was said about raising the revenue of the canal.

The War department recently assailed the present dual system of collecting tolls as permitting inequalities, manipulations, and endless reductions in charges, resulting in losses to the United States and unfair advantages to shipping interests. At present the canal, a 54½ million dollar investment, is losing almost a million dollars a year.

Manufacturers and other shippers of the Middle West have long maintained that the Panama canal toll charges are so low that the effect is to subsidize shippers of the East and West because it is cheaper to ship by water from either coast than by rail from the Middle West. The middle westerners have urged that the rates be raised to give them equal footing with seaboard competitors and also to give promise of amortizing the canal investment.

News of the Strikes, Sit-Down and Otherwise

HAVING virtually countenanced the sit-down strike in the case of the General Motors controversy, the administration found itself embarrassed by that favorite maneuver of John Lewis' Committee for Industrial Organization.

Out in Monica, Calif., about 200 employees of the Douglas Aircraft corporation went on strike and "sat down" in the big plant, completely stopping work on \$24,000,000 worth of airplanes the company is building for the government.

Finally the strikers were indicted for conspiring to violate two old California laws against forcible entry and trespassing, and when 300 armed deputies appeared at the plant, they surrendered and were taken to Los Angeles for arraignment.

Another big government job was halted for a time by a sit-down strike of employees of the Electric Boat company at Groton, Conn., which is building submarines for the navy. There, however, the local and state police soon evicted the trespassers and arrested them, and the rest of the employees, a large majority, resumed work.

Sit-down strikers in the plant of the Fansteel Metallurgical corporation at North Chicago, Ill., who defied court eviction orders, were routed by a force of deputies and police armed with tear gas guns and were arrested for contempt of court. Also taken into custody was the strike leader, Max Adelman, who had fled to Wisconsin. The strikers and their friends insisted they would prevent the reopening of the plant by strong picket lines and the corporation obtained an injunction against such procedure. The sheriff said he was prepared to deal with any act of violence. This is another C. I. O. strike, and Governor Horner of Illinois gained no glory in his efforts to settle it.

Among the many strikes in the Detroit district was one of 150 employees, mostly girls, of the largest Woolworth store in Detroit. They planned to extend the strike to all

other units of the company there, meanwhile keeping the big store closed by the sit-down method.

Japan had two strikes that at a distance seemed amusing. A large number of geisha girls struck for collective bargaining and "sat down" in a temple on top of a mountain. Then the merchant marine officers employed by the Nippon Yusen Kaisha, largest Japanese shipping company, struck because, when the emperor was reviewing the fleet last October, the company did not order the raising of the national flag on all its vessels. This, said the officers, was an insult to the emperor and the nation, and they demanded an apology.

Congress Gets Billion Dollar Housing Bill

SENATOR ROBERT F. WAGNER of New York and Representative Henry B. Steagall of Alabama introduced simultaneously in the senate and house the ad-



ministration bill setting up a program for the construction of homes for "families of low income." Under the measure the government may lend to state or local housing authorities \$1,000,000,000, from July 1, 1937, to July 1, 1941, the money

to be raised by bond issues and the loans to be supervised by a new department, the United States Housing authority. To supplement the loans congress is asked to appropriate \$50,000,000 to be paid in outright grants. The loans are to bear interest at not less than the going federal rate and are to be payable over such a period, not to exceed 60 years, as the authority may determine.

The four year program calls for the construction of 375,000 family dwelling units at an average cost of \$4,000 a unit. Wagner and Steagall insisted that the bill called for "decentralization."

Start of Bonneville Power Sale Asked by Roosevelt

OPEN warfare by the government on private power interests will be started soon if the recommendations of President Roosevelt to congressional leaders are acted upon favorably. In letters to Vice President Garner and Speaker Bankhead, the President urged that prompt action be taken to provide for the sale of electric power from the \$51,000,000 Bonneville project on the Columbia river in Oregon; and he intimated this might be taken as the forerunner of a national power policy. The recommendations were in accord with a report from the committee on national power policy and also with the position Mr. Roosevelt took in the controversy with Dr. Arthur E. Morgan, TVA chairman, who favored co-operation with existing power companies and consideration for their investment.

Non-Operating Railway Brotherhoods Ask Raise

FOLLOWING the example set by the five operating railway brotherhoods—engineers, firemen, conductors, trainmen and switchmen—the sixteen non-operating brotherhoods, with a membership of 800,000, have voted to demand wage increases averaging 30 cents an hour.

Ex-Navy Officer Sentenced to Prison as a Spy

JOHN S. FARNSWORTH, former lieutenant commander in the United States navy, who had pleaded guilty to charges of conspiring to sell naval secrets to Japan, was sentenced by Justice Proctor in the District of Columbia court to serve from four to twelve years in prison. Farnsworth held himself rigid as the judge leveled an accusing finger and denounced him as the perpetra-

tor of a crime "abhorrent to every good citizen." He coughed as though he were holding back sobs when the judge sternly told him he was being sentenced "as a warning and deterrent to others."

Blockade of Spain Not Entirely Successful

PLANS for the complete blockade of Spain by the other European powers, in order to starve out the civil war, met with difficulties owing to the bringing up of points involving the national honor of France and Russia. The French made certain objections to the land patrol and the Russians to the sea patrol.

The Spanish loyalists were making a desperate effort to capture Oviedo, where the insurgent garrison was attacked by dynamite throwing Basques. The defenders, numbering about 12,000 men, were hard pressed and it seemed impossible that relief forces could reach the city in time to save them. In the Madrid sector, too, the rebels were getting the worst of it, for the government forces were about ready to make a mass assault on Pinzaron hill from which the Franco artillery has been shelling the Madrid-Valencia road.

Sec Wants Speculation by Exchange Members Curbed

IN ORDER to curb "unwarranted speculation" by members, all securities exchanges are asked to adopt certain regulations suggested by the securities and exchange commission. The proposed rules would put exchange members on the same trading basis as the general public. They would have to put up the 55 per cent margin required of other securities purchasers, and would be required to do this by 5 p. m. of the day of purchases.

In announcing the commission's step, Chairman James M. Landis told reporters:

"This procedure is in accordance with a plan of the commission to give the exchanges the opportunity to regulate the trading activities of their own members. This course, which has been adopted by the commission on previous occasions, will allow greater flexibility in the administration of the rules and will permit minor adaptations to the various exigencies of individual exchanges. While the responsibility for the enforcement of these rules will thus lie with the exchanges, the commission will observe both their enforcement and their effectiveness."

Dr. Townsend Convicted of Contempt of House

DR. FRANCIS E. TOWNSEND, the elderly Californian who devised the old age pension plan bearing his name, was found guilty of contempt of the

house of representatives because he refused to testify before a house committee that was investigating his scheme last spring and "took a walk" out of the committee room. The verdict, rendered by a jury in the District of Columbia court, made the doctor liable to a sentence of one to twelve years in jail or a fine of from \$100 to \$1,000, or both. Judge Peyton Gordon deferred sentence until he could pass on a motion for a new trial.

Townsend seemed rather to welcome the verdict, saying he had expected it. "Lord bless you, I'll be all the more active," he said when asked what effect a conviction would have on his movement. "I think it will be the general opinion that I have been the victim of an injustice. Our organization will be spurred to greater efforts."

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