

News Review of Current Events the World Over

President Tells What He Wants Congress to Do—Mussolini Tries Another Restoration Method—France to Quit Armament Negotiations.

By EDWARD W. PICKARD

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, in a series of conferences with congressional leaders, made known his desires in the way of immediate legislation. First, he told them he would soon submit a new request for \$1,500,000,000 for relief purposes, as was indicated in his January budget message. This bill will include several provisions—namely, a housing program and \$500,000,000 for the public works program to aid employment. The relief will be made a part of the usual deficiency measure.

Next, Mr. Roosevelt wants a stock market regulation bill with better teeth than those in the much modified Fletcher-Rayburn measure. He desires, too, passage of reciprocal tariff, general revenue, municipal bankruptcy, and federal insurance on bank deposits measures.

In order that congress may get through and adjourn by the middle of May, the President is willing to sidetrack some of the administration measures, including the permanent air mail legislation and the Wagner bill to eliminate company-dominated unions. He was reported also to have expressed opposition to measures to create a central monetary authority.

PREMIER MUSSOLINI of Italy has his own ideas of the way to restore prosperity, and they are utterly at variance with those of President Roosevelt. By his direction the council of ministers issued a series of decree laws designed to make the cost of living commensurate with the purchasing power of the lira.

The Italian lira now stands at 3 to 1 in purchasing power with reference to pre-war values, Mr. Duce declared. The cost of living on the other hand is 4 to 1 with reference to pre-war prices.

Slashed the pay of members of the government 20 per cent.

Cut the pay of state and public employees on a scale ranging from 5 to 12 per cent.

Slashed various supplements and indemnities granted state employees and others from 10 to 50 per cent.

Ordered every landlord in Italy to reduce rents by 12 per cent in cases of individuals and societies, and 15 per cent in case of businesses and shops.

Reduced prices in co-operative stores and military co-operatives by 10 per cent.

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, British chancellor of the exchequer, introduced in parliament a prosperity budget showing how far the country had gone toward recovery in two years, reducing taxes and restoring the pay of government employees and the dole for the jobless. The chancellor reported a surplus in the treasury of almost \$100,000,000 and held out bright hopes for the future. This prosperity of the British, however, isn't going to be of any direct benefit to the United States. Mr. Chamberlain said:

"Neither last year nor the year before did I make any provision for payment on the war debt to America nor for the receipt of war debts or reparations by ourselves, and in the absence of any further development I propose to follow precisely the same line this year."

DISARMAMENT negotiations under present conditions are futile, in the official opinion of the French government, and it will have nothing more to do with them, returning instead to its old plan for national security founded on armaments and allies. This is the gist of a note delivered to the British government which is held to be a death blow to any accord on armaments. The blame for failure of negotiations is laid by the French on Chancellor Hitler and his Nazi government of Germany.

The note described the increased German military budget as a "menace" and declared the German government, without awaiting the results of negotiations in progress, has shown its determination to continue all forms of rearmament in violation of the treaty of Versailles.

"The German government," the note charged, "intends to increase immediately on a formidable scale not only the strength of its army but also its naval and air forces."

"Whatever explanation may be advanced, facts of such exceptional gravity can lead to only one observation and conclusion. They prove the German government has made impossible further negotiations."

The French laid down one condition upon which they would re-engage in disarmament conversations, and it is regarded as insuperable. That condition is that Germany return to the League of Nations and to the league's disarmament conference at Geneva.

The note concluded by calling for

the final meeting of the disarmament conference to announce publicly that it is useless to continue its labors and to show the world where the blame lies.

CERTAIN tax increases written into the tax bill by the senate and passed by that body are regarded by house leaders as quite undesirable. Chairman Doughton of the ways and means committee declared they were entirely outside the original intent of the new revenue legislation, and a fight against them was planned in conference.

When the measure reached the senate it contained provisions estimated to produce \$258,000,000 a year in new revenue, chiefly by stopping the loopholes through which legal tax avoidance had been possible.

The bill fell quickly into the hands of the senate "liberal" element, and provisions were inserted to add \$220,000,000 to the yield provided by the house. Also, the senate inserted the provision for publicity of all income tax returns, which has been proposed many times but usually knocked out before final enactment.

SO FAR as the Democrats go, the Wirt affair is ended, the Democratic majority of the committee of investigation deciding to report to congress that the Gary educator's charges of a red plot to overthrow the government are unfounded. McGugin and Lehbach, the Republican members of the committee, formulated a minority report expressing their opinion that the inquiry should be broadened in scope. McGugin asserts there is plenty of evidence from many sources to prove that certain members of the brain trust are seeking to overthrow the established social order of the United States.

Representative Hamilton Fish of New York told a gathering of Republicans women that Doctor Wirt failed to prove his case because his sources of information were too remote, but that he, Mr. Fish, was going to prove it so there would be no doubt about it. Regardless of patriotic motives, the Republicans in congress are not to abandon just yet the campaign material supplied by the Wirt case.

When the Bulwinkle committee called before it the six who were with Wirt at the dinner in Virginia they all, with astonishing unanimity, denied practically everything that Wirt said occurred that evening. Each of them asserted that the doctor monopolized the conversation, talking mainly about gold devaluation, and that it was almost impossible to interrupt him. They verified only one statement which Wirt had ascribed to Miss Hildegard Kneeland, a division head in the home economics of the Agriculture department. This was that she had objected to Wirt's proposal that the goal of the government should be a restoration of conditions in the country as they were in 1920.

Miss Kneeland, in acknowledging this statement as hers, elucidated at the committee members' request and said she would advocate, instead of 1920 conditions, better distribution of property, minimum wage laws, unemployment insurance, mother's pensions, government control of the stock market.

Chairman Bulwinkle and some other Democrats declared Doctor Wirt had laid himself open to charges of perjury, but naturally they would prefer to drop the entire affair rather than to prolong it by trying to prosecute the doctor.

CONSIDERATION of air mail legislation was begun by the senate after President Roosevelt's new plan had been made public. His proposal was that contracts to carry the air mail be let to commercial companies on competitive bids, and that meanwhile a commission should be named to study the question of air mail transport and the development of commercial and military aviation and report to the next congress.

Four air lines filed in the District of Columbia Supreme court complaints seeking to enjoin Postmaster General Farley from carrying out his order annulling the air mail contracts. The complaints, brought by the Boeing Air Transport, Inc.; Pacific Air Transport; Varney Airlines; and National Air Transport, Inc., all subsidiaries of United Aircraft and Transport, Inc., charge that Mr. Farley as an individual canceled their contracts without a hearing, illegally, and deprived them of property "without due process of law in violation of the Fifth amendment of the Constitution."

JAPAN has issued a manifesto asserting its responsibility to maintain peace in eastern Asia and objecting to the giving of help to Chinese air and military forces by other nations. Especially the Japanese dislike the sales of airplanes to China by American and Italian manufacturers.

MORE than 1,200 citizens of Lexington, Mass., while preparing to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the battle of Lexington, decided to fire another shot that, though it wouldn't be "heard around the world," might be counted on to make a slight noise in Washington. They signed and sent to their state delegation in congress a protest against certain policies of the government. Here in part is what they wrote:

"We protest against federal interference in business under the guise of promoting social reform and economic recovery.

"We protest against the passage of legislation without more careful consideration by congress.

"We protest against the indefinite extension of legislation originally designed solely for emergency purposes."

THE world wheat advisory commission, sitting in Rome, reached the first international agreement for price stabilization and urged the governments represented to adopt it before May 1, when a committee of experts will meet in London to put the price system into operation.

Four men with wide powers will be designated, under the agreement, to sit in London and control the world movement of wheat. Quotas will be granted and prices will be raised or lowered in the various countries as far as exports are concerned, according to quota shipments.

Sales below or above quotas will govern the increase or reduction in prices. The advisory commission considers this to be a good method of controlling quotas through prices. It was officially announced the minimum price plan supplements the London wheat agreement.

THE first measure in United States history to limit a crop was sent to the White House for approval after the house agreed to the senate alterations in the Bankhead compulsory cotton control bill. Final action by the senate was taken after the bill had been attacked earnestly by Senator Bailey of Texas and other southerners. Most radical so far of the New Deal measures, the bill restricts the South's output of cotton this year to 10,000,000 bales by placing a tax of 50 per cent upon all cotton ginned in excess of that figure. The secretary of agriculture is to apportion to each farmer, through his agents, the amount of cotton he may grow.

CONDEMNATION and seizure of private property in the interest of the administration's great housing program has been begun in Atlanta, Ga. Secretary Ickes, acting as Public Works administrator, asked Attorney General Cummings to file condemnation proceedings against 134 parcels of land there in the name of the Federal Emergency Housing corporation. In addition to these parcels the government is buying outright 70,000 square feet of land to complete what is needed for a \$2,000,000 housing plan for negroes.

It was indicated that similar action in connection with housing plans will be taken in Chicago and other cities. Condemnation proceedings are to be resorted to only to expedite the program, says Mr. Ickes, and the government is willing to pay a fair price at all times.

"ALFALFA BILL" MURRAY, governor of Oklahoma, doesn't propose to permit reserves of property for delinquent taxes in his state.

These sales were scheduled in eleven counties, six others having already called them off. The governor called out his ever-ready National Guard, declaring that "protection for the homes of the people in stressful times like these is a vital policy transcending any temporary loss in taxes." He ordered the arrest of any county official who attempted to conduct a delinquent-tax sale.

The counties to which guardsmen were sent are scattered. In most counties the military department consisted of an officer and three men. Adjutant General Barrett said a greater number was not sent for economic reasons, but added that "more troops will be ready to go if necessary."

REDUCTION of passenger rates in the South and West proved to be a goose that laid many golden eggs for the railroads in those regions, but now the NRA, which has no control over the railroads, is trying to persuade the Interstate Commerce commission to kill the goose because the bus operators are complaining. A hearing has been called in Washington for April 23 and the bus operators, the railway officials and the public will be heard. The first named propose that the railroads raise coach rates to 2 cents and pullman rates to 3 cents and that the motor bus code be changed to halt special excursion rates and chartering of buses. Most of the railroads are willing to do this.

JOHN J. BLAINE, for years one of the prominent political figures in Wisconsin, former governor of that state and also United States senator, died of pneumonia at his home in Bos-cobel. He was one of the La Follette group of independent Republicans and was defeated for renomination to the senate in 1932 by John R. Chapple, who was beaten in the election by F. Ryan Duffy. At the time of his death Mr. Blaine was a director of the Reconstruction Finance corporation.

By Western Newspaper Union.

Washington Digest

National Topics Interpreted
by William Bruckart

Washington.—Anyone who attempts to interpret Washington news or appraise its effects meets a circumstance frequently where the only course is one of watchful waiting. There is no alternative.

Complex situations must work out; ulterior purposes must be disclosed to a slight degree, if there are such purposes, and some scent must be had of the factors and influences at work. Otherwise, appraisal of the potential effects usually will miss its mark under circumstances of that kind.

Of such a type were the charges by Dr. William A. Wirt, the school superintendent from Gary, Ind., who asserted that "brain trust" members of the Roosevelt administration were seeking to overthrow our form of government and establish a communist or Russian Soviet state in its place. Doctor Wirt's accusations came out of the blue sky, so to speak, because there was no advance notice of them. Of course, there were thousands of persons who were uneasy about the trend of events and the plans of the New Dealers. Apparently, however, most of them were unwilling to make themselves a target for the unbelieving by becoming vocal about their opinions. So, the setting in which Washington observers found themselves was, to say the least, a new one.

With these facts in mind, I have awaited an exposition of Doctor Wirt's charges before attempting to analyze them or to fit them into other things that have been happening to make a complete picture. His appearance before the house committee of inquiry left nothing to be desired in the dramatics. He was there, accompanied by that famed attorney, former Senator James A. Reed of Missouri, which was, in itself, a surprise. And Doctor Wirt stood up against the barrage of attempts to discredit him! He never flinched; he fought back, and he was apparently convinced of his own findings, a fact that gave him added courage.

Doctor Wirt wasted no words in telling of the famous party in a nearby Virginia home where Lawrence Todd, Washington representative of the Russian Soviet news agency "Tass" and several "satellites" of the brain trust were at dinner with the Indiana educator. He quoted Todd as the authority for the statement that President Roosevelt was the "Kerensky" of the present revolution and that presently Mr. Roosevelt would be supplanted by a "Stalin," even as occurred in Russia.

Of course, Mr. Todd has no part in the government, officially, and a good many of those who scoffed at Doctor Wirt originally contended the charges were just "baloney." But he made the statements under oath and their effect now is the thing with which we are concerned. For to say that the charges have had no effect is to make a statement that the moon is made of green cheese.

To those of us whose job it is to keep a finger on the pulse of public sentiment, it has been apparent for several months that a reaction against many of the New Deal principles had set in. I, for one, however, was unable to gauge it accurately. I could not tell how deeply rooted these convictions were. It required some such incident as the Wirt charges to focus attention on the fact that there were doubters before most of us here could gain an idea of the "opponentist" movement that appeared to exist. Let me say at this point, too, that it is apparent Mr. Roosevelt is not the only target; the criticism seems to be more of the ideas prompted by his brain trust advisers than the President's own reform or recovery principles. There is a decided difference, one realizes, between the two, for one group in the administration is promoting reform and another recovery.

Here is where the Wirt testimony becomes important in its effect. By making the charges, Doctor Wirt directed attention to the two schools of thought. In effect, he has called upon the country to distinguish between reform and recovery programs, and has asked the question whether we shall sacrifice recovery in order that reform ideas may be forced down the throats of those who find it difficult to "swallow untried theories."

There can be no doubt that several millions of Americans who, heretofore, were willing to trust Mr. Roosevelt to run the whole show, are now making individual examinations of the structure which the New Dealers have, or propose to, set up. I think it equally true as well that these examinations by individuals will result in a crystallizing of opinions more than has happened up to this time. They undoubtedly will find some good and some bad, some workable and some unworkable, items among the New Deal plans. That ought to be a wholesome thing for the country. History seems to prove that a cross section of our national mind is nearly always correct after the hysteria dies down. Thus, the opinions I gather around Washington stress the importance of the reform that obviously is going to result from New Deal methods. But they em-

phasize equally the importance of the Wirt testimony in balking an onrushing wave of so-called reforms that so many persons consider to be actually destructive of the basic and proved practices of our commerce and industry.

And, after all, that is the point at issue in this country today. Doctor Wirt quoted Mr. Todd as having said that "Roosevelt is in midstream and the current is too strong for him to turn back." I still have faith in our system of government and I have more faith in a majority opinion of the people of the United States. Since Doctor Wirt testified, they are on their guard. It may be that the sun of the brain trust theorist is setting.

One more observation about the Wirt affair: in a long service in Washington, I have seen few hearings as badly muddled by a committee of congress.

Each of the members of the committee knew, of course, that the atmosphere was surcharged with politics. Some of the Democrats obviously were afraid that Doctor Wirt was going to explode a bombshell of politics that would do their party no good at all, and some of the Republicans were afraid that Doctor Wirt would not explode that bombshell. Consequently, there was haggling without end. I believe the consensus among the hundred-odd correspondents who were reporting the hearing was that Representative Bulwinkle of North Carolina, a Democrat and the chairman, reflected no particular credit upon himself or the committee as inquisitors. Criticism of Representative McGugin, a Republican from Kansas, also was heard, for Mr. McGugin went just as far in supporting the witness as Mr. Bulwinkle did in harassing him.

In the background of the committee, haggling, stood the tall, gray-haired figure of "Jim" Reed. Senator Reed, when he was in the senate, was probably the most feared of all debaters. His vitriolic retorts and cutting statements seldom failed to make spines quiver. His presence as Doctor Wirt's counsel failed at first to check Mr. Bulwinkle, but the fact that he was there provided Mr. McGugin with assurance of help in any battle of words.

Certain evidence of people's views always is reflected in congress rather quickly after changes in sentiment take place, and it is no different now. There was a time during the first months of President Roosevelt's administration when anything he sent to congress was put through, and no questions were asked. Currently, however, there is a disposition among members of both political parties in congress to inquire into the character of legislation they are putting through. For example, the bill that the President wanted for controlling the security exchanges, like the New York Stock Exchange, was advertised by Democratic leaders at first as being ready to go through without question. Mr. Roosevelt said he wanted "teeth" in it, and teeth were put in it, plenty of them. Indeed, the proposed legislation would have left little of the stock exchange to operate. Rigid control was a mild expression compared with that original stock market bill.

Stock exchange members, brokerage houses and plain investors suddenly awakened to the fact that the bill was going to do things to them. They started to fight. They found responsive chords in the house and senate. Reason and logic, as opponents of the bill understood those words, began to prevail and, presently, rumors of proposed changes in the measure began to crop up. And what's more, the changes began to be accepted by a majority of the committees that had the bill in charge, despite frequent reiterations by Senator Fletcher, chairman of the senate banking committee, and Chairman Rayburn, of the house Interstate Commerce committee, that the President wanted the teeth left in.

It is to be admitted, I think, that there was a lot of monkey-doodle business going on among some members of security exchanges. My belief is that they did not always give the individual investors in stocks a fair shake. But some of the reformers included in the administration's brain trust appear to have overlooked the good in whatever amount it exists in the stock exchanges.

But, to get to the point of the story. Many persons hold to the view that the government should not spend a parental wing too far over private affairs. It has been done already beyond the anticipation of a majority of the people. They want to be free to deal in stocks, to speculate, even to gamble, if you please, without having bureaucracy here in Washington to tell them what to do.

The legislation will go through eventually. Of that there is no doubt. In its final form, however, it will not be the handiwork of the reformers. There will be reforms brought about by it, only they will be for the purposes of correcting abuses and not for the purpose of trying out theories on somebody's money.

By Western Newspaper Union.

Soy Bean Responds to Soil Sweetener

Limestone, When Added to Manure, Found to Greatly Boost the Yield.

By C. J. Badger, College of Agriculture, University of Illinois—WNU Service.

"Believe it or not," soy beans which are often spoken of as an acid tolerant crop will produce from two to five times as much hay to the acre, when given the benefit of limestone on some of the light-colored soils.

Evidence showing the value of an application of the "soil sweetener" is revealed in the results of four years of tests at two soil experiment fields of rather low productive levels maintained by the state university.

At one field, where the soil is a light gray silt loam, the use of manure gave a yield of 340 pounds of soy bean hay to the acre, but when limestone was applied in addition to manure, the yield of bean hay was 1,700 pounds an acre. The field that received no treatment returned about the same as where manure had been spread. The increase resulting from limestone, when it was applied in addition to manure, amounted to 1,360 pounds, or more than a half a ton to the acre.

Another experiment field consisting of a yellow-gray silt loam gave somewhat better yields. Soil with no treatment returned 1,040 pounds of soy bean hay to the acre; the manure treatment improved the yield to an average of 1,420 pounds, and applications of both manure and limestone jumped the harvest to 2,590 pounds, or practically a ton and a half of hay to the acre.

The response to manure over no treatment amounted to 350 pounds, while the response to manure and limestone over manure alone was 1,500 pounds an acre. However, manure and limestone gave returns of 1,940, or nearly a ton to the acre, over the plot which did not receive any treatment.

Crested Wheatgrass Gets Good Start, Lasts Longer

One reason why forage specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture are enthusiastic over the merits of crested wheatgrass for planting the drier lands taken out of wheat production this year is the fact that this grass is able to grow at lower temperatures than most grasses. Because of this, crested wheatgrass gets an early start in the spring and is one of the last grasses to become dormant in the fall.

A stockman who has a pasture of crested wheatgrass is fairly sure to have good grazing for stock a week or 10 days earlier than he otherwise would, and he may be able to stretch the grazing season again in the fall. The advantages of deferred grazing to allow pastures and ranges to recuperate after intensive use are becoming better known. Crested wheatgrass adds a new advantage of a longer season of keeping cattle on grass. Crested wheatgrass is also distinctively drought resistant and will endure extreme cold.

Plumpness in Oats

How much hull there is in a sample of oats cannot be judged by the plumpness of the kernels. This was shown by tests made by the Minnesota agricultural experiment station, which in 1930, '31 and '32, tested several recommended varieties of oats to determine hull percentages. There was very close agreement between results from tests at University farm and at Crookston, the average of all tests showing the following hull percentages: Rainbow, 25.1 per cent; Minrus, 26.1; Gopher, 25.6; Iogold, 27, and Anthony, 30.2. The studies were made because of common opinion among farmers that varieties with plump appearing grains, such as Anthony and Gopher, have less hull than those like Minrus and Minota with grains of thinner appearance.

Preserving Butter in Brine

A southern mammy down in South Carolina has discovered the secret of keeping butter as fresh as dew for six months, in cans, and without ice. She wraps rolls of butter in a muslin cloth or bag, packs them in cans, jars or crocks, and covers them with salt brine made by dissolving about ten ounces of table salt in a quart of water. The container is covered and set away in as cool a place as is to be found.

Agricultural Hints

Hybrid corns are practically free of barren stalks. Crop roots cannot penetrate deeply into a soil logged with water. New York state plans to provide 35,000,000 trees for planting on waste lands this year.

Bearing apple trees in the United States were about one-fourth fewer in number in 1930 than in 1920. Farmers in the north of England are turning from plowing to dairying, and farms of from 50 to 75 acres are in demand.

Owing to the inelasticity of demand, small crops of potatoes consistently yield larger incomes to farmers than large crops. Production credit associations to make short-term loans to farmers have been organized for more than half of the entire country.