NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Reviewed by
CARTER FIELD

U. S. May Build Base in Iceland . . . Transshipments Found Impractical . . . Army Experts Had Figured Germany Would Beat Russia in Four Weeks . . . and Lindbergh Had Said Russian Air Force No Good.

(Bell Syndicate—WNU Service.)

WASHINGTON.—Even American isolationists get a chuckle out of the German and Japanese protests at the "immortality" of the British and Russian invasion of what used to be called Persia, and especially the sensibilities in Berlin and Tokyo being shocked by this "unwarranted" attack on a weak and defenseless power. It is obvious, of course, that the infiltration of German "tourists" and "business men" had a fifth column significance.

But a story from Iceland is just as amusing, even if it is more than a year old.

It seems that when a British fleet steamed into the harbor of the chief port of Iceland a Nazi watcher on the docks rushed up to the German consulate to report it. The consul was not interested.

"It is not a British fleet," he said, "it is a German fleet. Don't bother about it."

Then he hesitated, and surprise showed in his face. "But they are 10 days ahead of schedule," he said.

Then he went about his business.

Contrary to the belief of many people in this country, Iceland is not being used importantly as a transshipment point for American supplies for Britain. It had been assumed here, after the sending of an American force to Iceland, that this would be done. The thought was that American ships, prohibited by the neutrality act from entering the war zone, could take supplies to Iceland, and then British ships could transport them the remaining 800 miles to Scotland.

Maybe this was the plan, but there were a lot of miscalculations about the facilities in Iceland.

The transshipment plan has been found impractical for the simple reason that there are no piers equipped with loading and unloading machinery of the modern type in any Icelandic harbor. To make transshipment of any ordinary freight possible it would be necessary to ship the equipment there and set it up—rather a large-sized undertaking.

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THE EXPERTS GO WRONG ON SOVIET RUSSIA

In view of the possibility of a shooting war with Japan it might be wise to bear in mind that surprises may be expected, perhaps very unpleasant surprises. Nobody here believes there will be any surprise about the final outcome, but there may be developments of far-reaching importance which no one now envisions.

This skepticism applies to supposedly well-informed intelligence services of the army and navy as well as the man in the street, who knows only what he reads and can figure by looking at maps.

For instance: Within a few days after the attack on Russia by Germany a man in close touch with our army intelligence, a man whose business requires him to have contact there daily, was having dinner with some friends. He made a bet that night that the war between Germany and Russia would be over by September 1. After the bet was irrevocable, he smilingly informed the person he thought he had taken advantage of that he was betting on the best information in the world—the opinion of military experts in the army intelligence!

It would seem to the casual observer that the army should have been better informed both as to the strength of the Soviet and the morale of its people and troops. It was a great military mistake. Wars have been lost because of less grave errors than that.

Soon after Munich the editor of Aviation magazine, following a visit to Germany, wrote a story for the Saturday Evening Post, entitled: "Hitler Wasn't Bluffing." This backed up the much-maligned information given by Charles A. Lindbergh to the effect that the German air force was terrific. Lindbergh had added that the Russian air force was not very good.

This Lindbergh report was well in advance of the opening of the present war, in September, 1939. So, having laughed at Lindbergh in 1939, and seen his information confirmed in 1940, it would seem that the "experts" then accepted everything he had said in 1939 as still being true in 1941. In short there apparently was no information in the places in Washington where it should have been in June, 1941, that the Russian air force was strong enough to make some trouble for the Germans.

Other information about Russia seems to have been as cockeyed as the army's estimate that it could not fight more than four weeks. It may be that the government is about to make the same mistake in estimating the future.

F. D. Roosevelt Accepts 1936 Election Returns As Mandate to Continue Supreme Court Battle

By special arrangement with **Collier's Weekly** and Western Newspaper Union this newspaper presents in condensed form a series of articles by President Roosevelt currently appearing in that magazine.

THE FIGHT GOES ON

"The Constitution Prevails"—Part II

By Franklin D. Roosevelt

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This is the second half of the President's own story of the fight for Supreme court reform. It is part of the newly written introduction series to a forthcoming volume of his State Papers.

IN NOVEMBER, 1936, came the presidential and congressional elections. It was a hard-fought campaign, in which the issue was joined without reserve, in which no punches were pulled. The issue was a single one—the New Deal, its objectives, its methods, its future proposals. The opposition pointed to the court as the only obstacle which had stood in our way. On the other hand, I made it clear that, if reelected, I intended to continue to press harder and harder for our objectives, in order to carry out the will of the people. The spirit of the Democratic campaign was expressed in my speech at Madison Square Garden in New York City, on October 31, 1936: that for all our objectives—many of which had already been blocked by the Supreme court—we had "only just begun to fight."

The election returns of 1936 left little room for doubt as to whether the people of the United States wanted that fight to continue. Forty-six states out of the 48 voted for the New Deal. The popular vote for the New Deal was 27,500,000 votes—or a plurality of over 10,000,000 votes out of the 45,000,000 cast.

As I returned to Washington after election day, I knew that the great interests and the great newspapers which had opposed my re-election in 1936 by violently attacking the policies and objectives of the last four years, were all ready and set again to transfer the scene of battle from the legislative halls to the court room. Defeat at the polls would never deter them from seeking ultimate victory from the courts.

Dictatorships Growing.

In fact, many of the later New Deal measures were already even then working their way up to the Supreme court: the social security act, the national labor relations act, the public utility holding company act.

The problem was a simple one to state; but an almost impossible one to solve.

To stand still was to invite disaster. Across the seas, democracies had even then been yielding place to dictatorships, because they had proven too weak or too slow to fulfill the wants of their citizens. Social forces in our day gather headway with ever - increasing speed. It would have been dangerous to block too long the just and irresistible pressure of human needs.

Yet it was hard to read the opinion of the court on the Agricultural Adjustment act and say what we were going to be able to do for the farmer. Or the opinions outlawing the railroad retirement act, the bituminous coal act, the National Industrial Recovery act, the New York minimum wage act, and decide just what we could do in the future for the exploited laboring man and woman; or what we could do in the way of flood control and drouth control; or what we could do in all the other fields where we had promised progress—help for the blind and crippled, unemployment insurance and old age pensions, total abolition of child labor, protection against monopolies, building decent housing for the lowest income groups, slum eradication, cheaper electricity, intelligent handling of industrial disputes through collective bargaining, minimum wages—maximum hours.

The challenge of a third of a nation ill-clad, ill-housed, ill-nourished, was still with us; and we seemed to be without the necessary weapons to meet the challenge.

Court Blocks Progress.

The reactionary members of the court had apparently determined to remain on the bench as long as life continued—for the sole purpose of blocking any program of reform. This was nothing new in our national life. The same thing had happened in earlier days of our history; it had happened during President Wilson's administration. It was happening again. These men seemed to have a definite mission in life—to block our social and economic progress; and, dedicated to that mission, they clung to their places. Although it had become, on the average, the most aged court in our history, although six justices had passed the age of 70, not a single vacancy had occurred during my first term in office. The bench had been created almost entirely by appointments by conservative Presidents; and it was now continually passing economic and political judgments, almost month by month, on a liberal program of recovery and reform.

Time would not allow us to wait for vacancies. Things were happening, NOW!

That same element of time was also most important in considering the question of passing a constitutional amendment to meet the court crisis. I considered that remedy very carefully—and rejected it. The program of the New Deal involved the most controversial social questions in the last 75 years of our history. Tremendous interests were at stake—interests which would hesitate at nothing to gain their ends. It would only be necessary to prevent ratification in 13 states in order to block any proposed amendment to the Constitution. I knew how long it would take to get the approval of 36 states. I had seen the long year-after-year ordeal of the proposed child labor amendment, which involved opposition which was only picayune in comparison with the intrenched antagonism to the new social program. No! It would take years and years to get a constitutional amendment which would meet our difficulties. Time was too pressing for that.

Retire Members at 70.

The plan which I finally proposed provided for a continuous and recurrent addition of new blood, new vigor, new experience, and new outlook. For, under my plan, as soon as a judge reached the age of 70, a new judge would be appointed. The old judge could retire on full salary for life, if he wished. If he preferred not to retire, he might continue to remain on the bench; but he would be counterbalanced there by the new man who had had an active contact with life about him.

Time and again during the fight, I made it clear that my chief concern was with the objective—namely, a modernized judiciary that would look at modern problems through modern glasses. The exact kind of legislative method to accomplish the objective was not important. I was willing to accept any method proposed which would accomplish that ultimate objective — constitutionally and quickly. I received, however, no reasonable guarantee or assurance that some other definite method would obtain congressional approval. Rumors of compromise were plenty; but never a definite agreement or offer. Furthermore, it was clear that the opponents of the plan suggested by me would never be able to agree among themselves on a plan of their own. And the best legislative advice which I could get from the congressional leaders was that my own suggestion would ultimately be approved.

No Compromise Offered.

That is the reason why no so-called compromise was ever submitted by me to the congress; that is why it was necessary to persist in the plan originally proposed. Had any satisfactory compromise been definitely offered which would have been effective in attaining the objective, and which would have been capable of quick passage, it would have been accepted by me.

Events happened in the midst of the fight to becloud the chief issue. There was first, the retirement of Justice Van Devanter in June, 1937. Some have said that it was strategically timed; but of course that is incapable of proof at the present time. There came, then, the death of Senator Robinson, the senate Democratic leader of the members in favor of the plan.

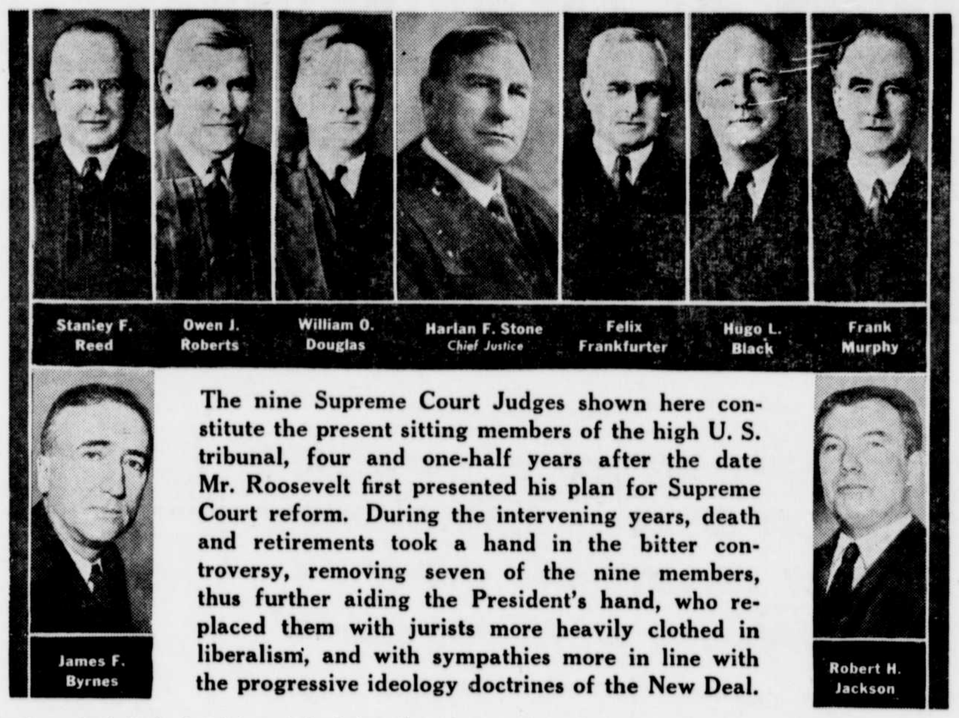
Supreme Court Yields.

But the startling fact which did more than anything else to bring about the defeat of the plan in the halls of the congress, was a clear-cut victory on the bench of the court for the objectives of the fight. The court yielded. The court changed. The court began to interpret the Constitution instead of torturing it. It was still the same court, with the same justices. No new appointments had been made. And yet, beginning shortly after the message of February 5, 1937, what a change!

Whether this change came as a result of the election returns of 1936, whether it came as a result of my message, whether it came as a result of public discussion during the course of the fight, or a combination of all these—those are important questions for the later historians of the period. These need not be discussed here.

On March 29, 1937, the court completely reversed itself on the constitutional power of a state to pass a minimum wage law for women. Just nine months after denying this power to the states, the court unequivocally decided, five to four, to uphold the power; and, in so many words, it expressly overruled its earlier contrary decisions and thus a new interpretation was placed on the doctrine of freedom of contract.

It was not until after the end of the judicial term in June, 1937, that a single vacancy on the court actually occurred. The about-face in the decisions of the court had come from the very same personnel that had been on the court since my first inauguration. The victory, therefore, cannot be attributed to the new justices. It was rather a realization by one or two members of the court that the court had exceeded its powers, that it had strayed away from the Constitution itself, and that the liberal minority of the court had been correct in its conclusions.



The nine Supreme Court Judges shown here constitute the present sitting members of the high U. S. tribunal, four and one-half years after the date Mr. Roosevelt first presented his plan for Supreme Court reform. During the intervening years, death and retirements took a hand in the bitter controversy, removing seven of the nine members, thus further aiding the President's hand, who replaced them with jurists more heavily clothed in liberalism, and with sympathies more in line with the progressive ideology doctrines of the New Deal.

United States Children Voice Tastes and Opinions in Poll

CHICAGO. — The second nationwide poll of children, 8 to 13 years of age, conducted by William T. Reed, candy manufacturer here, reveals some interesting, amusing and startling answers. The questionnaire was mailed to youngsters in all sections of the country, whose parents' incomes represented all income brackets, to determine the tastes and opinions of the average 1941 child.

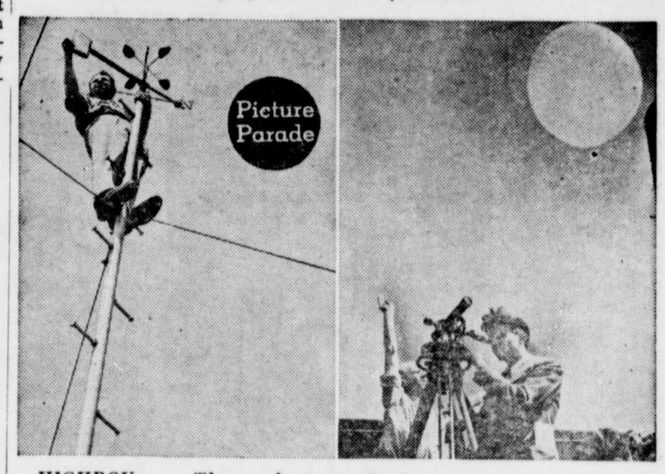
One boy offered anything in the world to defeat Hitler, except, "My mom, dad and dog." Isolationists among the children were outnumbered 11 to 1.

Nearest and dearest question, to the children no doubt, was the one relating to their favorite candy flavor. Chocolate led with 22 per cent, butterscotch second with 16 per cent, followed by caramel, cherry, peppermint, orange, and vanilla.

Army Weathermen

As the weather plays a vital role in war, Uncle Sam is taking steps to insure a supply of weathermen as a defense measure. At the department of meteorology in New York university thirty college graduates are learning the art of "doping out" the weather before becoming members of our armed forces. Part of the training consists in operating a weather station on a 24-hour basis. These photos show how they work.

CORN ON THE COP . . . John Quigley, chief cop and campus guard at the university, telling the young weather experts that he'll back his corn against all their gadgets as weather forecaster.



HIGHBOY . . . The gentleman atop the pole is adjusting the cup anemometer and wind vane, a device for determining the speed of the wind.

Student weathermen taking observations. The balloon has just been released. Its flight is followed with the theodolite, and observations are taken and recorded.

Professor A. Spilhaus explains the operation of a radiometeorograph to some of the student weathermen. Attached to a balloon, it is sent aloft to ascertain conditions in the upper air.

Now you'll have to take the prof's word for this. He is explaining the equations of motions of atmosphere to the class. If we knew more about it we'd tell you, or become a weatherman ourself.