WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS BY JOSEPH W. LaBINE

Social Security Amendments Pave Way for 1940 Elections By Wooing Townsend Voters

(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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CONGRESS:
Pensions

Many a Republican, and a few Democratic legislators were elected last November on the promise that Dr. Francis E. Townsend's $200-a-month pension plan—to be financed by a 2 per cent transaction tax—would get a hearing. Hearing it got, but little else. Yet Townsendites are potent enough to cause plenty of trouble in next year's election.

DR. TOWNSEND
Beaten, but the ghost still haunts.

To satisfy the pension vote, to provide weapons for next year's Democratic campaign based on "humanitarianism" and to soothe tax-eaten businessmen, the senate passed amendments to the social security act which, if approved by the house, would:

(1) Broaden old age insurance to include 1,100,000 persons like seamen and bank employees, and step up the starting date from 1942 to 1940.

(2) Require states to supply $10 per month for each pension beneficiary, the U. S. to match state funds 2 to 1 up to a total pension of $15 per month; i.e., a total monthly minimum of $25 for each beneficiary.

(3) Freeze the present 1 per cent payroll tax against both employees and employers until 1943, instead of jumping to 1½ per cent next year. Estimated saving to employers and employees: $275,000,000 annually.

(4) Permit downward revision in payroll taxes to finance state unemployment insurance. Estimated annual saving to employers: $80,000,000.

Fly in the ointment was that the plan actually boosted federal-state cost while lowering taxes, a situation which on its face fails to add up. Though a new "contingency" social security reserve of $8,000,000,000 will replace the old plan for an eventual reserve of $47,000,000,000, Michigan's Sen. Arthur Vandenberg figured the senate had added $750,000,000 to the cost (spread over 15 years) without providing any method of paying.

RELIEF:
'Ungrateful'

Old WPA regulations provided union wages for skilled workmen, who thus labored fewer hours for their monthly pay than did unskilled reliefers. Example: Union carpenters might work 53 hours a month and pick up odd jobs on the side; common ditch-diggers might work 121 hours for the same money.

Said WPA Administrator F. C. Harrington to congress: "It is my recommendation that persons employed on . . . WPA be required to work 130 hours a month and that earnings of such persons be on a monthly basis . . ."

Said congress: O. K.

Said more than 100,000 reliefers, going on strike: Congress must restore union wages.

Said President Roosevelt: "You cannot strike against the government."

But strike they did. In Minneapolis two lay dead after riots. Mayor George E. Leach asked Washington to "clean up the mess" and State WPA Administrator Linus Glotzbach shut down all Minneapolis projects.

President Roosevelt found himself on a spot with both A. F. of L. and C. I. O., who have helped elect both him and his friends. But both congress and the White House apparently stuck to their guns despite bellowing by John Lewis and William Green. Commented the Cincinnati Enquirer: "The American people have a great deal of patience with the unfortunate and needy. But they have little patience with the ungrateful . . ."

ASIA:
Exit Britain?

One hot day in Tokyo workers at the British embassy heard a storm brewing outside. Soon a mob that numbered 15,000 began throwing stones and denouncing "British intervention in China," "British imperialism in Asia" and "British support of the murderer, Chiang Kai-shek," who is Chinese generalissimo. The day before two hand grenades had been thrown into the British consulate at Tsingtao. Spreading down the coast, Japan's blockade of British concessions struck awfully close to home when the crown colony of Hongkong found itself threatened by food shortages as Nipponese vessels blocked ports at Changchow, Tungshan and Chaoan. All able-bodied Britons in Hongkong were subsequently conscripted.

In such a tense atmosphere British Ambassador Sir Robert Leslie Craigie opened his long-touted conversations with Foreign Minister Hachiro Arita, knowing full well no settlement would be reached. Japs demand that Britain cease supporting General Chiang and abandon her "anti-Japanese policy in China," which would constitute complete surrender of all her Asiatic interests. Britain, on the other hand, insists that discussions shall deal only with the original conflict over Jap blockade of the British concessions at Tientsin.

When the first day's preliminary confab ended in hopeless deadlock, key Jap officials on the Chinese front issued more threatening statements and precipitated a few more incidents to help make up the harried British mind. First sign of what may become wholesale British withdrawal from China came when missionaries were shipped from Kaifeng, important Honan province railroad city, sharp on the heels of a Jap-inspired ultimatum.

EUROPE:
Visitors to Paris

Mid-July found Europe in pre-dog day doldrums. Adolf Hitler was reported by the Chicago Tribune's Sigrid Schultz as consulting the stars to guide his decisions. Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels fumed over the anti-Nazi letter England's Stephen King-Hall was writing in wholesale lots to "dear German readers." The Reich's toy industry complained that an English-made "Chamberlain-with-an-umbrella" toy

SARAH DELANO ROOSEVELT
She was there, too.

was outselling German-made toys in the British isles.

Biggest news in Paris, however, was Bastille day, 150th anniversary of the French revolution. Hobnobbing on the reviewing stand with President Albert Lebrun as 30,000 troops filed by were Mrs. Sarah Delano Roosevelt, mother of the U. S. President, British War Secretary Leslie Hore-Belisha and many another English notable.

Keynoted Premier Edouard Daladier: "We menace no one. We dream of no conquest. We desire only peace among all people . . ."

LOUISIANA:
Indictments

Out of its cell at Baton Rouge walked a parish grand jury to plump down the makings of a scandal that started with Louisiana State university's President James Monroe Smith, spread to include two of his aides and finally caught in its net Dr. Clarence A. Lorio who is president of the Louisiana Medical society, state senator, member of LSU's supervisory board and its medical director, physician and surgeon for the state penitentiary and visiting physician for the tubercular hospital. The 29 indictments hit:

Dr. Lorio, for allegedly receiving stolen property and conspiring with 300-pound George Caldwell (ousted LSU construction superintendent) in embezzling $249 in school building materials.

Caldwell, on two counts alleging embezzlement of LSU building materials worth $2,097. He is already under federal charges of diverting WPA materials for private use.

E. N. Jackson, LSU business manager, charged (with Caldwell) with embezzling $480 in school materials, and separately with receiving stolen property.

Dr. Smith, charged on 23 counts, 12 of them with forgery, 11 with altering minutes of the board of supervisors so he could (1) borrow $500,000 from three banks; (2) add $3,600 "bonus" to his yearly $15,000 salary; (3) allow Caldwell 2 per cent commission on all WPA construction at LSU.

PUZZLERS

Rating: Answer all four, excellent; three, good; two, fair; one, poor.

1. Arrow points to Providence, Ky. Why was it in the news?

2. Of the three crops, corn, tobacco and wheat, which will be larger and which smaller than last year?

3. True or false: Paul V. McNutt has dropped his candidacy for the 1940 Democratic Presidential nomination.

4. Choice: Father Divine, Harlem spiritualist leader (a) got married; (b) refused to eat ham sandwiches; (c) bought a house at exclusive Newport, R. I.; (d) called on his Krum Elbow neighbor, Franklin Roosevelt.

(Answers at bottom of column.)

INTERNATIONAL:
Neutrality

Every congressman and senator wants to keep the U. S. out of war. But of ideas on how this shall be done, there are almost as many as there are lawmakers. Late in 1935 congress banned shipment of armaments to warring countries in the first neutrality act. Early the next year it added a provision banning loans to belligerents. In 1937 came a third provision, banning export of goods to embattled nations except on a cash-and-carry basis. The latter provision expired two months ago.

This year, with war hovering over Europe and Asia at the probable expense of Friends Great Britain and France, President Roosevelt wanted new neutrality legislation. His chief aim: Repeal of the arms embargo because it encourages self-sufficing aggressor nations like Germany, Italy and Japan. To replace it he wanted the cash-and-carry provision restored, since Britain and France would nominally control the sea during wartime and could pay for their purchases. Isolationists meanwhile called his attention to the fact that Japan is also a big maritime power.

Upshot was a senate foreign relations committee decision to table neutrality for this session.

While British economists were privately calling wary U. S. isolationists "cowardly," there was good reason to think all neutrality legislation may be wiped from the books and a return made to old international law. Thus the President would be better off, isolationists would be partly satisfied and—politically important—the intra-party Democratic squabble would cease.

NAVY:
Heart Break

Fifty-two days after the submarine Squalus carried 26 men to their deaths, patient salvagers got their giant chains around her (each link 15 inches long, 2½ inches thick, 76 pounds heavy), pumped air into stern and bow pontoons and raised her from a 240-foot grave to 155 feet. From there she was to be towed to shallow water, pontoons readjusted and raised again. As planned, two top stern floats broke the surface, indicating the Squalus lay at even keel. While jubilant salvagers sighed over a job well done, water suddenly began churning around the submerged craft. Up for a moment burst two huge pon-

SQUALUS SALVAGE CHAINS
Big, but they failed to bind.

toons. Then came the Squalus' bow like a whale's snout, out of the water an instant, then down to her 240-foot grave again to nullify all that had been done. Next two days, with falling barometers and heavy seas around Portsmouth, N. H., Rear Adm. C. W. Cole and his divers could only sit and wait, moaning over the mess below.

Answers to Puzzlers

1. Twenty-nine miners were killed in a soft coal mine explosion there.
2. Larger crops will be corn (2,570,795 bushels, estimated, against 10-year-average of 2,309,674,000 bushels) and tobacco (1,654,622,000 pounds, estimated, against average of 1,360,400,000.) Wheat will be smaller, 716,655,000 bushels against last year's 930,801,000 bushels.
3. False. Mr. McNutt accepted chieftainship of the U. S. security agency but continues his campaigning.
4. Father Divine "bought" a Newport mansion from Mrs. Angela C. Kaufman, socialite.

Bruckart's Washington Digest

Whole Farm Program for 1940 Is To Be Broadened, AAA Announces

Soil Conservation to Be Stressed; Increased Opportunities Given for Participation by Small Farmers; Folks Are Awakening to Fact Waste Must Be Paid For.

By WILLIAM BRUCKART
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WASHINGTON.—A press release has just come to my desk from the Agricultural Adjustment administration. It outlines the farm program for 1940. That is next year. The statement from the AAA press bureau announced that the 1940 farm program was evolved at a three-day conference of "approximately 100 AAA farmer-committeemen and others interested," acting for all of the millions of farmers. It explained that the whole farm program is to be broadened, but I will quote the opening paragraph, which is, of course, official:

"Increased emphasis on soil conservation, increased opportunities for participation by small farmers and greater responsibility of administration by the farmer committees are included."

I have watched the AAA officials operate for five or six years. They are still struggling for that more abundant life and, therefore, I have observed the changes with some curiosity. Also, there has been a certain amount of humor in what they have done—not humorous for the farmers but for an onlooker whose life savings and hopes were not directly at stake. There never has been a dull moment. Sometimes, the antics have resembled the movements of whirling dervishes of the desert in their most fervent moments of prayer; other times have produced attitudes on the part of the officials and their underlings that strangely resembled a mouse-colored and very stubborn mule that my father once owned, and then, again, there would be forthcoming schemes so fantastic that only a person wearing the degree of doctor of philosophy could have read the words without turning to Mr. Webster's unabridged edition of the dictionary. They have gone from the doctrine of scarcity to the doctrine of some other extreme and most things in between, always requiring, however, that the farmer must sign up a contract with a lot of do's and don't's.

Just a Word of Praise For AAA Administrators

That I may not be accused of being a common scold, let me give the AAA administrators a word of praise just here. The soil building and soil conservation phases of the program likely are going to be valuable although I fail to understand why anybody thinks it is necessary to pay a farmer to keep his own land in good shape. But, skipping my own thoughts on that, there is justification for governmental interest in helping to restore soil on a national scale because our nation is going on for a number of years — we hope.

Then, too, there is argument favorable to a policy of government encouragement in the planting of trees, a program of reforestation.

There is, of course, that famous "parity" business. There is a fund of $225,000,000 which a bunch of vote-getting congressmen put into law. From it, the AAA officials can pay farmers producing wheat, cotton, corn, tobacco and rice certain sums if the price of these commodities is less than "75 per cent of parity."

We have had that one before and after many trials there are still many hundreds of versions of "parity." It has put the money out. There is no doubt about that. The AAA men made sure that all of it went out, but some of the methods of calculations, of appraisals, of discriminations among farmers, of do's and don't's and just plain bureaucratic regimentation make a fellow dizzy. I cannot help wondering what those who live a hundred years from now will say when they read the current AAA records. They may find some new words that will properly describe the mess.

Now Comes the Pay-Off On the 1940 Farm Program

Next comes "commercial vegetables." There is to be designation, as this year, of "commercial vegetable counties," the designation, of course, to be done by AAA officials. Commercial vegetable farmers, after they sign up and do as they are told, will get payments, too, and I hope the arrangement will make the green onions that my wife buys from the commercial vegetable man who calls at our door somewhat less spongy.

And now, we give you the pay-off on the 1940 program.

Next year, any farmer who grows a vegetable garden will get $2—two whole dollars that are still highly regarded by me—if he "co-operates" and does as he is told by the AAA master farmers. If he fails to grow that vegetable garden, he will be docked $2. The government will get it, too. Uncle Sam's boys are good at that. To make sure about getting that $2 fine, the AAA will deduct it from whatever other payment that the farmer has earned.

The regulations have not been issued yet so I cannot report to you in advance what you will have to do to get your $2. The AAA may possibly tell you that you have to grow so many rows of radishes, so many hills of beans of two or more types—maybe some pole beans if you have planted trees under the reforestration program. Or they may tell you to produce so many yards of spinach, and there must be carrots and peas, because children must eat carrots and peas. And potatoes! I want to warn the AAA about potatoes. Maine and Idaho voters may kick about including potatoes in the list of "must" vegetables. In the South, there ought to be melons, for there is nothing like a good ripe watermelon. Medical men advise squash in the diet, along with rutabagas. As a special favor to me, I am going to ask that onions be included and planted alongside that row of tomato vines.

Will Extend Law as Far as Language Can Be Stretched

Of course, as I said, the regulations have not been issued and so I do not know what will constitute a vegetable garden "within the meaning of this act," as the official rules will say. On this point, however, I think it can be said safely now that the regulations will extend the law just as far as human ingenuity can stretch language. The idea will be to embrace as many of the farmers as can be brought under the newest—and rawest—of the schemes for regimenting the farmers of the nation. None will be overlooked, except perhaps those like myself whose farm consists of a backyard some 60 feet deep wherein are crowded flowers that I love.

I guess that I will not get any payment for planting trees, either. But the real reason I resent this $2 payment is that it represents a gigantic reduction in the price of votes. I think those AAA men haven't learned much about politics. They've gone sissy. The new price sounds like a fire sale. They ought to know that no votes induced by that price will stay put.

But to get serious about this thing, this new atrocity that is being put over in the name of farm aid, it ought to be said that never in all recorded history has there been any such thing attempted before. That, of course, is no answer. It is an answer, however, to say that some governmental policies, like the actions of some private persons, are so utterly ludicrous that they hardly warrant discussion. Further, we ought to remind ourselves that in this instance a government, supposed to serve all of the people, is undertaking the course. To my mind, the fact that government is doing it makes it perfection on the asinine side.

Folks Awakening to Fact That Waste Must Be Paid For

We have witnessed waste in more forms in the last few years than ever happened in our nation or any other. Folks throughout the country are awakening to the fact that this waste has to be paid for, because taxes are beginning to sneak up on them from the most unexpected directions. There will be more. Of that, there can be no doubt. Meanwhile, instead of slowing up federal spending, we find AAA paying $2 for a garden. There should be something in the way of aid for those who grow window boxes.

It was only the other day that the treasury released final figures on its condition at the end of the fiscal year, July 1. Those figures showed that the government had spent $3,500,000,000 more in the last 12 months than it had taken in by taxation. Shortly, thereafter, a private organization issued a statement showing income and taxes of 163 great corporations. Those figures which were claimed to be official revealed that only about half of those corporations had made enough money in the last year to meet their tax bills. In some instances, the taxes paid by those corporations amounted to as much as three times the income that was left to them after they had paid their workers and their overhead expenses.

Thus, it seems to me that when our government is running so far behind; when it is already taking from its citizens as much or more than they earn in taxes and when more taxes are as certain as death is to all of us, when these conditions exist it is about time to take stock and see where we are going to end up. The future is not so black but that we can see streaks of light in it, and these problems can be solved. They can be solved rather simply, too, if—as in the case of the vegetable gardens—we stop to figure that government is going to take several times $2 for every vegetable garden brought under this new scheme of "co-operation."

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Ask Me Another
A General Quiz

The Questions

1. What does the nautical term "anchors aweigh" mean?
2. Are any tin mines operated in the United States?
3. What is meant by biogenesis?
4. What is the world's annual income?
5. How many states were represented when the Constitution was adopted?
6. Which releases more moisture into the air, an acre of a lake or an acre of forest?

The Answers

1. Lifting the anchor so the ship may proceed.
2. The only tin mine now operating in the United States is located at Lincolnton, N. C.
3. Natural generation of life from life.
4. Estimated at $300,000,000,000.
5. Twelve. Rhode Island did not send a delegate.
6. Because of the heavy transpiration that takes place in trees, an acre of forest releases more moisture than an acre of lake.

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