WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS BY JOSEPH W. LaBINE

German Corner on Munitions Makes U. S. Embargo Provision Help Reich's Cause, Is Charge

(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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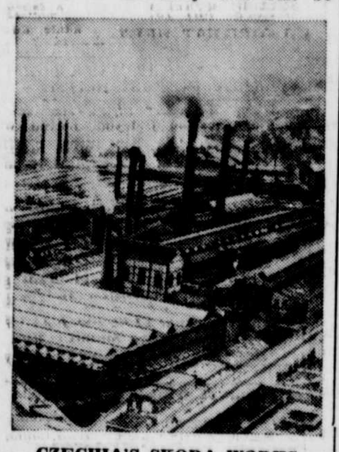
NEUTRALITY:
Co-operation?

German domination over lesser European nations need not only mean dependence on the Reich for peacetime manufactured goods. If such was the case last year, Adolf Hitler's aggression this spring added military domination to the already pressing economic leverage. Reason: Already boss of Germany's mighty Krupp works, Berlin captured the even mightier Skoda plants when Czecho-Slovakia fell before the conquerer. Until then southeast Europe's minor nations (like Rumania, Greece, Turkey and Jugoslavia) had Skoda guns and shells to ward off the aggressive Reich. Today Skoda munitions go mainly to Germany and can be



CZECHIA'S SKODA WORKS
It may change U. S. policy.

bought by lesser nations only in exchange for concessions.

Aggravating the situation is the Anglo-French rearmament program, which demands domestic consumption of all munitions produced in those nations' plants. Lesser countries get none.

This forceful argument against current U. S. neutrality legislation was apparently saved for the crucial moment. Not offered early this session during house and senate committee hearings, it was plumped in their laps unexpectedly by Secretary of State Cordell Hull just as the two houses seemed likely to give neutrality an airing.

It seemed a fairly sound basis for changing U. S. policy, isolationists notwithstanding. Since the Nazi government has become No. 1 source of military supplies, moreover since practically continuous German mobilization aggravates the situation, Mr. Hull joined Nevada's Sen. Key Pittman in demanding repeal of the neutrality act's embargo provision.

(This provision stipulates that once the President finds a state of war exists in any foreign conflict, the sale of U. S. arms and munitions is prohibited.)

Best anti-embargo argument: That it actually places the U. S. in a position of co-operating with Nazi Germany in freezing out smaller nations by depriving them of munitions.

On the surface less pressing when war scares have temporarily died down, neutrality revision seemed out of the question if congress is to consider tax revision, relief appropriations and social security and still adjourn by July 15.

PENSIONS:
Revision

Downed in the house 302 to 97 was Dr. Francis E. Townsend's visionary plan to give everyone over 60 about $200 a month through a $20,000,000,000-a-year 3 per cent transaction tax. This was beaten before it reached the floor, much to the embarrassment of representatives who accepted Townsend support last election. But by adjournment time congress will probably liberalize social security to start paying 65-year-oldsters next year on basis of their average previous wages rather than on their payroll tax accumulations:

Method. Under present rules, social security taxes would rise from 1 per cent to 1½ per cent against both employer and employee on January 1, 1940; to 2 per cent in 1943; 2½ per cent in 1946; and 3 per cent in 1949. Probable revision: Current 1 per cent rate against each will be frozen for three years.

Results. At present a worker now making $100 a month would get nothing but a small lump sum settlement in 1940. Under revisions, he would begin getting $25.75 a month if single and $38.63 if married.

Significance. By cutting payroll contributions and boosting pensions, congress will upset the elaborately planned program for a $48,000,000,000 old-age reserve account by 1980, scheduled to draw 3 per cent interest as it grew through the years. Proposed amendments, however, are merely being realistic about the fact that the current $2,000,000,000 reserve is all I. O. U.'s from the treasury, whose interest is paid by borrowing more money and thus raising taxes.

COMMUNICATIONS:
Free Speech?

Fourteen U. S. radio stations are "international," *i.e.*, they direct broadcasts to foreign continents (chiefly Latin America) as well as to home listeners. European stations do likewise, but under government orders they propagandize programs in a way that the U. S. Constitution would forbid as an impediment to guaranteed free speech.

Surprised and puzzled, therefore, were the 14 international stations when Washington's unpopular federal communications commission ordered that beginning November 1 their programs must "promote international good will, understanding and co-operation." When time comes to renew their year-by-year licenses, stations must show their programs have reflected the "culture of this country."

What FCC denied was censorship, nevertheless seemed that way to more than one congressman.

PEOPLE:
Men at Work

Three new jobs for the following men may soon make news:

GROVER CLEVELAND BERGDOLL, notorious World war draft dodger, now in military prison after returning from Germany, says he will use his wealth to relieve U. S. employment by opening his Philadelphia brewery and other inherited property. Other plans include a private building project on his 24½ acre farm near Philadelphia.

ADM. WILLIAM D. LEAHY, retiring chief of U. S. naval operations, whose projected appointment as Puerto Rican governor to succeed Blanton Winship was mysteriously dropped, is now expected to succeed Claude A. Swanson as secretary of the navy. Already past retirement age, Admiral Leahy is remaining as naval chief temporarily.

JESSE JONES, Texan chairman of the Reconstruction Finance corporation, is expected to be named administrator of the consolidated federal lending agency effective July 1 under President Roosevelt's first government reorganization plan. Mr. Jones may also administer the proposed program of loans to small business.

TREASURY:
News Notes

June 15 is quarterly U. S. treasury refinancing time. Only refinancing this June is an offer to exchange $426,554,600 in 1⅜ per cent notes maturing next September for new five year, ¾ per cent notes maturing June 15, 1944. No new money will be needed until September. Other treasury news:

¶ During the first 11 months of the 1938-39 fiscal year the U. S. operated with a deficit of $3,240,467,092, which will probably hit $4,000,000,000 by year's end on June 30.

¶ Secretary Morgenthau revealed only 49 Americans had million-dollar incomes in 1937, compared with 61 in 1936. Yet 6,350,148 people filed 1937 income tax returns, compared with only 5,413,499 in 1936.

¶ Okayed by the senate was a measure to remove the $30,000,000 limit on federal bond insurance, though the total debt limit of $45,000,000,000 (to be reached next fiscal year) remains undisturbed.

ONWARD

TELEPHONE—If the 560,000 telephone wires under one New York corner were strung above ground, 9,000 strings of poles would be needed to carry them. Laid underground, cable compactness has heretofore reached such efficiency that one cable 2⅝ inches in diameter would carry 3,636 wires. Newest exploit: Placing 4,242 insulated wires in a cable the same thickness.

HANGOVER—Air sickness, discovered Dr. Arnold D. Tuttle of United airlines' medical department, results from lack of oxygen. Finding that air travelers with hangovers suffered most, Dr. Tuttle decided that morning-after feeling is characterized by pronounced want of oxygen. Therefore he thinks mild doses of pure oxygen should be an antidote for too much alcohol, opening the way for drug store oxygen bars.

PUZZLERS

Know your news? Answer all these questions and you're excellent; answer three and you're good; two, fair; one, poor.

1. In above map, note the spot marked "X." What disaster took place there recently?

2. True or false: Homer Martin's United Automobile Workers of America, big link in the C. I. O., has refused to join the American Federation of Labor despite a squabble with C. I. O.

3. What infantile paralysis sufferer is returning from a pilgrimage to France's Lourdes shrine?

4. On what charge was former U. S. Judge Martin T. Manton convicted in New York city?

(Answers at bottom of column.)

POLITICS:
Showdown

When asked about a third term, President Roosevelt promptly discusses the weather, a habit chiefly distressful to West Virginia's anti-New Deal Sen. Rush D. Holt. Strongly against a third term, Rush Holt would need only a hint from the Sphynx-like White House to demand senate confirmation of a resolution he has kept pocketed more than a year. That resolution would forbid a third term.

Paridoxically, two New Dealers who least want a Roosevelt third term are greatest battlers against the Holt resolution. Both potential 1940 candidates, Vice President

SENATOR HOLT
The question: Resolve or not?

John N. Garner and Postmaster General James A. Farley fear a showdown. Reason: If the resolution were defeated after much-publicized Senate debate, the public might interpret it as a vote of confidence in President Roosevelt, thus encouraging him to run again.

Contrariwise, Republicans and anti-New Deal senators favor a vote immediately, win or lose. Reason: The badly split Democratic party's No. 1 need is an immediate decision by President Roosevelt. If the resolution carries, that decision will be made for him; if it is defeated, he will be forced to say whether or not he will run.

AGRICULTURE:
Downgrade

In booming 1929 U. S. gross farm income was $12,791,000,000. In depression-ridden 1932 it was less than half, or $5,562,000,000. Returning prosperity zoomed it to $10,350,000,000 in 1937. But in 1938, according to bureau of agricultural economics reports, it dropped again to $9,220,000,000.

This was not unexpected, since farm income always follows the general economic trend. Chief interesting revelations: (1) That, contrary to popular belief, the U. S. farm problem is not confined to a few major crops like cotton and wheat; (2) that the $482,000,000 in U. S. subsidies for 1938 was 31 per cent more than in 1937 ($367,000,000), yet total income went down anyway.

Two possible deductions: (1) That all the U. S. government's costly farm relief measures have been ineffective; (2) that on the contrary they have been effective in bolstering farm income during natural "off" years.

Sample comparative incomes:

Crop	1938	1937
Corn	$ 291,315,000	$ 248,914,000
Wheat	443,554,000	617,547,000
Oats	41,608,000	66,126,000
Cotton Lint	575,741,000	770,377,000
Cotton Seed	91,494,000	113,399,000
Tobacco	294,063,000	318,305,000
Truck Crops	318,176,000	360,204,000
Citrus Fruits	81,349,000	138,755,000
Apples	102,756,000	143,170,000
Cattle	1,165,079,000	1,237,422,000
Hogs	1,072,800,000	1,161,157,000
Sheep	163,055,000	194,956,000
Milk	1,778,813,000	1,960,922,000
Eggs	608,015,000	651,496,000

Answers to Puzzlers

1. The British submarine Thetis went down with a loss of 98 lives.

2. False. In a referendum among 70,000 U. A. W. members, 96 per cent voted in favor of affiliation with A. F. of L.

3. Fred Snite Jr. of Chicago.

4. Conspiracy to obstruct justice and to deprive the U. S. of his impartial services, ie., for selling "justice."

Bruckart's Washington Digest

Would Force Public Ownership on Nation in Spite of Voters' Wishes

Power Commission Appears as Spearhead of Minority With Socialistic Tendencies; Niagara Falls Investigation May Bring Out Some New Facts; Private Plants Menaced.

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

WASHINGTON.—Public investigations always hold some fascination for me, whether the inquiry is conducted by a congressional committee or by some agency of government. My interest, however, seldom lies in the sensational testimony or muckraking that may be among the results. I care little for the smearing of individuals and that sort of thing. The thing that attracts me to these ditch-digging activities is a desire always to know what motives lie beneath the apparently earnest effort in behalf of the pee-pul.

I do not mean to impugn the motives of all and sundry individuals who set about unearthing facts. Far from it. But whatever the results may be in the public interest, it remains as fact that in most instances there will be found an individual or two who are seeking to capitalize upon the reputation they can build for themselves in a good knock-down-and-drag-out investigation. Now, it may be that this is just a by-product, like some of the poisons that come from beautiful flowers. But it does come, and that is why I always want to smell around a bit for a look-see at the full story of an investigation.

There is no doubt, for instance, that the federal power commission's investigation of the use of Niagara Falls water for generation of electric power may produce some new facts. A great natural resource of that kind should not be allowed to become a thing in which public interest is ignored. But there should be, and there is, a limit to public interest, just as much as there is a limit beyond which private control should not be allowed.

In the Niagara case, however, the power commission is made to appear as the spearhead of a loud-speaking, rough-riding minority which, for years, has sought to saddle public ownership on the whole United States. That group makes no bones of its purposes. It is for public ownership, a socialist venture, whether the voters of the nation want it or not. Indeed, a good guess is that this group wants to force public ownership of all utilities—power, water, transportation—upon the country despite the refusal of congress to create a network of electric lines throughout the nation such as has been established in parts of the South under the creeping paralysis of TVA.

Bound to Destroy Property Value of Private Plants

This conclusion is borne out, as far as I am concerned, by the public pronouncements of those charged with making the policy of the power commission and, therefore, the power policy of the Roosevelt administration. The conclusion is accepted by many also because of the unending efforts of Secretary Ickes of the interior department. Mr. Ickes, as is rather generally known, has urged municipalities, wherever he could find one, to borrow federal money or accept an outright gift of funds for the purchase or construction of publicly owned electric light plants. He even has gone so far as to pour millions out on the plains, agricultural areas, as he did in Nebraska, where there is no market for more than a thimbleful of electricity. Such a course was bound to destroy the property value of private plants which did not have a bottomless treasury from which to make up operating losses.

When one has a knowledge of all of this background, the Niagara Falls story changes its aspect, considerably. The power commission has been kicking the Niagara Falls case around about 10 years. Suddenly, a couple of months ago a hearing was ordered on a great number of charges of violation of license. They are too technical to be of much concern here, but it is plain to see that if the commission's views are sustained in the courts, a wedge has been driven by the government, itself, into the structure of private ownership. In other words, a federal agency has carved national policy by use of regulatory power and has done so by the simple process of enforcing its views rather than the wishes of the people which are expressed through laws of congress.

Clearly Illustrates How Investigations May Turn Out

Thus, it seems that the Niagara Falls case can be used as an illustration of what investigations may turn out to be, even though such an inquiry is properly conceived in the public interest. The use of them for the purposes that appear in this one surely must be deplored, for it is bureaucracy run riot.

There is yet another phase of the Niagara Falls case to which attention should be drawn. It relates to the utilization of investigations for personal promotion. Oh! I reckon there is no crime in promoting one's self, or one's political ambitions. Anyway, I do not infer any crime. I am merely criticizing the thing as something that does not make for good government. It is a species of demagoguery, this campaigning on a vehicle set up for other purposes.

So, we come to the case of Casa March, 28 years old, a Texas citizen, and an attorney for the power commission which is a federal agency. From all appearances, Mr. March is politically ambitious. He is convinced, it seems, that Texas ought to have him as governor in the next few years. Prosecution of some great corporation is a political horse that will gallop far and well over the plains of the great state of Texas. Of course, Mr. March would be aboard that horse. I understand that he even has a campaign slogan. He would herd the voters of Texas under his banner with "Forward March, With March."

I am not informed as to Mr. March's qualification for the office of governor of Texas. Sometimes these young whippersnappers have what it takes and Mr. March may be one of them. In any event, he is determined to win the power commission case against "those four families that have pyramided one corporation on top of another" until Niagara Falls water must be crushed under the burden. The four families are named by Mr. March as the Morgans, the Mellons, the Schoellkopfs and the Carlisles.

Wonder if Private Persons Any Longer Have Rights

One look at the stenographic record of the hearings in the Niagara Falls case rather causes one to question whether private persons any longer have rights even under our constitutional form of government. There were apparently no rules of law followed in that case; and the statement is the same regarding the usual congressional committee investigations. The fellow who gets on the witness stand in one of these cases is worse off than the Negro boy behind the canvass at the county fair. The boy can duck. He has that sporting chance, even though his head is the target for well-aimed throws. Not so with a witness in a public investigation.

Nor does there seem to be any limitation on the kind of charges that can be hurled at a person or a firm or a corporation, once they are in the toils of an investigation. The constitutional provision seems to have been reversed. You are guilty until you are proved innocent—that is, if you get a chance to submit proof.

Of course, such names as the Aluminum Company of America, and J. P. Morgan and company and the Carlisle power interests and the others are well known. They are "big" names. Without them, most investigations are a flop. Being wealthy and well known, when those people are attacked, they make headlines. Almost anything that is done about them or by them is printed. Besides, many, many speeches can be made about trust busting!

Perhaps such tactics pay. Think of Hugo Black. He rode roughshod over anybody and everybody in his airmail investigation several years ago, an investigation conducted by him as a United States senator. Mr. Black now sits as an associate justice of the Supreme court. It will be a long time, however, before most people will forget how Mr. Black used powers of the securities and exchange commission to force the Western Union and Postal Telegraph companies to deliver thousands of personal telegrams to his committee for use in the investigation.

Jackson Tried It Too, See What Happened

There was Robert Jackson, too. Mr. Jackson, as chief counsel for the bureau of internal revenue, battled the late Andrew W. Mellon over his income taxes. He was appointed soon thereafter as the assistant attorney general in charge of anti-trust prosecutions. Promptly, he started an anti-trust suit against the Aluminum Company of America, but his political star was not in the right transit. Anyway, he did not get to be governor of New York. He did not even get the nomination, as did Thomas E. Dewey, as a public reward for striking at malefactors of great wealth or racketeers—one type being as good as the other for political purposes.

Or, we may advert to Senator LaFollette's crusade with his senate civil liberties committee. Now, I am none too sure of the meaning of the phrase, civil liberties, but Senator LaFollette surely tried to convince the union workers, especially the C. I. O. members, that he was protecting them against those sinful employers who would grind workers into the grime and grease of their overalls, as well as obtaining much publicity for the senator.

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