

MEN AND AFFAIRS AT WASHINGTON

★ National Topics Interpreted by ★
WILLIAM BRUCKART ★

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. Whatever 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 on 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, than, the committee put forth some of its own ideas.

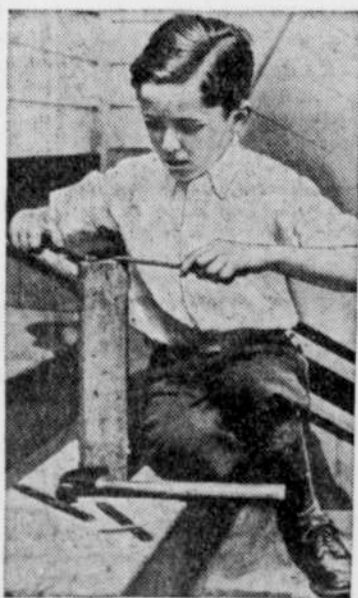
"It applies force to the judiciary," the committee said in a sentence that constituted one paragraph and thereby was emphasized.

"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 Presi-

Inventor at Eight



Jordan Bierman of New Rochelle, N. Y., age eight, is the youngest inventor ever granted a patent by the United States. He was honored with a special associate membership in the National Inventors' congress at the annual meeting in New York. The invention Jordan patented is a collapsible, flexible clothes hanger, by means of which a large number of garments may be hung in a small space.

dent'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, calls to mind the investigation by

Hunt Tax Evaders

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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Highest Lake in New York

The highest lake in New York state is Lake Tear on the southwest slope of Mount Marcy in Essex county which is 4,300 feet above sea level.

Lights of New York

By L. L. STEVENSON

Meanderings and meditations: A wagon filled with bright-colored potted plants drawn by a pony trotting down Eighth avenue. . . . Possibly those plants will lighten the gloom of tenements. . . . Over on Seventh avenue, a wagonload of those foolish little evergreens. . . . That maybe will last out the summer in boxes in front of apartment houses. . . . Youngsters clinging to the back of a Broadway bus. . . . Risking their lives for a brief thrill. . . . Or to save a few blocks walk. . . . Greenwich Village mothers hovering over their broods on front steps. . . . An Eighth street ice peddler transporting his wares on the chassis of an old baby carriage. . . . A peddler decked with brushes large and small, ringing a bell and looking at windows hopefully as he plods along Tenth street. . . . Pretty girls smiling at passengers in Sixth avenue elevated trains which pass the lofts where they are busy making artificial flowers.

Youngsters sailing toy boats in Conservatory lake in Central park. . . . A lot of them are experts. . . . and may grow up to be sea captains. . . . or captains of industry. . . . An umbrella mender asleep on a bench. . . . The first I've seen in New York in many a day. . . . Wonder what's become of Pittsburgh Phil. . . . Who used to visit our town every spring. . . . and whose most cherished possession was the handle of an umbrella once carried by William McKinley. . . . Sub-debs doing a bit of roller skating on the Mall. . . . Along with youngsters from East Side tenements. . . . the place where the Casino used to stand. . . . Where Jimmy Walker and other celebs gathered. . . . and where a cuppa cawfee cost a half a buck. . . . A couple of young lovers holding hands. . . . and probably wishing there weren't so many motor cars and pedestrians.

Alexander Woolcott strolling Fifth avenue. . . . He's still my favorite ether story teller. . . . Dudley Field Malone who is my idea of how the well-dressed man should look. . . . A "Public Notice" that sticks in my mind: "Bro. come home. Mom sick. Sis." . . . Tragedy in six words. . . . Dorothy Fox window shopping along Fifth avenue. . . . She's president of the Ziegfeld Girls club. . . . which helps out those who were once "glorified" but who have been getting bad breaks. . . . Paul Jonas, once of the Museum of Natural History. . . . Now in business up in Mt. Vernon. . . . Makes animals correct in every detail. . . . But only one-tenth natural size. . . . One of his patrons is an Indian maharajah. . . . The calm dignity of that statue of Father Duffey. . . . Set amid the false glitter of Broadway. . . . and many a former doughboy salutes the bronze of the famous chaplain of the old Sixty-ninth.

The old Constable home on Eighty-third street, just off Fifth avenue. . . . A white wooden house. . . . With stables behind it. . . . Typical of New York. . . . and now for sale. . . . The ivory punishing Eddy Duchin standing in front of one of those 25-cents a lesson music schools at Eighty-first and Broadway. . . . Listening to some youngster playing a la Eddy Duchin. . . . The fiery Jalna, who dances with Georges in the Waldorf. . . . Who is called "Senorita" . . . In her veins flow Indian, Scotch, English, Irish and a bit of German blood. . . . But no Spanish. . . . One thing to be thankful for: With the ceremonies over, there'll be no more "Coronation cocktails."

A well-dressed gentleman, with morning coat and top hat, stepping out of a sedan at Columbus circle. . . . With a carnation on one lapel. . . . and the red button of Communism on the other. . . . Frank Kolbe, now a big railroad man, entering General Motors building where his offices are located. . . . Newsboys pitching pennies at the base of the Maine memorial. . . . and a soap-box orator holding forth in the shadow of the Columbus statue.

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Keeping Up With Science

By Science Service

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Geniuses Not Born Eccentric, Declares New York Scientist

Gifted Children Are Studied in Clinic

Langhorne, Pa.—If men of genius are eccentric or insane, it is not because all geniuses are born queer, but possibly because of lack of understanding in their education and family life, Dr. Harvey Zorbaugh, director of the Clinic for the Social Adjustment of the Gifted, New York university, told an audience at Woods schools here.

Among a hundred gifted children whose development is being watched at the clinic, five are so extremely gifted as to be clearly in the class of potential genius. In terms of IQ, these children all score at or above 180; a "normal" score is 100. One child registered 204 on this mental scale; the others were respectively 180, 190, 196, and 200. Such genius is rare, Dr. Zorbaugh said.

All Well Adjusted.

All are well adjusted, socially competent young persons, Dr. Zorbaugh told the Conference on Education and the Exceptional Child.

"In three generations of the five families of these children there is but one relative who may be suspected of a psychotic episode," he said. The mother of one child is eccentric although it has never been necessary to put her in a hospital. All the other relatives seem to be, or to have been, normally adjusted and stable personalities. All the families are long lived and have good health histories.

At present these young prodigies are tall, healthy children ranging in age from five to fifteen—all of them normal mentally, physically and emotionally.

Their Futures Uncertain.

"We cannot predict the futures of these children," Dr. Zorbaugh said. "So far, they and their families have had careful guidance. The children have all had unusually fortunate educational experiences. If, as they grow older they become unstable, we believe it will be due to the clinic's inability to control the hazards of development to which such children are exposed."

"If society showed the interest in its children of genius that it shows in its idiots, we might speak more confidently. We spend millions of dollars yearly, for research and education, on our feeble-minded."

"An equal amount invested in our gifted and talented children would yield an immeasurably rich return—in a deeper understanding of the nature of giftedness and talent, in the increased social productivity of the gifted elements of our human population."

Man Dies of Fright in Cemetery Wager

Wranowitz, Czechoslovakia. — Anton Smula bet a group of drinking companions that he was not afraid to go into a cemetery and steal a wreath from a new grave. The next morning his friends found him dead, his coat caught in a picket fence of the cemetery. Doctors said he died of fright; that he probably thought a ghost had seized him.