

WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS BY JOSEPH W. LaBINE

## Lengthy Congress in Prospect Despite FDR Peace Overtures; New Tax Measure Faces Fight

(EDITOR'S NOTE—When opinions are expressed in these columns, they are those of the news analyst and not necessarily of this newspaper.)  
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### CONGRESS: Keynote

"Dear Alben" Barkley settled down for six months in Washington. "We'll be here until June," he told reporters, "but I doubt if there will be much new legislation. There probably will be efforts to amend the Wagner act and the wage-hour law. The reciprocal trade treaty program probably will cause the greatest controversy."

He told no lie there, and President Roosevelt knew it. Striking fast, before the opposition had a chance to open its mouth, the President keynoted the second session of the seventy-sixth congress in a state-of-the-union speech which attacked the "destructive mine-field of trade restrictions." Plumping for rene-

three-to-one majority in the senate, and a three-to-two lead in the house. Major issues, aside from the reciprocal trade act and national defense:

1. Whether to raise the national debt limit, now nearing its \$45,000,000,000 legal peak.
2. What to do about new tax proposals, such as Secretary of Agriculture Wallace's "certificate plan" (in effect, a processing tax) to pay farm benefits.
3. Whether to amend the Wagner labor relations act, under fire from all sides.
4. Whether to continue Martin Dies' un-Americanism committee.

### COMMUNICATIONS: Wire Merger

Western Union maintains 20,000 branch offices employing 43,000 people; Postal Telegraph, its competitor, has 4,400 offices and 14,000 employees. Thanks to air mail, telephone and radio, Western and Postal are both having financial troubles. This month, as a result, came a paradox: While Trust Buster Thurman Arnold was busy breaking up monopolies, the much-concerned federal communications commission recommended to congress that Western and Postal be allowed to consolidate.

### INTERNATIONAL: Something in the Wind

It was big news in early January that hardy Finnish troops had cut 16,000 Russians off from their base at Salla; had trapped another division near Suomussalmi; had captured a Russian base at Aittajoki; had repulsed countless shock troops on the Karelian isthmus; had even blasted a Red air base in Estonia.

But the biggest news came from a little Madrid newspaper called *Alcazar*. Said its editorial: "Finland is defending with its flesh and bravery the treasure of occidental civilization. Fighting so bravely for independence she fights also for all Christianity, and it is inexplicable that after a long month of war she hasn't received tangible aid . . ."

Looking about them, European observers wondered if the *Alcazar* plea wasn't being answered. They saw a series of potentially related moves

that might eventually lead to peace among the allies and Germany, and to a European attack driving the Russian bear to his den. Indications: Isolation. Home from Moscow to London went Ambassador Sir William Seeds to write a white paper on Russo-British relations. Gossip had it that his conversations with Premier Viacheslav Molotov had been stormy, and that he probably wouldn't return. Also homeward bound was Augusto Rosso, Italian ambassador. Left in Moscow, uncomfortable and lonesome, was French Ambassador Paul Emile Naggiar.

**Shakeup.** The newspaper *Petit Parisien* reported from Italy that Germany was planning a drastic political reorganization to woo the allies. It would include Adolf Hitler's becoming president, succedate Herman Goering; purging of radicals like Heinrich Himmler, Joe Goebbels and Dr. Robert Ley; management of foreign affairs by a moderate like Dr. Hans von Mackensen, ambassador to Italy; slackening of relations with Russia and provisional recreation of Poland and Czechoslovakia.

**Aid.** In an embarrassing spot, Germany announced she would wink at allied shipments of munitions to Finland, but could not tolerate troop movements. Thus it was obvious the Reich would like to see her "ally," (Russia) driven back, yet could not risk exposure to allied troops from the North sea.

**Western War**

Following custom, there was more horseplay than warfare. The western front was a tomb, but at Buenos Aires German sailors from the scuttled *Graf Spee* joined their enemies from British battleships in a night of revelry. British preparations included a plan to call 2,000,000 more men to the colors this year, and a report that 20 freighters had been scuttled at the mouth of Scaup Flow. Purpose: To prevent Nazi U-boats from entering the harbor and sinking more ships like *Royal Oak*.

## NEWS QUIZ

Know your news? One hundred is perfect score, and deduct 20 for each question you miss. Score of 60 or more is acceptable.



1. This English peer's daughter, an ardent Hitlerite who has been in Germany since before the war started, returned to England on a stretcher with a revolver bullet in her neck. What's her name?
2. Why did Irish Premier Eamon De Valera ask parliament for dictatorial powers?
3. True or False: Martin Dies has asked congress to discontinue his un-Americanism probe because of ill health and because the justice department is now prosecuting alien "isms."
4. What do the following have in common: Robert Fechner, head of the CCC; Guy Ballard, head of the "Great I Am" cult; several thousand residents of the Turkish earthquake area; the 163rd Russian division on the Finnish front.
5. If the U. S. began taking its decennial census January 2, why hasn't an enumerator knocked on your door yet?

### News Quiz Answers

1. Unity Valkyrie Freeman-Mitford.
2. He feared an uprising of the outlawed Irish republican army.
3. False. He asked congress for more funds.
4. They died. Most of the Russian division was killed.
5. The business census started January 1. The regular "nose-count" doesn't start until April 1.

### COURTS: Tell It to Congress

Well-timed if its intention was to heighten congressional demands for revision of the Wagner act, a decision by the Supreme court upheld the much-criticized National Labor Relations board on three counts:

- (1) For refusing to place an allegedly company-dominated union on ballots used in a bargaining agency election at the Falk corporation, Milwaukee.
- (2) For designating a C. I. O. union as collective bargaining agency for waterfront workers along the Pacific coast.
- (3) For ordering employees of the Jackson, Mich., power company to vote on the question of affiliation with C. I. O., after a ballot on C. I. O. versus A. F. of L. had brought no majority vote.

These decisions offered no particular commendation of NLRB, however. Commented Justice Harlan Stone: ". . . this failure (of congress) to provide for a court review (of NLRB decisions) is productive of peculiar hardships. . . . But these are arguments to be addressed to congress and not to the courts."

### TREASURY: Easy Taxes

Tenderly breaking the news that income tax time is just around the corner, Guy T. Helvering, commissioner of internal revenue, soothed taxpayers with the announcement that this year's report forms have been simplified. Instructions, once as complex as the report form itself, have been pared down and shawed of technical phrasing.

### POLITICS: Appointments

Fast on the heels of President Roosevelt's judicial and justice appointments came a baker's dozen of explanations. Among them: Attorney General Frank Murphy was named to the Supreme court (a popular appointment) to get him out of the 1940 presidential picture; Solicitor General Robert H. Jackson was reclaimed from obscurity and made attorney general as grooming for a place on the 1940 ticket, probably as vice presidential candidate under Cordell Hull; Judge Francis Biddle of the circuit appeals court (a lifetime job) was boosted to the solicitor generalship to make a place for unpopular Warren Madden, NLRB chairman. Thus were several birds killed with one stone.

### Other political news:

Democratic Chairman James A. Farley announced the national committee would meet in Washington February 5 to select a time and city (probably Chicago) for the 1940 convention. Thus he made the G. O. P. victor in the winter's biggest stalling game, permitting Republicans to hold their convention and name their candidate later.

Secretary of State Cordell Hull disavowed presidential ambitions and denied knowledge of reports that President Roosevelt had picked him as No. 1 choice for 1940 candidate.

## Bruckart's Washington Digest

### 'Pressure Groups' Already Are Worrying Members of Congress

New Deal Agencies, Seekers After Justice and Promoters Of Various Movements Active as Usual; Old Age Pensions, Unemployment Insurance Not Neglected.

By WILLIAM BRUCKART  
WNU Service, National Press Bldg., Washington, D. C.

WASHINGTON.—About the time congress reconvenes each year, the national capital is deluged with what have come to be known as "pressure groups." It is a poor description. I believe most of them can be called "selfish groups" for the reason that the self-righteous individuals who lead (or promote) movements or causes or demands for justice usually have jobs of their own at stake.

They want to keep their followers happy, especially the saps who contribute hard-earned dimes or dollars so that their representative or their delegation may put up a good front in the city of Washington.

Any way, it is the open season for them, again. They are busier than a hive of bees. They are engaged in the annual invasion upon senators and representatives and among the numerous New Deal agencies, seeking justice, urging help for those whose liberties are being trampled into the mud, appealing for this and that and the other.

There are the usual spokesmen for corporations and groups of corporations. They, too, are seekers after justice. They are no more selfish than the lesser racketeers. Those fellows, however, have a different kind of stake in the results. The seekers after individual justice,

number of seekers after justice in Washington.

It is astonishing to see the lengths to which some of them will go. For example, there is one great church organization that sought to force the census bureau to include in the forthcoming census certain questions that would have given that church a powerful leverage in the future administration of government affairs, according to well-authenticated reports. The church representative tried for weeks to high pressure the census officials into inclusion of three questions. He made some threats about the consequences of their refusal. The government attorney to whom the census officials submitted the question had the guts to say "no" and that was the census bureau answer.

It was a despicable thing, however, and illustrates the dangers inherent in the conditions I have tried to describe.

The old age pension movement and the unemployment compensation movement and the other "welfare" movements are represented in full force.

### Other Groups Are Working For Gifts From Government

There are half a dozen other groups around town, working for one thing or another in the shape of gifts from the government. Nearly all of them have found something wrong with the present social security law, but they do not agree on what is wrong with it. The whole circumstance rather convinces me that maybe the law ought to be tossed overboard. I doubt that the federal government can ever administer such law. There probably is little possibility that any such law ever can be made workable on a national basis. Some of the dreamy New Dealers who conceived it have faded out of Washington officialdom already and have left their baby for somebody else to nurse to maturity. The one service they performed was to the New Deal finances, because the original program has brought six or seven hundred million dollars into the federal treasury—and it has been spent.

Organized labor has its representatives on the scene in a big way.

Both the Congress of Industrial Organizations, which is headed by John L. Lewis, and the American Federation of Labor, which is headed by William Green, have national headquarters here. What is a poor politician going to do, however, when Lewis and Green are fighting each other and seldom, if ever, agree upon what changes must be made in the national labor relations act.

The labor row may get more than just an ordinary airing during the session of congress now under way.

I have written heretofore about the special house committee investigation of the National Labor Relations board. Exposures by that committee already have brought demands for the ousting of Commissioner Smith and Chairman Madden. Commissioner Leiserson, appointed only a few months ago, apparently is seeking to clean up the stinking mess, but the Lewis faction of labor which has dominated the board thus far is making Mr. Leiserson's job pretty difficult. There will be little consideration for the Green faction if Lewis can prevent it.

### American Legion Can Really Put on High Pressure

There is an offshoot of organized labor's setup here known as Labor's Non-Partisan league. I don't know what it is supposed to accomplish, but it has a press agent and a staff of "executives" and they all seem to get paid regularly.

The American Legion is getting active again. It wants more government money for the ex-soldiers, and make no mistake about it. The American Legion can really put on high pressure when it sets out to do the job.

I haven't scratched the surface in naming the pressure groups that are to be found here for the current session of congress. There are at least 50 business organizations and trade associations. The purposes of all are the same, namely, advantages for them. The advantages may be in the form of cash such as the pension petitioners and the Legion seek, or advantages that can be turned into cash after the methods of business. In any event, they are all headed down Washington way. It seems to bode no good at all for the folks who are going to pay the bill, including a national debt that is now \$45,000,000,000 or more.

## Youthful Tailored Two-Piece Frock

SEASON in and season out, the whole year round, you need a two-piece tailored suit-frock like 1875-B. It's ideal for business, classroom wear and general spectator sports. The collarless neckline, besides being very smart, gives you a chance to indulge your fancy for sports jewelry and scarfs.

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stitched seams emphasized by two little flat pockets, placed just where slim figures need them! It is fitted in to hug the waistline, and the shoulders are gallantly squared, to make it look even more slender. Tweed, velveteen, flannel and wool crepe are excellent materials for right now; by all means repeat this later in faille or flat crepe.

Barbara Bell Pattern No. 1875-B is designed for sizes 12, 14, 16, 18 and 20. Corresponding bust measurements 30, 32, 34, 36 and 38. Size 14 (32) requires 4 1/2 yards of 39-inch material. With long sleeves, size 14 requires 4 1/2 yards of 39-inch fabric.

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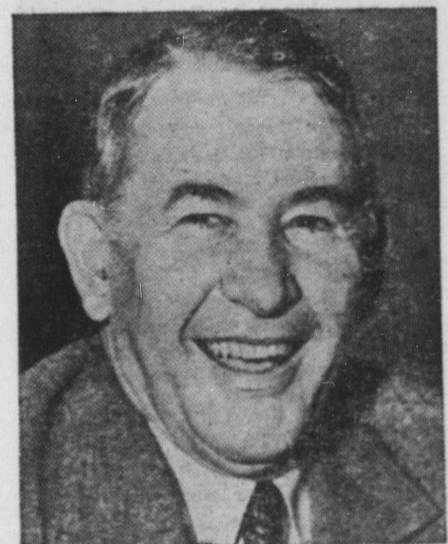
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KENTUCKY'S BARKLEY  
"We'll be here until June."

al of his "most-favored-nation" program in which the administration—not congress—has the power to sign trade pacts, he offered this defense: ". . . it is advisable to provide, at times of emergency, some flexibility to make the general law adjustable to quickly changing conditions."

Only one other concession did he want in 1940, because it is an election year: "I am asking the congress for army and navy increases which are based not on panic but on common sense."

Conservation of resources, protection of national health, extension of social security and the merit system were also mentioned, but in a moderate voice. Only out-and-out political dart was a crack at G. O. P. Hopeful Tom Dewey, who recently accused the New Deal of "defeatism." Said the President: "To warble easy platitudes that if we will only go back to the ways that have failed, everything will be all right—is not courage."

Next day congress got the budget.

Items and total:	
National defense	\$1,800,000,000
Work relief programs	1,300,000,000
Agricultural programs	900,000,000
Public works and investments	1,100,000,000
Pensions, retirements and assistance	1,200,000,000
Interest on the public debt	1,100,000,000
Regular operating	1,000,000,000
Total	\$8,400,000,000

This, said the President, was an estimated cut of \$675,000,000 from the current fiscal year, while treasury receipts are expected to rise \$32,000,000. Estimated net deficit for 1940-41: \$2,176,000,000, compared with \$3,933,000,000 this year. But to further cut the deficit, Mr. Roosevelt recommended that his \$460,000,000 boost in defense costs be paid through new taxes. Commented loyal Sen. Pat Harrison from Mississippi: "It's not easy to raise \$460,000,000 right off. I'm not strong on this tax business."

Rolling up its sleeves, congress found the Democrats enjoyed a

## NAMES

... in the news

Harry Bridges, West coast C. I. O. leader freed on deportation charges, announced he would seek naturalization "at the earliest possible moment."

Charles Edison, inventor's son, named secretary of the navy, began studying means of speeding up the naval construction program.

Louis (Lepke) Buchalter, sentenced to 14 years in prison for violating the federal narcotics law, heard that New York's District Attorney Thomas Dewey hoped to "put him away for 500 years" on racket charges.

James H. R. Cromwell, economist and husband of Doris Duke, "richest girl in the world," was named U. S. minister to Canada.

John W. Finch, director of the bureau of mines, was requested to resign by Interior Secretary Harold Ickes "because the bureau needs a director who has enough iron in his blood . . ."

Neville Chamberlain, president of Britain's Midland Salmon and Trout club, wrote his cronies: "I fear that there is little prospect of my finding time for fishing under present conditions."