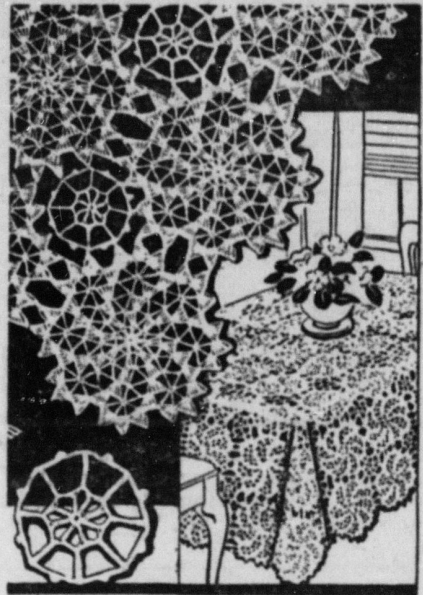


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Washington Digest  
National Topics Interpreted  
by William Bruckart  
National Press Building Washington, D. C.

Washington.—Dear Editor: I wish I could dodge writing a column this week. The whole Washington picture is so disturbed; the course is so uncertain; the future is so indefinite, that I must confess my inability to properly appraise and report on the situation. You will remember President Roosevelt once wrote a book which bore the title, "On Our Way." I guess that is correct as it applies to the national government now; only I can not figure out what the way is or where we are going.

To explain in some detail what my personal problem is, let me say that before I write each week, I have canvassed many, many people's opinions and have obtained the facts that are necessary for the discussion which I undertake. There has been no change in my method of work. Yet, I find myself ten days after Mr. Roosevelt has announced his new and larger spending program totally unable to get heads or tails of the story. That is to say, I have found both the heads and the tails but none of the heads or the tails seem to be from the same carcasses. They don't fit.

So, therefore, I must write that I have found nobody who has been able to tell me where we are going. I listened to Mr. Roosevelt's radio speech and read his message to congress about the \$3,012,000,000 which he proposes to spend to stop the depression; I talked with officials of the Treasury and members of the federal reserve board of governors about the billion and a half of idle gold that is to be made "active" again, and I have looked into the program by the Reconstruction Finance corporation which is prepared to loan almost two billions to commerce and industry. There is so much activity about it, among the executive departments, that it seems something must come of it. There is activity at the capitol, too, but it is in the nature of a row over the question whether all of this spending will do any good.

The one tangible thing evident around the capitol is that perhaps 40 per cent of the representatives and senators have been left rather cold by the idea of a great new spending program. Somehow, they look back on the previous pump priming operations and they tell me that the pump was primed by a total of about eight billion dollars without causing the water to flow freely as a good, streamlined New Deal pump ought to work. These things they are saying in committee consideration of the various phases of the new program by which the President expects to bring back prosperity—or, at least, by which he hopes to check the depression.

There is a depression now. That may not be news particularly, but it is now official. It was a "recession" for some seven or eight months, according to all official pronouncements, but now that soft work has grown claws and it has become a bold, bad depression. It is too bad that the depression had to come just when congressional elections lay ahead. Of course, there can be no connection between the spending campaign and the elections! Not being able to analyze the situation—a fact admitted at the start—I naturally would be the last to say that retention of house or senate seats is as important as providing funds for relief of the destitute, loans or grants to states, cities, counties or businesses that might otherwise find votes against New Deal candidates. We must forget that phase.

Now, obviously, being one who is unable to understand what is going on, what the plans are if it is planned that way, I should wait and see what will come out of the pump this time. But I am impatient. I am rather cynical, too. Whenever these things have failed to work once, I naturally have to be shown why they failed once and will work the second or the third or the fourth time they are tried. Around many of the New Deal propaganda bureaus, however, I have been assured that the vast spending plan will work this time. Indeed, it was intimated to me that I was rather stupid, just plain dumb, because I failed to understand. Really, the assurances given me by the press agents has had much more conviction than Mr. Roosevelt's speech.

One reader of my column wrote in the other day to inquire whether I believed all of this spending meant we are headed into inflation. At the moment, I am not much alarmed about that. All of the makings for a fine inflationary period are available. I mean that if congress were to be stampeded by the confusion that I have mentioned, there could be a regular flood of printing-press money. Congress, however, is not going to be stampeded. The sentiment is too evenly divided for and against the idea of spending our way back to prosperity. There are individuals in congress who actually think that the public debt of

the nation is already too large. They think really that the new spending ought to be limited just to caring for the distressed unemployed. Of all things, they would refuse to vote out more money unless that money were to be used for feeding and clothing people.

I think I should mention also that there are a goodly number of persons at the capitol who have lowered themselves to the level of playing politics. They are even ridiculing our President. They are saying that most businesses, little as well as big, have lost confidence in Mr. Roosevelt and that it does not matter whether the New Deal spends one billion or ten, it will fail to restore that confidence. Being a simple-minded soul, I just stand by and listen to that. On the other hand, the heads of three important magazine publishing houses have told me lately that their advertising contracts are being cancelled right and left. The national advertisers have told the publishers they have to conserve what money they have because they don't know what is going to happen.

I do not understand why they are so frightened. You will remember Mr. Roosevelt said he had urged congress to enact only four laws that would affect business. That is, four this session. One of these is the bill, as described by the President, "to put a floor under wages and a ceiling over the hours of labor." All that legislation would do, of course, is bankrupt businesses here and there. But those can't be successful anyway. They haven't made any money in several years and why worry about them.

The message of the President did not make any mention of the laws that hold the country back. It is to be assumed he did not want to disturb business by calling attention to them. Matters of taxation, for instance, I am told in this connection that the tax rates must go higher next year. There is going to be a much larger deficit in the Treasury than was anticipated in January when I wrote in these columns how the budget was going to be balanced next year under plans outlined by the President. Something slipped in those plans. Now, they don't know at the Treasury when the budget can be balanced. Surely, not next year, because here is something more than three billions to be spent out of next year's money supplies that had not been counted on. This hateful depression is causing so much trouble!

I hope I have not made this Washington situation appear too mixed up. The circumstance has me quite puzzled, as I have plainly tried to say.

There has been a story, a rumor, in circulation in Washington about a tiff between Mr. Roosevelt and Vice President Garner. Not that I believe in recording mere rumor, but more because of a sentence that was reportedly used by Mr. Garner, I want to write about it. The Vice President is a lovely soul, kind and amiable. He has a number of Texas expressions that appeal to me because they say so much in so few words.

Well, according to the rumor, Mr. Garner and a group of congressional leaders were in conference with the President. They were talking about the depression, or maybe the recession. What to do about it; how to meet it, and what the causes were. The President, it seems, has been sold the idea of this spending program as an aid to business, a priming of the pump. Rumor has it that Mr. Garner was asked what he thought could be done. His reply, a typical Garner answer, was: "Why don't you let the cattle put on some fat, Chief."

The President was reportedly quite displeased with the idea conveyed, an idea that the government had better quit harrassing business, quit trying to remake the country and reform human nature. Mr. Roosevelt subsequently denied the report vehemently, even rather angrily. There has been no denial or confirmation from Mr. Garner. He has been so silent about the thing that it is positively thunderous. As I said, I know of it only as rumor, but I do know that Mr. Garner's silence has convinced thousands of persons that there is some basis in fact for the report. In any event, the astute Vice President, if he made the remark, certainly said "a mouf full."

So, Mr. Editor, if you are still with me, let me say that the new spending program is going to be no more successful in restoring the country to prosperity than the earlier attempts. The nation can spend \$450,000,000 in constructing new public buildings. Suppliers of material will sell that brick and stone and cement and plumbing supplies, etc. But after the job is done, darkness falls again and the men are out of work.

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HEADLINES FROM THE LIVES OF PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELF!

"Ice Age in the Bronx"

By FLOYD GIBBONS  
Famous Headline Hunter

HELLO EVERYBODY:

For a long time I've been telling the cockeyed world that you don't have to go places to find adventure. I remember once saying that you could get more thrills just by sticking around your own home town than you could by signing up with Admiral Byrd for one of his exploring trips to the South pole.

And now, here comes John Standmann of the Bronx to tell me I was right about that South pole business. Admiral Byrd went down into the Antarctic to study the ice age, but Jack Standmann stayed home and studied another ice age—in the Bronx.

The Admiral loaded up a boat, signed on a crew, and sailed away toward the South pole, but Jack just put on his coat and a pair of gloves and, in ten minutes, found a spot that was just as cold as anything the Byrd expedition was able to dig up in a year's stay way down there at the bottom of the world.

It was in June, 1932, which is a doggone strange time for a man to go Arctic adventuring in the Bronx. Jack was working in an ice-cream factory and that more or less explains everything. The plant was a new one, and a lot of new-fangled machinery had been installed in it. One of the machines was the big steel conveyor that carried packaged ice-cream into the freezing chamber. That machine was the special bane of Jack's existence. The freezing chamber was a long tunnel where the temperature ran around forty below zero. Moisture used to gather in there and turn into ice. During a week's time, enough of it used to collect so that there was danger of it stopping the machinery. Then, Jack found himself facing a job he didn't like very well.

Working in Forty Below Zero.

The job was to crawl inside the freezing tunnel and hack and chip out all the ice. It was a chore that took every bit of two hours, but it had to be done a little at a time, for no man could stand that 40 below zero temperature for more than 20 minutes at a stretch. It couldn't be done



Jack Was Pulled Out of the Freezing Tunnel.

while the plant was operating. It had to be done after closing time. The result was that Jack had to work overtime, and most of the evening at it.

On this particular day, the plant had been working overtime itself. The minute the machinery stopped running Jack put on a lot of heavy clothes, slipped his hands into a pair of thick warm gloves, and crawled about 30 feet along the belt conveyor into that freezing tunnel. He worked as fast as he could, but he had been in there only about a quarter of an hour when his clothes were frozen so stiff that he could hardly move about and his gloves were so hard and brittle he could scarcely use his hands.

He had just about decided to crawl back and thaw out when suddenly he heard the door of the tunnel open, saw the lights go out, and then heard the door slam shut again.

Locked in the Tunnel to Die.

It was cold enough in that tunnel, but Jack suddenly went colder. He knew all too well the meaning of that slamming door. The light switch was just inside it. The watchman, not realizing that anybody was in there, had turned out the lights and locked the tunnel door. Even with the door open, Jack couldn't have groped his way out of the tunnel along the perplexing maze of conveyor belts. He had been abandoned in that freezing hole—to die.

Jack started to yell—he yelled until he was hoarse. But it was like yelling in a vacuum. The walls of the tunnel were insulated and sound proof. He began to crawl along the tunnel, his clothes freezing to the steel at every foot of the way. His gloves were as stiff as boards. The cold was penetrating to the very marrow of his bones. Pretty soon he would begin to get sleepy—and then—

Nearly Crazy With Horror.

It wasn't a pleasant subject, but Jack couldn't help thinking about it. Would they find him dead in the morning? Another idea struck him—a grisly, ghastly thought. When morning came, they would start the conveyor, and his stiff, dead body would be ground to pieces by the cogs of the great steel belt. Out of that machine, built to deliver the fixings for parties and the makings for kids' ice-cream cones, would come a sickening mass of frozen and lacerated flesh—flesh that had once been Jack Standmann.

A prey to thoughts like that, Jack almost went crazy. "It's hard to explain the honor of freezing to death in a pitch-dark tunnel," he says. "In my frenzy I imagined I had been in there for hours. I knew I'd be as stiff as my own gloves long before morning. But suddenly it occurred to me that I might try knocking on the wall."

Jack didn't have much hope that that would work. The walls were too thick. But at one point—a place where a cold storage compartment adjoined the tunnel, the wall was not insulated at all. And at that point he started hammering with all his strength. Would anyone go into that compartment? Would anyone hear his frantic signal?

Jack pounded for a long time. His body and face were numb, and his flailing arms were the only parts of him that had any feeling left in them, when suddenly, the lights went on. Someone yelled to him, and Jack doesn't remember whether he answered or not. But presently he felt himself being lifted out of the tunnel and carried out into the warm June air.

Well sir, if anybody in the Byrd expedition had any adventure as thrilling or as nearly fatal as that, I haven't heard of it.  
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Porcupine's Quills

The porcupine's quill equipment is indeed the secret of its survival. It has no speed, no keenness of eyesight or smell, no cunning, but it does have between 20,000 and 40,000 daggers, each more poisonous than the sting of a wasp. The point of each quill is polished and very keen. Then come the barbs, over a thousand of them, which begin to stick out when they enter warm flesh, like the barbs on a fish hook.

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"In some remote regions," said Hi Ho, the sage of Chinatown, "our ancestors made statues to heroes look all pretty much alike, so that when a new set of heroes came into fashion they could simply apply new labels and so save much expense."

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South American Tongue Twisters

The following are pronunciations of some South American names: Asuncion (Ah-soon-se-own), Bahia (Baa-ee-yah), Barranquilla (Barran-keel-ya), Buenos Aires (Bwa-knows-eye-race), Cartagena (Car-lay-hay-na), Iguazu Falls (Ee-quasoo), Iquitos (Ee-key-toes), Lima (Yah-mah), Liao-Liao (Yow-yow), Magalanes (Mah-gal-ya-nayes), Rio de Janeiro (Ree-oh day zah-nay-row), Toquilla (Tow-kell-ya).

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According to naturalists of the national park service, the coyote is a better mouser than the cat. His keen sense of hearing and sight, quickness of movement and ability to blend with the background of grass and shrubs makes him an excellent hunter of these rodents.

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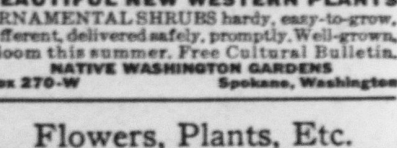
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