MEN AND AFFAIRS AT WASHINGTON

★ National Topics Interpreted by ★
★ WILLIAM BRUCKART ★

Washington.—Two messages to congress by the President have created more than the usual excitement attendant upon such things as the new session has settled down to its annual consideration of public affairs. In each of these were Presidential declarations that are beginning to reverberate and that means they are highly controversial.

Messages Cause Stir

In Mr. Roosevelt's annual message "on the state of the union," he took occasion to tell congress how much he appreciated its "cooperation" with him. He followed that bit of back patting with probably the boldest statement he has made since entering the White House four years ago for the first term. He called upon the Supreme Court of the United States, in a roundabout way to "co-operate" with the other two branches of the government, the legislative and executive.

The other wave of excitement, not to say disturbance, was caused by the President's special message asking congress for a wholesale reorganization of the executive departments and agencies—calling this proposal a plan for modernizing the government.

One can circulate through the corridors and offices of the Capitol and office buildings and hear mutterings aplenty and even a considerable bit of outspoken criticism by senators and representatives of the two circumstances I have mentioned. There are many members of the legislative branch who are entertaining a feeling that the demand for Supreme court co-operation was equivalent to carrying the ball out of bounds. But that part of the Presidential pronouncement is not likely, in the end, to produce the battle on the floor of the senate or house that will result from some phases of his "modernizing" program.

The fact is that our national government has become a structure, insofar as the executive agencies are concerned, that sprawls out like an octopus. About 75 per cent of these units and agencies are products of the New Deal recovery program; they work at cross purposes; they move in their own sphere and make their own policies with almost no direction from the White House. Certainly, the time is ripe to clean up that mess.

* * *

Reorganization Program

The Presidential reorganization program was sweeping in character and that is the reason why it has run into obstacles. For example, the plan calls for placing the interstate commerce commission, the general accounting office, the federal trade commission and the civil service commission largely inside of old-established departments over which cabinet officers preside. Now, a cabinet officer is and always has been in the past a political appointee, an individual who had been active in promotion of a party campaign and usually one who has made important contributions of money to his party's campaign fund. So, it becomes plainly evident, I believe, that to place such agencies as those I have named in regular departments, is to place them completely under political domination.

Where it is good, therefore, to place strictly administrative agencies under cabinet control, it becomes equally dangerous to place under political domination such quasi-judicial agencies as the ICC and the general accounting office. There can be no doubt of that fact. That is the crux of the disturbance among the legislators under the reorganization proposal.

Those of us who have had long experience as writers and observers in Washington have seen evidence in almost every administration of attempts of politicians to get their fingers into the pie of railroad rate making. They have adopted all sorts of tricks; they have used subterfuges and they have employed strong political pressure time after time to gain control of railroad rate making. Through all of these years since the ICC was established, there has always been enough sane minds in congress who, with White House backing, could resist this political move. Naturally, therefore, it is a matter of some question why President Roosevelt should attempt to toss the interstate commerce commission and its rate making power straight into the laps of the politicians.

Of course, the Presidential message on this point appears on its face to provide against the end that I have mentioned but old timers in congress point out how this wedge, driven only a little further, will bring about political domination of the ICC.

* * *

Potential Dangers

It is hardly necessary here to set down all of the potential dangers that can emanate from political control of such a vast structure as the railroads of the United States. It is unlimited in its possibilities. Dangers are inherent in any program of that kind with which the politicians are identified and it appears to be a circumstance in which congress, if it is going to serve the people properly, should call a halt.

As to the general accounting office and the plant to include it in the Treasury again under the rule of an auditor general, the reorganization scheme simply will set control of public expenditures back a quarter of a century. One of the earlier Presidents made no effort to conceal the use that could be made of the auditing unit of the government when he said, on an occasion where the chief auditor ruled an expenditure illegal, that if it were not possible to change the ruling under the law, it still was possible to change the chief auditor.

I am not making a charge that the present administration desires to spend congressional appropriations illegally; but one cannot dodge the conversations that are taking place around the Capitol in which legislators recall how President Roosevelt criticized John R. Mc Carl when he was comptroller general for a decision that prevented use of public money in a manner desired by the President. To sum up this particular phase of the situation, one hardly need to say more than that if the auditor general is a subordinate of the Secretary of the Treasury, he is likely to take orders from the Secretary of the Treasury, whoever that Secretary may be. And, since the Secretary of the Treasury is an appointee of the President and serves only at the President's pleasure, in my mind a link is established whereby the White House again will control determination of legality and illegality of expenditures.

Congress created the general accounting office in order that it would have an agency independent of the Chief Executive and the executive departments to keep tab on how those executive agencies expended the money which congress appropriated. That was the reason why the office of comptroller general was made to carry a fifteen-year appointment with removal only for malfeasance or misfeasance. Now it is proposed to tear down that structure and bring the whole auditing organization under a cabinet officer.

But there is another phase to be considered. It has been my good fortune to be in Washington during the entire life of the general accounting office as well as for several years before. Of my knowledge, I can say that the general accounting office has recovered millions of dollars of illegally disbursed funds as well as prevented illegal disbursement of other millions. It is a plain case, then, in which sound and honest administration has resulted because in cases where temptation for illegal use of public money has existed, administrative officials have resisted the temptation since, like the potential chicken thief in the country, they know that the sheriff or the constable or the state police are watching.

● Western Newspaper Union.

Officer Demoted; Failed to Kill Dog

Detroit.—Sergt. Alex Kennedy is without his stripes now because he failed to apply the "coup de grace" to a wounded mongrel dog.

The dog had taken a piece out of Kennedy's trousers. Kennedy shot it, but ignored a woman's plea to put the dog out of its misery with another bullet.

The veteran police officer was demoted to a patrolman when Mrs. Sophia Liaca, owner of the dog, complained before the police board.

Students Enjoy Winter Sports

Girls riding over a bump on the toboggan slide at the Northampton School for Girls, Massachusetts. Tobogganing, skiing and other winter sports take up a good part of the free time of the students.

A Mental Inventory—

◆ Wishes Are but Wasted Thoughts Unless We Work to Attain Fruition

IT is well in these early weeks of the New Year for us to take a sort of mental inventory of ourselves, and see if we are fostering any of the good things which we openly spoke of, or silently wished would materialize during 1937. Have these things already gone into the dump heap of futility? Have they been scrapped because of no effort on our part to further their becoming realities? Are we aware of this scrapping? Or do we still vaguely suspect they will materialize or be fulfilled just becuse we think of them with desire?

Action Essential.

Most of us remember the Macawberism "Name a wish and gratify it." There have to be things set in motion before a wish can come to fruition. Unless we actually want a thing enough to try to get it, we cannot want it very much. Our New Year wishes if they are to be fulfilled should be more than thought-seeds by now. They should have been planted and tended and perhaps have begun to show tiny sprouts.

Diversity.

As wishes vary according to desires of individuals and avenues of opportunity for them to materialize differ, it is difficult to make helpful suggestions except in very obvious instances.

Not every fervid wish can be literally acted upon. But even if not, it can be nurtured. Perhaps in the quiet of one's own room, one can prepare oneself for calmer and stronger progress, making one ready to work and see things through to a fine and a happy finish. Whatever the wish, it is but wasted breath or thought unless one makes some attempt to attain its fulfillment.

© Bell Syndicate.—WNU Service.

Alien Seizers

Roger Shaw, foreign editor of the Review of Reviews, names six foreign dictators who were not born in the nations they rule with rods of iron.

Adolph Hitler is not a German, but an Austrian. He wasn't able to get to first base in the land of his birth. Stalin, the big shot of Russia, first saw the light in Asiatic Georgia. Pilsudski had to leave his home town in Lithuania and go to Poland to make good. Mustapha Kemel was born in a Greek Salonica home. Eleutherios Venezelos was a native of the Island of Crete. And Eamonn de Valera seems to have learned how to boss Ireland by watching policemen in his native city of New York.

Even Napoleon, who swept the world for France, was an Italian Corsican. And Alexander the Great, who made the Greeks shudder at his fabled height, was not Attic but Macedonian.

Gas, Gas All the Time, Can't Eat or Sleep

"The gas on my stomach was so bad I could not eat or sleep. Even my heart seemed to hurt. A friend suggested Adlerika. The first dose I took brought me relief. Now I eat as I wish, sleep fine and never felt better." —Mrs. Jas. Filler.

Adlerika acts on BOTH upper and lower bowels while ordinary laxatives act on the lower bowel only. Adlerika gives your system a thorough cleansing, bringing out old, poisonous matter that you would not believe was in your system and that has been causing gas pains, sour stomach, nervousness and headaches for months.

Dr. H. L. Shook, New York, reports: "In addition to intestinal cleansing, Adlerika greatly reduces bacteria and colon bacilli."

Give your bowels a REAL cleansing with Adlerika and see how good you feel. Just one spoonful relieves GAS and constipation. At all Leading Druggists.

Burden of Wisdom

He who knows much has many cares.—Lessing.

PAIN IN BACK

HEARLY DROVE HER CRAZY Got Quick RELIEF By Rubbing

Muscles were so sore she could hardly touch them. Used Hamlins Wizard Oil and found wonderful relief. Just rubbed it on and rubbed it in. Thousands say Hamlins Wizard Oil works wonders for stiff, aching muscles. Why suffer? Get a bottle for speedy comfort. Pleasant odor. Will not stain clothes. At all druggists.

HAMLINS WIZARD OIL
For MUSCULAR ACHES and PAINS
Due to RHEUMATISM NEURALGIA
LUMBAGO CHEST COLDS

Calotabs Help Nature To Throw Off a Cold

Millions have found in Calotabs a most valuable aid in the treatment of colds. They take one or two tablets the first night and repeat the third or fourth night if needed.

How do Calotabs help Nature throw off a cold? First, Calotabs are one of the most thorough and dependable of all intestinal eliminants, thus cleansing the intestinal tract of the germ-laden mucus and toxines. Second, Calotabs are diuretic to the kidneys, promoting the elimination of cold poisons from the blood. Thus Calotabs serve the double purpose of a purgative and diuretic, both of which are needed in the treatment of colds.

Calotabs are quite economical; only twenty-five cents for the family package, ten cents for the trial package. (Adv.)

Sit in Your Chair ! at Home . . . and Shop !

The things you want to buy . . . at the time you want to buy them . . . at the price you want to pay. You can find these right in the paper. Your newspaper advertisements make it possible to do your *"looking around"* right at home . . . and then go downtown to do your buying . . . saving you time and energy.