

# Washington Digest

National Topics Interpreted  
by William Bruckart

Washington.—I heard a middle-western business man say on a visit to Washington the other day that there **Tariff Negotiations** was one thing about the new deal which made him feel at home. His visit was in connection with some of the State department negotiations for new tariff treaties with foreign countries. He spent several days in those discussions, and the nature of the conversations was such, he observed later, that he felt a conservative tinge remained in the new deal.

Cordell Hull, secretary of state, and perhaps one of the most thorough students of tariff questions, recently described the tariff bargaining negotiations as "stepping backward" to what he considers as a sound basis for solution of tariff problems. Mr. Hull always has favored low tariff rates, but from all of the information coming out of the tariff negotiations, it is made to appear that the secretary of state is willing to see some high tariff rates established where those rates do not engender retaliatory action on the part of foreign governments with the result that a high tariff wall surrounds the several nations.

The observation of the middle-westerner, therefore, must be accepted as some reassurance. It is undoubtedly true that there are many manufacturing interests in this country who are figuratively scared to death over the prospects of the administration's tariff treaty program. Nevertheless, there are factors influencing the results of the various negotiations which, many observers believe, will react to the benefit of American industries long used to high tariff protection.

This does not mean that the new rates worked out by the negotiators are going to be comparable in any way to the Fordney-McCumber or the Hawley-Smoot rates. I am informed also that it does not mean the new rates applying between individual countries that are now parties to the new treaties will be comparable to the low rates of the Underwood tariff bill. In other words, while I am not making the statement that the new rates will be applied scientifically, I feel that the opportunity is available for establishment of sound as well as scientific tariff charges.

The progress of the negotiations has been accompanied by the usual amount of alarm that always occurs when statesmen are tinkering with the tariff. I hear talk, however, purely from a political standpoint, that the administration would not dare to frighten business generally just in advance of an election. There have been too many demands for reassuring statements from the administration, something on which business would feel free to proceed, to cause administration spokesmen to take such a chance at this time.

It is to be recalled in this connection that the Treasury has been smiling on prospective bond buyers by making guarded statements that there will be no early inflationary steps. In addition, the National Recovery Administration virtually has abandoned its "crack down" policy and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration has said in several languages lately that crop restriction will not be as rigid next year. It would seem, therefore, that the whole movement is just a little bit to the conservative side, but, as has been suggested, this may be due to the forthcoming election. Whether that is correct only time will tell.

Beyond the superficial election appeal of assurance on tariff questions, however, there certainly is a feeling in Washington that Mr. Hull can travel a long way in working out the tariff problems if he is permitted to do so. It is to be remembered always that a thousand and one influences are brought to bear any time an administration seeks to revise the tariff. It does appear, though, that the various committees working under Mr. Hull's direction are examining each case on its merits. Of course the conclusions they reach will not satisfy everybody; no tariff rates can perform that function, and there will be much wailing and gnashing of teeth before it is all over; but if there is anything in prospect, the current prospects seem to hold forth more hope for a reasonable adjustment of tariff questions than have appeared on the horizon for some time.

Mr. Hull has been discreetly vague in enunciating his policies and has not given business generally a definite idea what measuring rod he is using. It is assumed in many quarters that he will employ something of the same policy used in his pronouncements in the world economic conference in Montevideo last fall. In these pronouncements Mr. Hull suggested that tariff protection ought to be extended to commodities the importation of which is less than 5 per cent of domestic consumption. He also suggested that there was no sound excuse for maintaining a high rate of protection for industries which, as he said, had such protection "for a considerable period of time" and had not been able under that protection to develop their production to the point where the output amounted to less than 15 per cent

of the amount of such commodity consumed in this country. Lately Mr. Hull has made some statements which indicate retention of the earlier pronouncements as his guide. He contended recently, for instance, that the application of these principles could hardly be said to constitute a crippling factor upon any major industrial enterprise in this country. That is, he said, the minor groups who had failed to develop behind a wall of tariff protection should not longer expect to be milked. At least that is the construction placed upon his words.

Treasury experts have gone to work in preparation of a new tax bill. I reported to you a month ago that this could not be avoided. The question now is how much revenue will the administration attempt to raise.

At the outset it must be remembered that there are tax levies raising approximately five hundred million dollars annually due to terminate next year. This revenue must be replaced. But there is much more money needed, because the program of spending our way out of the depression probably will be expanded during the coming winter.

Secretary Morgenthau will have the benefit of reports of his own experts and of a study under way by a special subcommittee of the house of representatives. He also will have the benefit of a survey of the British taxing system that is being made by a group of tax authorities sent abroad especially for that job.

But I gather from the discussions heard around Washington that it is not the question of size of tax rates on the scientific basis under consideration that is considered most important. Frankly, unbiased observers contend the significance of the present tax study lies in a fact that will not be disclosed until later, namely, whether the administration is preparing to balance the budget at an early date.

The resignation of Lewis W. Douglas as director of the budget links straight into this question. Mr. Douglas is variously reported as having insisted strongly for curtailment of recovery expenditures and an early balance of outgo and income. He left the job as a gentleman and did not criticize his former chief. Nevertheless, signs are numerous that Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Douglas did not see eye to eye in the matter of easy release of cash in the manner that has been followed since the recovery program got under way. Some observers here contend on what they insist is unimpeachable authority that Mr. Douglas was urging a curtailment in expenditures and a sharp increase in taxation so that the next federal budget would be in balance with the beginning of the fiscal year next July 1. That would represent a tremendous job. Mr. Douglas knows what the problem is and he also knows, as a big business man, how necessary it is to assure holders of federal bonds that their funds are safe. It is to be assumed from all of the straws which the wind has blown that the break came on that question. If that assumption be correct, wisecracks are saying, it means that the next tax bill will be held to the minimum.

Although it may be a bit ghoulish, it is a fact that speculation has begun respecting appointments to the Supreme Court of the United States. At present all of the nine justices are in good health despite their advanced age. Five of them are in their seventies and only one is younger than sixty. The appointment speculators, therefore, think that President Roosevelt will be called upon in the course of a year to name another justice.

The circumstance seems to have developed as a psychological result and as an aftermath of the death of Speaker Henry T. Rainey of the house of representatives. Mr. Rainey's death, of course, has political significance and once the speculators were started they carried on.

The present assumption is that Senator Joe T. Robinson of Arkansas, the Democratic leader, will be named to the Supreme court when there is a vacancy. It would fulfill Senator Robinson's ambition and it would be a compliment to him for the yeoman service he has performed for the new deal. But the elevation of Senator Robinson would leave in the senate something of a battle for leadership there, and that is the thing about which the politicians at the moment are giving some thought. The majority leader in the senate or the house necessarily must be something of a "yes" man. Without detracting from Senator Robinson's ability, it is generally known that he has acquiesced in all of the new deal proposals without having in his own mind a conviction that they were the best pieces of legislation that could be drafted; so if and when he is elevated to the Supreme court there will be a scramble among some of the senators who crave the honor of leadership and who also desire for political purposes to demonstrate their fealty to the new deal.

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## Many Uses for Bamboo

### Found by the Chinese

In one sense the Chinese civilization might be said to be a civilization built on bamboo. Throughout a large part of China groves of bamboo grow like trees near the homes of the people. They eat the tender tips of bamboo as we eat asparagus, and use bamboo chopsticks to eat their food. They carry rice in bamboo baskets and sweep the floor with bamboo brooms. They learn to write on bamboo paper with bamboo pens. Houses are made with bamboo poles at the corners, woven bamboo walls and roofs. Shoes and hats are made of the same light, strong material.

Not all Chinese are rice eaters. This is a mistaken impression which gained currency because the first European ships to visit China put in at southern ports, in the rice-raising lands. Millions of Chinese, particularly those in north China and Manchuria, never see rice, but depend on the soy bean and wheat for food. But it is rice that many more millions eat. Rice grows in very wet land, land that is generally covered with shallow water at planting time. Each tiny rice seed is grown in a seed bed until it is about 8 inches high. Then the tender shoots are transplanted in even rows in the wet fields, back-breaking work for which the planters receive very poor pay.

## Servants in Medieval Castle

In a medieval castle servants included the steward, who was a general domo or butler. There would be one or more cooks, depending on the size of the establishment. There would be scullions, butchers, maltsters, cellarers, cup bearers and a miscellaneous crew of boys and men doing menial work. More on the military side, but still servants, were the armorers, farriers, hostlers and grooms. Every castle had its priest, who also was a sort of sergeant. A priest might also act as almoner and scribe. There often was a fool or jester. There were many maids, a housekeeper and seamstress.

## Crabs "Shed" Quickly

The transition of crabs through the three stages from peeler through soft shell to hard shell is only a matter of a very few hours under natural conditions. The hardshell crab, having outgrown its shell and with a new or soft shell developed beneath, gradually breaks out of the hard shell. During that stage it is known as a peeler. Once out of the shell the new shell is soft and will remain so if the crab is taken out of the water and packed for shipment to market. However, if the crab remains in the water for two or three hours after sloughing the shell, the new shell also becomes hard. The entire process may not require more than four or five hours.

## Fat Men and Giants

The United States has its fair share of fat men and giants. Miles Darden was both, says a writer in the Kansas City Times. He was 7 feet 6 inches, and weighed a little better than a half ton. He was born in 1798, and lived until 1857, was married, a father, worked all his life, and was a pretty normal individual in spite of his size. Silly statistics and information are always in order when discussing giants or fat men—it took thirteen and a half yards of material to make a coat for Darden.

## Hiawatha Brought Peace and Goodwill to Indians

Hiawatha is the Iroquois name of a hero, of miraculous birth, who came to the North American Indians, to bring them peace and goodwill, observes a writer in the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

In Longfellow's poem, published in 1855, he was a member of the Ojibway tribe, reared by his grandmother, Nokomis, daughter of the moon. Hiawatha represents the progress of civilization among the Indians. First he wrestled with Mondamin (Indian maize), whom he subdued, and gave to man bread-corn. He then taught man navigation; then he subdued the Mishe-Nahma or sturgeon, and told the people to "bring all their pots and kettles and make oil for the winter."

Hiawatha then conquered Megisogwon, the magician, "who sent the fiery fever on man; sent the white fog from the fen-lands; sent disease and death among us" and he taught his people the science of medicine. Then he married "Laughing Water," setting his adherents an example to follow. Lastly, he taught them picture writing.

With the arrival of the white men and their religious faith, Hiawatha asked his people to receive the new words of wisdom and departed "to the kingdom of Ponemah, the land of the Hereafter."

## Every Motorist Should Know Needs of His Car

If you would reduce automobile accidents, give heed to the four common causes of mechanical failure. These four causes are listed as follows by Wilson S. Isherwood, prominent automotive official and a leader in safety campaigns:

1. Bad brakes.
  2. Worn tires.
  3. Worn steering gear.
  4. Poor acceleration.
- Every motorist should know when brakes are not properly functioning and when tires have reached the danger point, Mr. Isherwood declared. But there are many who are unaware of the necessity for steering gear inspection, and for tuning up the motor for better acceleration. A motor that is well tuned up, he stated, seldom stalls on a railroad crossing or goes "haywire" in traffic.

In tuning up the motor, Mr. Isherwood points out the necessity for a complete tune-up, which can be performed in about 30 minutes. This consists of the following operation:

1. Clean and adjust spark plugs, replacing any worn plug.
2. Inspect ignition cables and battery.
3. Clean breaker points.
4. Adjust timing.
5. Adjust valve clearance.
6. Adjust carburetor.

## The Appalachian Trail

The Appalachian trail, as conceived by its proponents, is a footpath for hikers in the Appalachian mountains extending from Maine to Florida, a distance of some 2,050 miles. The trail shuns automobile roads and lowlands, the purpose being to provide access to the mountains and wild country of the Eastern highlands for tramping, camping and outdoor recreation. Its route is the crestline of the Appalachian system. With the exception of national and state parks and national forests traversed, the trail is on privately owned land with the consent of owners.

## The Gerrymander, an Old Scheme Used in Politics

The gerrymander consists in laying out electoral districts in such a way as to give the party conducting the operation an unfair advantage over its opponent. An authority defines the act as throwing "the greatest number of hostile voters into a district which is anyhow certain to be hostile, and adding to a district where parties are evenly divided a place in which the majority of friendly voters is sufficient to turn the scale."

Notable examples of gerrymandering came into notice near the end of the last century. For example, in 1888 the Republican majority in Ohio was estimated at 20,500. Two years later the Democrats carried the state legislature and changed the districts so that the Republicans could get only 7 out of 21 congressmen. Later on, the Republicans had their turn in power and arranged the districts so that they elected 17 congressmen.

Famous gerrymandered districts have been the "Shoe-string" district in Mississippi, 250 miles long and 30 miles wide, in which the negro vote was concentrated; the "Dumb-bell" district in Pennsylvania, composed of two separated groups of counties made "contiguous" by a single connecting county; the Missouri district, which was made longer than the state itself.

It is believed that the term gerrymander originated in Massachusetts in 1812.—Exchange.

## Our Early Trade Routes Along Navigable Rivers

The early trade routes followed navigable rivers and Indian trails, notes a writer in the Washington Star. Communication between the different colonies was chiefly by water and between the three populous centers of the North—Boston, New York and Philadelphia. Roads developed slowly—as late as the Revolution there were only three routes north and east of New York, and only one leading west from Philadelphia. To the south two rude trails led across mountains—one at Harpers Ferry and the other through Cumberland Gap. Progress was more rapid in New England.

As early as 1639 the state of Massachusetts ordered each town to construct a highway with the adjoining town. The roads of Colonial New England followed roughly the routes of the New York, New Haven & Hartford railroads.

In the South, an excellent system of waterways navigable during the entire year because of mild climate, furnished the best means of transportation and delayed the building of roads until the middle of the Eighteenth century.

## Poison Ivy and Poison Oak

Poison ivy and poison oak are not the same, although the names are confused in some parts of the country. Since some forms of poison ivy do not climb, and some forms of poison oak do, it is hard to distinguish between them.

## Where States Meet

At Harper's Ferry three states meet and the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers join. John Brown's raid on the United States arsenal in 1857 was in this town, and it was in a state of almost constant siege during the Civil war.

## Heads to West, Feet to East, Old Burial Custom

In all early Christian cemeteries in Great Britain and northern Europe the graves were carefully orientated, the body being almost invariably laid with the feet pointing toward the east. This custom prevailed until a century or two ago, and is still widely observed. Even in the family burying grounds on the colonial estates of Maryland and Virginia the bodies usually lie with the head to the west. The custom arose from medieval legends and pagan practices. Christ, according to the legend, was buried in the sepulcher with his head to the west. Many suppose that Matthew 24:27 means that when Jesus comes in judgment he will appear in the east. That verse reads: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." Bodies, therefore, were buried with the feet toward the east, to enable them on arising on the morning of resurrection to face the east and to hurry in that direction to meet the Lord. Because of this custom, the east wind is known in Wales as "the wind of the dead man's feet." Orientation of the dead, however, is older than Christianity. The pagan Franks placed their dead in the tombs with the feet to the east; and Walter Johnson, in "Byways in British Archeology," describes a cemetery at Charvaise dating back to the earliest iron age, in which all but two or three of the more than seventy graves were so orientated that the head lay to the west end.

## Pronouncing Given Names

The pronunciation of any given name, or of any surname, is a matter for the owner of that name to decide for himself. The customary pronunciation of Joan, and the only one recognized by the dictionary, is Jo-an—one syllable, o as in go. If the name is pronounced in two syllables—Jo-an—the customary spelling is Joanne.—Literary Digest.

## Early Use of Dice

Dice were probably evolved from knucklebones. It is almost impossible to trace clearly the development of dice as distinguished from knucklebones, on account of the confusing of the two games by ancient writers. It is certain, however, that both were played in times antecedent to those of which we possess written records.

## Ban on Competition

During the Middle ages, Belgium had very strict laws to prevent what it considered to be unfair competition, writes Isaac Hershkowitz, in Collier's Weekly. In at least one town, craftsmen and vendors of goods were not only forbidden to advertise but they were not even allowed to stand in their doorways for fear they might blow their noses or sneeze in order to attract the attention of passers-by.

## Naturalization in Canada

British subjects domiciled in Canada do not need to take out naturalization papers. Under the provisions of the franchise law they may vote after the expiration of one year. Under the terms of the immigration act a British subject or an alien must live in Canada five years before becoming a citizen.



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