

CURRENT EVENTS IN REVIEW

By Edward W. Pickard

TVA Held Valid on All Points at Issue

SCORE one for the New Deal; and a big one. The Supreme court in its long awaited decision ruled that the Tennessee Valley Authority act is valid, on all points at issue in the suit brought by the stockholders of the Alabama Power company. Under the ruling the administration is free to go ahead with its power program in the Tennessee valley actually under way. The decision was read by Chief Justice Hughes and was concurred in by all the associate justices except Justice McReynolds. He read a dissenting opinion.

Because of circumscribed limits the decision was much narrower than most of the New Deal findings of the Supreme court. It was limited strictly to the terms of the contract on which the suit was brought, namely, acquisition by TVA of a transmission line to convey power from the Wilson dam.

Certain phases are still open for possible legal contest in the future, and only Wilson dam, not Norris dam or any other dam constructed or projected on the Tennessee river was involved in the court's finding.

The legal right of the federal government to acquire and own transmission lines to a market for surplus energy—never before directly passed upon by the United States Supreme court—was ruled upon in the affirmative. Unanswered is the question of what constitutes surplus power.

Among the chief points in the majority opinion were these: The government had full authority to build Wilson dam—keystone of TVA.

Congress has undisputed power to order disposal of electricity developed at the dam.

The government acted legally in building or obtaining through purchase from private companies certain transmission lines to transport power to a wider market.

The government has the same right to dispose of surplus power as it would have to dispose of copper, gold, and minerals on public lands.

Justice McReynolds in answer to this said: "If under the thin mask of disposing of property the United States can enter the business of generating, transmitting and selling power, as, when and wherever, some board may specify, with the definite design to accomplish ends wholly beyond the sphere marked out for them by the Constitution, an easy way has been found for breaking down the limitations heretofore supposed to guarantee protection against aggression."

Chairman Frank R. McNinch of the federal power commission said the TVA decision "settles all questions of constitutionality of such federal projects as Grand Coulee, Bonneville and Fort Peck."

Military Revolt in Paraguay Succeeds

REVOLUTIONARIES, mostly military and led by Colonels Smith and Recalde, veterans of the Chaco war, took possession of the government of Paraguay after some fighting in the streets of Asuncion, the capital. The government forces surrendered to the rebels and President Ayala took refuge on a gunboat. It was believed a new government would be formed with Col. Rafael Franco as its head. He is now an exile in Buenos Aires.

Italians Win Big Battle With the Ethiopians

DELAYED dispatches from the Italian headquarters in northern Ethiopia tell of a six-day battle, the fiercest and most important of the war so far, in which the forces of General Badoglio, about 70,000 in number, defeated and routed 80,000 Ethiopians, including 10,000 of the emperor's guard under Ras Mulugheta, war minister, and 70,000 warriors under Ras Kassa and Ras Seyoum. The Italians were left in full possession of the fertile and strategic Endero region and in control of the passes in the Tembien region. After six days of encircling operations, during which torrential rains bogged the field of battle and heavy clouds enabled the Ethiopians to make invisible movements, the March 23 division of blackshirts planted the Italian flag on the mist-veiled high summit of Aradam, completing that particular operation. They then had a clear path to Amba Alagia, 18 miles further south, and it was presumed that the taking of that mountain would mark the cessation of activities because of the coming March rains. It was estimated that in this battle more than 6,000 Ethiopians had been killed and many times that number

wounded. The Italian casualties were not announced but they undoubtedly were not light. Only white Italians participated in the fighting.

Substitute Farm Bill Passed by Senate

TEN days of hot debate in the senate culminated in the passage of the administration's substitute farm bill by a vote of 56 to 20, and it was hurried over to the house with the prospect of quick approval by that body.

Attacked by Republicans as a substitute to get around the Supreme court AAA decision, and frankly conceded by Democrats to be a measure indirectly continuing control of farm production, the bill would accomplish its objective as follows: The secretary of agriculture would be empowered to make benefit payments to farmers who voluntarily cooperate with the government's suggestions on retiring certain land from production to conserve its fertility. Payments would be determined on four factors:

1. Acreage of crop land.
2. Acreage of soil improving crops.
3. Changes in farming practices.
4. Percentage of normal farm production which equals that percentage of normal national production of farm commodities required for domestic consumption.

This arrangement would be limited to two years. It would be replaced by a system of 48 individual state AAA's to regulate production, with the federal government apportioning funds to the states.

Senator Black's Inquisition Creates Resentment

SENATOR HUGO L. BLACK of Alabama and his lobby investigation committee are creating a flood of resentment among American citizens that is likely to do vastly more harm than good to the New Deal. Quite without concealment Black is using the committee in a way that thousands of people do not like. He sent out a questionnaire to individuals and organizations known to be opposed to the New Deal, demanding information on their relations with all organizations and their corporation and other investments. Many refused to answer the questions, and they are supported in this position by the American Liberty league, which has challenged the right of Black's committee to compel answer under oath to the queries. In effect, the league dares Black to cite for contempt of the senate those who refuse to reply to the questionnaire.

Senator Black's only reply to date was that it was "a little difficult to believe that the league would attempt to intimidate or coerce its own members to keep their mouths shut until the du Ponts say they can talk."

House Passes the Huge War Department Bill

THE War department bill, appropriating approximately 545 million dollars for "national defense," was passed by the house. For purely military purposes the sum of \$376,866,333 is allotted. The remainder, \$168,669,965, goes for rivers and harbors projects, generally classed as "pork."

An attempt to put back into the bill a \$29,000,000 appropriation for carrying on such projects as the Passamaquoddy tidal power experiment in Maine and the Florida ship canal was suppressed firmly. Not until congress has authorized these projects will more funds be provided them, the leaders ruled.

The military budget provided by the bill will be sufficient to maintain an average army of 147,000 men during the coming year. By 1939, according to the War department, the maximum of 165,000 permitted by congress should be reached.

The most important amendment added to the bill was one providing for the employment each year of 1,000 reserve officers on active duty for a 12-month period, of whom 50 will be annually commissioned in the regular army.

Plan to Cash the Bonus Without New Taxes

ACTING on behalf of the senate finance committee, Senator Byrnes consulted the executive department and then introduced an amendment to the independent offices appropriation bill to provide \$1,746,000,000 to cash the veterans' bonus. He predicted that it would require no new taxes. The sum mentioned will be sufficient, Byrnes said, together with the 254 million dollars now in the adjusted service certificate fund, to pay in full every outstanding bonus certificate.

In addition to appropriating the cash, the Byrnes amendment would transfer 507 million dollars in bonds to the United States government life insurance fund to repay loans on bonus certificates.

Germany Warned to Keep Troops Off the Rhine

FRANCE believes Hitler is just waiting for a favorable opportunity to announce that Germany will re-arm the Rhineland, contrary to the terms of the treaty of Versailles, but she does not intend to be caught napping as she was when he sprung his announcement of compulsory military service for the whole German nation. So Premier Van Zeeland of Belgium was summoned to Paris and he and French Foreign Minister Pierre-Etienne Flandin issued a warning that the remilitarization of the Rhineland would bring immediate reprisals.

The exact nature of the reprisals agreed upon between Flandin and Van Zeeland was not revealed, but it is declared they have been worked out to the last detail and will be applied automatically and simultaneously by the two countries. It is believed in Paris that Great Britain has agreed to support action contemplated by France and Belgium, and that meanwhile Belgium will complete her system of border fortifications.

Four Moslem Nations United by Treaty

DISPATCHES from Istanbul say that four Moslem nations, Turkey, Iraq, Persia and Afghanistan, have concluded a treaty of friendship and nonaggression and that it will be signed soon either at Teheran or Bagdad.

It is considered of the greatest significance that these four independent Moslem countries have for the first time united on their own initiative and agreed to patch up minor differences which have embittered past relations and to seek friendly co-operation in the future.

Russia and Japan Agree to Investigate Clashes

ACCORDING to an official communication issued at Moscow, the Soviet and Japanese governments have agreed in principle to the appointment of a mixed commission to investigate clashes on the Soviet-Manchukuan border.

The offer of the Japanese government to enter into such an arrangement was communicated to the foreign office by Japanese Ambassador Tamekichi Ota. G. S. Stomoniakoff, Russian vice commissar for foreign affairs, pointed out that the Soviet government frequently has made similar proposals in the past.

The Soviet government ordered its consulate at Mukden, Manchukuo, closed, but an official spokesman declined to connect the order with recent clashes between Japanese-Manchukuan and Outer Mongolian troops on the Outer Mongolian border.

Norway Wins Winter Olympic Games

NORwegians won first place in the winter Olympic games at Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. Germany was second with 117 points, and the United States came fifth with 35½. Norway's speed skaters and ski jumpers were invincible. The only title won by Americans was in the two-man bobsled event captured by Ivan Brown and Alan Washburn of Keene Valley, N. Y.

Newton D. Baker Heads Special Bar Committee

PRESIDENT WILLIAM L. RANSOM of the American Bar association, with headquarters in Chicago, announced that Newton D. Baker, former secretary of war, has accepted the chairmanship of the association's special committee on co-operation between the press, radio and bar against publicity interfering with fair trial of judicial and quasi-judicial proceedings.

The creation of this special committee to define standards to be recommended to lawyers, newspapers and radio broadcasters in the matter of publicity as to court trials, said the announcement, is an outcome of the incidents arising in the course of the Bruno Hauptmann trial and various proceedings before governmental boards and bodies.

Pan-American Parley on Peace Proposed

LETTERS have been sent by President Roosevelt to the heads of the Latin-American governments inviting them to participate in a Pan-American conference, probably in Washington, the purpose of which will be to organize the peace machinery of the western hemisphere. Our State department says that the meeting will endeavor to provide means for adjusting international disputes by peaceful means. The conference may bring up the Monroe Doctrine for a new definition through multilateral endorsement.

King Alexander's Slayings Are Sentenced

TRIAL of the assassins of King Alexander of Yugoslavia at Marselles came to an end at Aix-en-Provence, France with verdicts of guilty for the six defendants. For three of the band of Croats, members of the secret Ustachi society, who were apprehended, mercy was recommended and they were given sentences of life imprisonment in French Guiana. The others, who never were caught, were sentenced to death. One of the latter is Dr. Ante Pavelich, reputed head of the Ustachi.

Washington Digest

National Topics Interpreted
By WILLIAM BRUCKART
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New Farm Relief Law

Washington.—We have a new farm relief law on the way. The natural and logical question is, what does it do? And, among the cold and non-partisan analysis of the Washington field one also hears a third question, namely, is the sponsorship of any of the numerous farm plans, Republican or Democratic, sincere?

Congress, for the sake of its political hide, is anxious to do right by agriculture. It is attempting to supplant the Invalidated Agricultural Adjustment act with a law about which its individual campaigning members can talk, to which they can point with pride.

But there are other and unofficial farm plans bobbing up here, there and everywhere. It seems to be the open season for proposals to aid agriculture. Few, if any, of them are grounded completely in sound practice. Each of them ought to be conceded commendation for some of the provisions they include. None of them, including that which is backed by the New Dealers, is going to completely solve the farm problem because we are going to have the farm problem with us for next year and the next and a good many years thereafter whether we like it or not.

The tragedy of the current situation is that the farm relief plans, taken individually or collectively and on second thought I believe that the most appropriate word that can be used. Throughout the administration's proposal for aid to agriculture and permeating every other proposal that has been put forward, whether by statesmen or panacea promoters, one can find a splendid collection of objectives that cancel each other. I mean exactly that. Recognizing the breadth of the statement I have just made, evidence seems to be necessary. Let us look at these various plans, or certainly at the one that is scheduled to take the place of AAA.

First, the administration proposes to take something like five hundred million dollars each year from taxpayers in one form or another to use for benefit payments to farmers. It proposes to use these funds to save the soil, to prevent further carrying away of productive elements in our soil by continued cropping. New Dealers describe the purpose as prevention of erosion.

With that purpose, it seems to me there can be no quarrel. Ever since the successive portions of our country were settled and the forest coverings removed, soil has been subject to erosion by rain, by flood and by wind. The Department of Agriculture says that the top soil of probably fifty million acres has been destroyed in that manner. It would seem, then, that it was high time our government was finding ways to stop it.

Admitting the soundness of this phase of the program, one then must turn to another phase that is not written into law but results from it. If the fertility of soil is improved, is it not natural then that there should be an increase in production? And if there is an increase in production, is it not logical further that we may find ourselves developing a huge surplus of commodities from the farm—and with no foreign market? The answer obviously is, yes.

So, we find these two circumstances in the administration farm bill, proposed, even driven, by that group of New Dealers who, until a few months ago, were declaring here, there and everywhere that to maintain price we must have security of production. That theory was basic in the AAA and was carried out to the furthest by Secretary Wallace and Administrator Chester Davis.

I know of no one with a superintelligence sufficient to enable him to picture the result of this combination nor have I heard any argument that was convincing to me, reconciling the previous policy under AAA with that now projected in the new farm relief plan.

There seems to be no doubt among students of the farm problem that a subsidy, whether by that name or some trick phrase, for agriculture cannot be avoided. Some way, somehow, money is going to be taken out of the federal treasury to pay benefits, subsidies, to the farm population. I do not know whether anyone can predict where such a policy will lead as a long-term national program. Political figures seem to be content with a temporary solution, something to get farm votes. In all of the debate that has moved through the ventilators of the house and senate chambers, discussion of the farm problem on a long-term basis has been noticeably absent.

This fact is just as true when anti-New Deal farm programs are subjected to a searching analysis as is the administration's plan itself. It applies to the proposal of an export bounty, offered by Senator McNary, senate Republican leader; to the plan of George Heck, former AAA administrator, to

the piecemeal presentations of Senator Borah, Idaho Republican Presidential prospect or to the ideas advanced by Senator Dickinson, Iowa Republican or any of the others.

Since it seems established that the subsidy idea will and must be kept as a part of any farm policy, the problem is narrowed down to the question of how it will be administered. Each plan provides machinery—political jobs—for administration. That fact, however, would seem to guarantee inefficiency rather than efficiency in administration. Each of the plans obviously must reach into nearly every county in the United States and the experience gained from AAA administration forces the conclusion, regretful as it is, that no efficient means for administration has been suggested.

An unbiased investigation of the whole situation, as far as I have been able to make it, prompts me to say that until partisan politics is eliminated from farm relief considerations, farm aid is going to continue in a mess. Perhaps it is a character of our system of government that the condition exists, but whatever the reason may be, I am convinced that there ought to be a distinction between the giving of a subsidy to accomplish other purposes. I mean by that if we are to have a subsidy, let us not get it all mangled up with a lot of prescribed conditions which bind the farmer hand and foot. I am one of those who believe that the average farmer is better equipped to solve his own problem than are his professional leaders who call themselves heads of farm organizations or the politicians who prate about the farmer and think only in the terms of his voting number. So I say until the farm problem can be separated from politics and until it can be separated from theories of regimentation and crop-control and binding the farmer by a lot of conditions, there will not be any effective solution for the farm problem.

Several years ago, when the present work-relief policy was young, a reader wrote me a rather critical letter because I made the statement that crookedness was bound to crop into administration of the relief programs. My prediction was predicated not upon any clairvoyance or ability as a soothsayer but upon a knowledge of the difficulty that necessarily harasses the management of a far-flung organization. It was predicated as well on an understanding that there was no way on earth to keep politicians and visionaries out of these organizations. I had no apology to make to that reader then but I do have the privilege of boasting just a bit since administrative heads of these organizations in Washington have been put to the necessity of cleaning up one dirty problem after another. It has happened in countless places, not with the consent of the ruling authorities, that petty grafters have crept in, have taken their toll.

Now, however, evidence is seeping through to the top in record form, of another danger in the attempted management of so many different groups from a central office in Washington. The best illustration of this that I have seen comes from New York where the local relief organization has a "writers' project" in operation. Just at this time the local New York authorities, with the assistance of Washington headquarters, are trying to find out whether radicals, many of them of foreign birth, have taken charge of the New York "writers' project."

One man, Samuel McCoy, assistant director, has been dismissed. He has charged that he is in control and that they are taking up their time proselyting and seeking new members of a Communist organization. Against his charges, those he attacked countered with accusations that McCoy has continuously sought to promote Fascism among the writers. It is an unhappy thing to occur. Here we have a paternalistic federal government seeking to provide people with work and some measure of compensation for that work, and we see a political problem injected into it. I do not know what the end will be, nor is it pertinent to this discussion. The point is, after all, that it represents, indeed it proves, the futility of attempting to run all of these things from Washington. Those who favor the old idea of states' rights certainly cannot want for ammunition in defense of their beliefs.

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"Here" Criminals
Popular interest in criminals long before the present day has gone to the extent of making heroes of murderers and thieves. In 1754 Rev. Mr. Villlette, of London, described a sermon he had heard by a street preacher praising the remarkable skill with which Jack Sheppard, a notorious thief, had escaped from jail and "manfully burst his fetters asunder." Sheppard, as well as Dick Turpin, died in his neatest attire, and the execution of both was just the theatrical show the crowd expected.

OF INTEREST TO THE HOUSEWIFE

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Two tablespoons of grape juice added to a grapefruit after it has been cut gives a delicious flavor and a pretty color.

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