NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Reviewed by
CARTER FIELD

Federal contract-seekers have a new hurdle to clear—the Defense Commission . . . Political effect of opposition to Lease-Lend bill doubtful.

(Bell Syndicate—WNU Service.)

WASHINGTON.—National defense covers a multitude of sins, being spread out thin enough even to cover the old rivers and harbors pork-barrel situation. Back in the years just before World War No. 1 those bills were a scandal.

Then came the famous filibusters, led by Sen. Theodore E. Burton of Ohio, which gradually built up so much popular opposition to the pork-barrel system that it was changed.

The system gradually evolved for outwitting the pork hunters, and yet leaving some bacon for the boys in congress to take home to their constituents, and thus get re-elected, is something like this:

First, congress passes a bill directing the army engineers to survey a certain project. Then the engineers, with a weather eye cocked on future promotions, appropriations for their own service, and friendships on Capitol Hill, study the project.

In due time, the engineers report. Generally the report, strangely enough, is favorable, or at least can be so translated by its advocates.

AUTHORIZATION NEEDED

Now comes the second hurdle. The project must be authorized. That is, congress must specifically approve of the project being put on a list from which those actually to be done are to be selected. Then congress votes a sum, usually under $100,000,000 a year, to finance those projects which may be selected.

Note that congress no longer—as in the old pork-barrel days—actually makes the final decision as to which projects shall be done this year, and which shall wait, perhaps forever. That decision as to which projects pass this third hurdle is made by the engineers, always having in mind the elements previously mentioned.

Lots of projects on the "authorized" list will NEVER reach the pick and shovel stage. Everybody knows it, including its congressional backer. But at least he is able to boast about it—tell his constituents he is fighting to get federal money spent right there.

To these three hurdles the President has now added a fourth. Even if the engineers like a project on the authorized list, it must be sanctioned by the defense commission.

Because the pork barrel is still there, the smart pork grabbers on Capitol Hill have adapted themselves to the new rules. They have to do their trading with the White House, now, instead of with their colleagues.

So don't let the shock affect your heart when your senator votes for something the President wants that you know personally the senator thinks is cockeyed. He's just straightening out the national defense situation back in his state. Making the engineers, AND the defense commission, AND the President, see how important that dam on Podunk creek is to help Britain.

* * *

SPECULATE ON EFFECT OF LEASE-LEND BILL

While there is no desire on the part of most observers here to charge that opponents of the lend-lease bill to aid Britain are playing politics with national defense, there is a good deal of speculation as to what the effect will be when the political wheel does turn, as it has a way of doing.

At the present moment, as revealed in all sorts of ways, including the polls, the public is in favor of going to any necessary length to aid Britain by something approaching a three to one majority. Hence it might seem poor politics, regardless of other motives, for men who are ambitious for their own political futures to side with the minority.

This would be more important, so far as the senators are concerned, if that facing of the constituents had to be done SOON. As it is, even the next congressional election, when only one-third of the senators are up, is almost two years away, and two years in the present international situation is a mighty long time indeed.

RECALL 1920 ELECTION

In the 1918 election, it is recalled, certain popular figures who had opposed going into the war did not fare well. For example, Clarence C. Dill, a member of the house from Washington, was defeated chiefly because he had voted against the war declaration.

But in the 1920 election, just two years after the Armistice, the voters turned on the Democratic party very largely because of the war and peace conference aftermath.

So it is not enough to be with the majority at the time. If one is to succeed in politics one must be able to guess what the popular reaction will be a couple of years later. If you are just a voter, you can swing and right-about-face with impunity. But if you are an elected official you have to be a long-distance political weather forecaster.

Food Needs of Starving Europe Present Problems for America

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

NEW YORK CITY, N. Y.—Should America send food to the starving, war-stricken nations of Europe which have been successfully invaded? Considerable controversy surrounds the answer to this question for it may be a vital factor in the outcome of the current war.

England fears feeding these nations would indirectly aid Germany and tend to neutralize the effectiveness of their blockade, but others disagree. Herbert Hoover successfully supervised distribution of food in Belgium during the World war and believes it can be done again. The "National Committee on Food for the Five Small Democracies" has been formed to carry out his plan.

The following article presents the committee's reasons why the "five small democracies" should be aided.

Food is a weapon but famine is a boomerang. Each is powerful and effective and, like all deadly arms, should be handled with knowledge and experience and not emotion.

The first reaction of the British government of October, 1914, to the proposal to feed Belgium was, in the words of Lord Robert Cecil, chief of Great Britain's foreign office, "directly counter to every dictate of military prudence."

Herbert Hoover

But the British government later came to realize, in the words of Mr. Asquith, "that this relief food reaches the Belgians and the French, and reaches them alone"; while Lloyd George, speaking of "the work . . . for the allied and associated powers," said, "it has been of inestimable value."

They demonstrated their belief in its necessity by giving priority to relief shipments even over shipments of troops, munitions and food for the Allies.

This is a striking lesson from the annals of the World war and should cause us to explore deeply the facts of the present proposal before condemning to possible death 37 millions of people, as well as occasioning the inevitable concomitant diseases that will stop at no ideological, political or geographical frontier—not even the Atlantic ocean.

In the World war experience, the condition of starvation in Germany at the close of the war, as contrasted with the maintenance of the Belgian population in good health and without the loss of a life by starvation throughout four years, is eloquent proof of the fact that the blockade of Germany had been effective and in no way affected by the feeding of the occupied territories.

Outline Proposal.

What is the proposal? How was this effected last time? How could it be repeated?

The proposal is not to dump miscellaneous quantities of food into western Europe in the vague hope that they will be distributed exclusively among the conquered peoples. Nor is it an arrangement by which any imported food would release to the Germans equivalent quantities of native produce.

On the contrary, it is to set up a total administration under which all of the native produce would be mobilized, by centralization in the administration's warehouses, for the exclusive use of the civilian populations, and then to import only those foods in which there is a deficiency so as to make up a bare subsistence maintenance-of-life ration —precisely as was done in the World war. It is, further, that Germany contribute towards this program important quantities from her own supplies which she has produced or requisitioned.

Under such a plan, it is obvious that any leakages out of the total stores in sufficient quantities to affect the German food supply by any amount large enough to influence the German ration, and thereby the war, would be immediately self-revealing and very simple to check and to control.

A great deal of opposition to this plan is based upon the assertion that the Germans would not live up to any "guarantees" which they might give. But, curiously enough, guarantees are of secondary importance and German national interest the primary factor. What are these so-called "guarantees"? Naturally, operations could only begin after the negotiation of an undertaking with the German government that they will abstain from seizing either native or imported supplies.

Small Help to Germany.

But food alone would scarcely provide the motive for seizing the imported supplies. Native produce is hers for the taking, anyway. Germany is consuming today 1,400,000 tons of food a month; the invaded territories would need about 280,000 tons a month; foodstocks would be maintained in these countries (as they were last time) on a two-weeks' protection basis. Thus, if at any one moment Germany effected an all-embracing seizure from the North Cape to the French border, she would receive thereby exactly 72 hours of supplies for her 80 millions of people. And if she did, the flow of food would be cut off from one shipment to the next. There we see exposed, amazing and yet so obvious, the maximum menace to Britain—a three-days' supply of food for Germany!

Some believe that it is Germany's obligation to feed these people, but this also is inconsistent with the prevailing opinion of the German regime. The more ruthless one believes them to be the more obvious it is that they are not going to raise a finger to help their victims.

We have heard of requisitions and leaks of food supplies during the World war, but the audited and published accounts of the commission that did that job reveal that throughout the four years of their operations there was not one single requisition;—at least, not one that was not replaced directly or in equivalent supplies. It is not improbable that there were small leaks such as have been cited in personal letters to the press; but when it is considered that over 11,000,000,000 pounds of goods were taken into the occupied territories, it is petty to raise these infinitesimal proportions of the total amount handled as an objection that may condemn these 37 millions of people to death.

Revolt Held Unlikely.

Is it possible that if we do not feed these people they may revolt against their conquerors? Formerly, when there was less disparity between the weapons of an army and those of a mob this would have been possible; today, it is absurd to expect that a mob armed with scythes and pitchforks, hunting guns and knives, could withstand the weapons of modern warfare.

Anyone who advances this theory is apparently unacquainted with famine which, far from emboldening men, slowly and progressively breaks their spirit and reduces them to impotence and utter apathy.

Some thought, too, must be given to the question as to whether it is not, after all, merely one of distribution and not of shortage in Europe. Agricultural experts reveal that Europe is normally 15 per cent short in her food supply. Due to one of the coldest winters on record last year followed by one of the wettest springs, there is a further shortage of another 15 per cent. Add to these the additional shortages due to war phenomena, such as the doubling of consumption immediately upon mobilization, the destruction of stocks, and the interference with sowings, cultivation and harvests, and it is obvious that the total shortage in Europe this year will be far over and above 30 per cent.

One proposal has been to send into these countries medicines and food concentrates for children. There is but one cure for famine and that is food and no amount of serums or medicines can ward off death by starvation. Such "relief" is but a saline solution, a prolongation of the agony.

No, either this thing is right and of no risk to England or it is wrong. If it is right, since we have a stake in this war which we are steadily increasing, it is our duty to raise our voice that at least a trial be made to save these millions of people of our own ideals and philosophy—especially when the risk, the worst that could happen for the British cause, is but 72 hours' supply for Germany.

The only alternative is to deny food to these victims of aggression, exposing them to dangers of starvation.

The 'Other Side'

Many persons believe that it would be impossible to satisfactorily supervise distribution of food sent to conquered nations of Europe. Among those who hold this view is Wallace R. Deuel, who has spent six years in Germany as foreign correspondent for the Chicago Daily News.

Recently a reader wrote him and asked, "If we could ship food through the blockade to the starving Belgians (for example) what percentage of it might we expect the Nazis to take?"

To this question he replied, "You might expect the Nazis to take either most or all of what you sent. If they refrained from taking the same food you sent they would take a corresponding amount of other stocks. The starving Belgians would, in either event, be little or not at all better off than they were before."

U. S. Soldiers Require 90 Different Shoe Sizes

The war department has announced that in order to provide shoes of the proper size for each soldier, it is necessary to keep in stock at least 90 different shoe sizes in every army camps and posts.

Regular stock includes 90 sizes, in lengths from 5 to 12, and widths from A to EE. In addition, it is necessary to provide in some cases shoes as large as size 16 or as small as size 4½.

Valentine's Day

Greeting cards are very swell
For the friends that you know well;
But we wrote some special verses
For these very famous persons.

TO THE PRESIDENT

We are "Your Friends," and we remind you
"You're the Boss" and we're behind you!
But now we must guard our every border
So please hurry that stuff you've got "on order"
For don't think you can stop our foes
With that little "piece of garden hose"!

TO WINSTON CHURCHILL

As long as you keep that "bulldog chin,"
Old Adolf knows he just can't win.
For just as long as you're the Boss,
The channel he won't dare to cross!
And when he's ready to finish warring,
John Bull's lion will still be roaring!

TO MUSSOLINI

With stubby jaw you stood on high,
To watch your legions marching by
But soon those boys will be back home!
The Greeks have shown them road to Rome!

TO HITLER

You're just a rowdy on the loose!
And someone's yet to "cook your goose"!
For you'll surely find, before you're through
You've bit off more than you can chew!

History Records Lives Of Seven St. Valentines

Any attempt to explain why valentines are sent on St. Valentine's day bumps into the question: "Which St. Valentine do you mean?' For history records not one, but seven St. Valentines.

Some historians believe that the observance is dedicated to all seven, while others specifically name the bishop of Terni and a Roman priest who were both burned at the stake by Claudius, Roman emperor.

GRASSROOTS

by WRIGHT A. PATTERSON

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND OURS

I HAVE SEEN something of farming conditions of Europe—the narrow strips of land, of which every available inch must be cultivated that the farm family may eke out a barren existence; the little huddle of buildings along one side of the road in which the farm families live; the horse and cow and pig occupying the first floor of each building; the farmer and his family occupying the floor above; a manure pile in front of every building, each ounce of which must be carefully preserved that the few acres may be kept fertile and productive.

In such crude homes there are no conveniences—no toilets, no facilities for a bath, no telephones, no radios, and never an automobile.

In these villages there are no stores, no schools, no newspapers. They represent but a small settlement of peasants. One generation follows another. There is no opportunity for advancement, and among these people there is no ambition to achieve more than a mere living, as their fathers and grandfathers did for generations.

Such are the general farming conditions throughout continental Europe. Such is the general standard of farm life in France, Germany, Italy, Belgium and throughout the Balkans.

Germany has announced that she proposes to establish throughout all Europe a uniform standard of living, with the German standard at the top and serving as a model. That is the aim of Nazi rule.

It is a condition born of European methods. Such a condition would not, and must not, be tolerated in America.

Here we have opportunity. Thousands of our farm boys and girls achieve prominence in all walks of life. They are encouraged to work for self-improvement, encouraged to cultivate ambition, and out of it all, we are continually improving the American standard of living.

That is the American way.

* * *

DEFENSE TAKES TIME AND CAPITAL

WHEN WALTER CHRYSLER bought his first automobile in 1915, they were making them one at a time, and his Buick car cost something over $5,000. It turned him from a railroad mechanic into a top-notch automobile manufacturer, but it took 30 years to perfect mass production methods to the point where hundreds of better cars could be built in less time than it then took to build one and so they could be sold at a small part of $5,000.

It took a long period of designing, developing and building machines to do the job. Now we are asking industry to step into mass production of tanks, cannon, airplanes and other defense implements practically over night, and are inclined to condemn American industry for not making good.

The machinery used to produce automobiles will not produce any of the war implements we are asking for. New machines must be designed, developed and built for the new job. Not one of each, but hundreds. The first mass production job is that of tools.

Today there are employed in the manufacture of automobiles well over one million men. To provide tools and machinery for each man to work with has cost many billions. To provide tools and machinery for mass production on war implements will mean an expenditure of close to eight billion dollars if a million men are to be employed on the job.

It takes not only time, but it also takes money to do the job. Government restrictions as to financing have made it an almost impossible task for industry to provide any such sum. When the threat of war, or the war if it comes, is over, that eight billion dollar investment in tools and machinery would be practically valueless.

If industry is to protect us and provide for our war-time needs, we must give industry a chance as it applies to both time and money.

* * *

SEEING AMERICA

THE WAR in Europe is causing Americans to see something of the beauty and grandeur of their own land. Trains are heavily loaded with tourists now seeing America, who in previous years had thought of travel only as a trip to Europe, to the Far East or a Mediterranean cruise. An eastern friend tells me he has finally found that the western boundary of the United States is not the Hudson river.

* * *

HUNGER MORE PERILOUS

HUNGER WILL kill more people in Europe during the next 12 months than will bombs and bullets. Estimates of those endangered by lack of food range all the way from 15 to 60 million—and such conditions at a time when America is piling up surpluses of food products.

War accounts for but a portion of the difficulty. Lack of a practical, workable, world-distribution system is even more responsible. Americans can well afford to study that subject.

Here's a Design for Rag Rug Enthusiasts

By RUTH WYETH SPEARS

MAKE one rag rug and you will find yourself a member of an enthusiastic clan that gloats over any soft piece of old woolen goods and who count the days until they fall heir to a dress of a particular color that they want. These enthusiasts bleach materials to tone them down; they brighten others

with dye; they antique some with tea and they have a wonderful time.

The sketch gives all the directions you will need to copy this fascinating braided rag rug with a flower medallion in the center. Or you may make two of the medallions, sew them together and add a braided handle for a knitting bag. Braid the fabric strips tightly and keep the work flat while you sew the circles for the roses and the loops for leaves; then sew them together. Use carpet thread double for this and for sewing the braided rows around the edge of the rug.

* * *

NOTE: There are two other fascinating braided rug designs in Mrs. Spears' Book 3 and the new Book 6 contains directions for a hooked, a braided and a crocheted rag rug. "The Rug That Grew Up With the Family" is in Book 3. Each book has 32 pages of pictures and directions. Send order to:

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Cultivation of Genius

The richest genius, like the most fertile soil, when uncultivated, shoots up into the rankest weeds; and instead of vines and olives for the pleasure and use of man, produces to its slothful owner the most abundant crop of poisons.—Hume.

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Tide Will Turn

When you get into a tight place, and everything goes against you, till it seems as if you couldn't hold on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time the tide will turn. —Harriet Beecher Stowe.

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