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The bill that President Roosevelt presented to Congress today is of such great scope that it's an effort for the imagination to begin to take in ~~all~~ the possibilities. By one of those strange strokes of coincidence that are always happening, this measure in Congress bears the resounding and historic number -- Seventeen Seventy-six. It just happens to be the seventeen Hundred and seventy-sixth bill entered in the present session.

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The bill would empower the President of the United States to build armament and deliver it to any nation -- as the President might see fit. The phraseology is this "to manufacture in arsenals any defense articles for the government of any countries whose defense the President deems vital to the defense of the United States". Not only that -- the President ^{would be} ~~will be~~ authorized to deliver to such a ^{nation} ~~xxxxxxx~~ armament already on hand. ^{The} ~~Such~~ war material would be ~~xxxxxxx~~ loaned, and could be returned or paid for ~~xxxx~~ with other material. Of course, the nation that is immediately meant is Great Britain, but the scope of the bill is such that it can apply to any nation in any part of the world. ~~that might be considered to be attacked.~~

The question of money is not raised in the bill.

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That ^{is} ~~question is~~ to be taken up later. The President merely asks Congress to give him the legal right to lend armament. Later he will ask the lawmakers for the money -- the billions.

H How does this fit in with our neutrality law and the Johnson Act? The neutrality law provides that the nations at war may buy armament over here only on a cash-and-carry basis. Cash -- no credit. The Johnson Act forbids the granting of credits or loans to any nation that has failed to pay up on its war debts -- and that includes Great Britain. Today's bill contains the statement that its provisions shall apply as it says, ~~with~~ "notwithstanding the provisions of any other law." That would seem to make it a negation of the neutrality law and the Johnson Act.

All of this is sufficient to arouse the keenest attention. But the bill also provides a startling surprise. It would give the President the power to permit a nation at war to have its warships repaired ⁱⁿ ~~at~~ American harbors. ~~Ex~~ These would be available as repair bases for ^{foreign} ships damaged in battle.

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The provision in the bill reads in the following general terms --

"to test, inspect, improve, repair, outfit, recondition, or otherwise to place in good working order -- any defense article for any such government." That, of course, could mean an immense number of things, but, in all actuality the only foreign defense article that would be ~~likely~~ likely to be repaired in this country would be a warship. ^H This is clearly admitted by the Administration leaders in the Senate and the House. In a joint statement they ^{spoke} ~~speak~~ the following words: "It could conceivably mean that the British battle-cruiser Renown could be repaired in the Brooklyn Navy Yard if the President considered it in the interests of national defense." ^H How does this square with ~~the~~ international law and ~~with~~ our own laws? That's a point which already is being debated by the experts. Under international law, a damaged warship is usually permitted only a limited time for repairs in a neutral port. Witness the Graf Spee at Montevideo - forced to leave harbor after a time limit. The result -- the Captain scuttled the Spee. Suppose we should permit British warships to use our ports ^{without limit} for repairs -- would that constitute an act of war?

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One question ~~that~~ suggests itself: Does the inclusion of the repair provision in the bill mean that the British have an urgent need to use American ports to fix up damaged vessels? *if*
~~That would be a case of getting injured warships over here. If~~
this surmise should be groundless -- why the part about repairs in such an important law?

The bill is certain to provoke the most intense ~~counter-~~ debate in Congress. And immediately -- President Roosevelt led off for his side. In a press conference he referred to the immense powers ~~which~~ which would be conferred on him. He said that personally he does not want the power, but that somebody has got to have it ^{for} -- the task of making the United States an arsenal for Democracy. He disclaimed any personal ambition in asking what are called -- "blank check" powers. He said the new Legislation would not have the effect of ^{repealing} ~~repealing~~ the Johnson Act. True, the bill does use that phrase "notwithstanding the provisions of any other law." But the President explained that this is a phrase commonly ^{employed} ~~used~~ in such measures.

As for the money, President Roosevelt refused to make

any statement of how much he would ask of Congress later on.

Common supposition in Washington is that the program of lending armament to Britain would call for an appropriation of two to five billions right away. Maybe as much as ten billions before it's through. This in addition to the budget of seven ^{teen} billion dollars presented the other day.

In his press conference the President urged the element of -- speed. He wants Congress to pass the bill right away.

He said that a delay of even a week would be bad. But what about the debate in Congress -- the lawmakers have a way of ^{ing} ~~prolonging~~ prolonged discussion. Will there be an attempt to impose a clothure rule in the Senate -- a rule to shorten the debate? The President said that would be up to the Senate itself.

Well, the debate promises to be both stubborn and bitter -- judging from the immediate reactions in Congress.

Supporters of the Administration spoke in ^{quicks} ~~immediate~~ approval. ^{Said}

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Senator Byrnes of South Carolina:- "I am heartily in favor of the bill." Senator McKellar of Tennessee:- "I think it's entirely all right." Senator Pat Harrison of Mississippi:- "I am for the Legislation."

Congressman ~~Self~~ Bloom of the House Foreign Affairs Committee:-

"It will meet with the approval of the country." ^P The dissenting

voices are those of ^{both} the Republicans and ~~the~~ Democratic

Isolationists. Senator Nye of North Dakota:- "This bill ^{amounts} admits

to a request for a grant of power to the President equal to a

declaration of war." Senator Hiram Johnson of California:-

"It will create a dictatorship here." Representative Vorys of

Ohio:- "It's a streamlined declaration of war." Representative

Hamilton Fish of New York: "No man should ask for such vast

powers, no man should have them."

The Democrats in opposition speak in the same tenor.

Senator Cotton Ed Smith of South Carolina:- "We are about to give

him absolute power over the purse of the people, but not with my

consent." ~~xxxx~~ Senator Bennett Clark of Missouri: "It would

authorize the President to declare war and establish a totalitarian

government."

^{These}
~~This string~~ of quotations that I have given you are

a foreshadowing of the debate that is to come. It promises to be

one of the great Congressional struggles of our time.

Today's news of the war in the air brings one unusual fact. R.A.F. war planes today bombed the Germans in the area of Calais. The significance lies in the word -- today, as meaning daytime. Hitherto the R.A.F. bombings have been at night, under cover of darkness. Now, however, they've staged a daylight raid, the first one since the major phase of the air war began. The R.A.F. bombers ~~have~~ were heavily escorted by fighting ~~and~~ planes, Spitfires and Hurricanes. That too is a novelty. The night air raids, of course, are ~~now~~ accomplished by bombers alone.

Earlier British reports stated that today's daylight attack was one of the biggest that the R.A.F. has launched against the invasion bases. A later London statement, however, ~~says~~ declares that the attacking airfleet consisted of a small squadron of bombers heavily escorted by fighters. There was some resistance by the Nazi air force, and three German planes were shot down -- so says London.

~~Berlin says it was -- a large formation of British bombers. And the Germans claim the daylight air attack was beaten off.~~

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BRITISH FOOD

The British government is planning penalties for a new kind of crime -- gluttony. Any greedy person who eats more than the regulations permitted ⁱⁿ ~~to~~ restaurants will be subject to two years' imprisonment and a fine of twenty-five hundred dollars. The restaurant regulations provide that at any meal there may be only one dish of what they call basic food, meaning fish, meat or eggs. If, for example, somebody with a husky appetite should happen to eat both eggs and fish at a meal, he'll be punished as a glutton.

The reason of course is the shortage of food, because of the Nazi submarine campaign. It's producing some odd situations. A London restaurant owner told the following:- "I order my meat from the wholesaler," said he, "but I never know what I'll get. Today," he added, "I got only tripe."

ITALY

The war in North Africa continues along the same line.

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The British are investigat^{ng}~~ing~~ the stronghold of Tobruk and report the place virtually isolated. Other Italian forces are retreating to the West.

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The Greeks today captured the important Italian stronghold of Klisura. The battle was ^{under}~~in~~ the bitterest of conditions, ~~by~~ heavy snow and sub-zero temperature. The Greeks say that the new success opens another route of attack against the Italian key harbor -- Valona.

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Rome reports some successes at sea. ~~The~~ Italians claim that they've sunk two British submarines and four merchant ships. Also a Fascist war plane successfully bombed a British battleship; -- says Rome.

RUSSIA

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The new treaty between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia is being held in Berlin as a diplomatic triumph. The provisions, as we get them, do not seem in any way startling. They consist largely of an adjustment of Russo-German boundaries in the Baltic area, exchange of populations, and so on. Today's diplomatic pact is separate from a new commercial treaty which Moscow and Berlin are said to be ready to sign. This calls for an exchange of products between the two countries -- the Nazis to give the Communists a variety of manufactured articles. In return they'll get raw materials -- including food stuffs.

The Soviet-Nazi treaty signed today and the one that is still to come would seem to be important mostly as an indication that Stalin and Hitler are still in cahoots -- no sign of a break between them.

NEWSPAPER

One sign of the predominant importance of the armament building program is to be found in the make-up of special newspaper editions devoted to business and industry. Yesterday the NEW YORK WORLD TELEGRAM gave its resume of developments and prospects -- and stressed the defense program angle with an exhaustive analysis. And tomorrow the NEW YORK SUN devotes its annual business supplement predominantly to angles concerning American industry and the turning out of weapons of war.

BILLIARDS

In Chicago the doctors say that Willie Hoppe is a very sick man -- the one-time ^{boy}wonder who is now the grand old man of billiards. Hoppe collapsed last night while playing a championship match. And today we got the details -- which show what a staunch and sturdy trooper the veteran is.

Today Hoppe's physician said, "Willie played with a temperature ranging from one hundred and three to one hundred and four the last two days." Naturally, the play went against him. Challenger Jake Schaefer proceeded to cut down a huge lead that Hoppe had piled up -- whittled it down to seventy-five points. That's how they stood last night. As they played along Schaefer continued to excel Hoppe. In twenty-one innings he ran up thirty-five points -- to only nine for the champion. The lead was reduced to forty-nine. Hoppe was fading out. Then he faded out completely. As he picked up his cue and walked to the table for the twenty-second inning, he stumbled and reeled -- about to fall. The referee caught him, and helped him to one side. Hope was immediately placed in the hands of the doctors, who said it was a marvel that he was able to play at all -- he was that ill.

What about the championship match? Jake Schaefer immediately announced that he was withdrawing his challenge, refused to take the title by default, from the man who has been his rival at billiards for many years -- since they both were boys. And now the word comes that Hoppe's condition is serious, the greatest billiard player of all time.

LEVY

In New York they had an odd case -- showing how the law can go astray. Today Joseph Levy, seventy-seven years old, was released from a jail cell -- after a lot of hasty legal manoeuvring. For there never had been any reason to put Joseph Levy in jail. The aged man is the custodian of a synagogue. He's been in this country for fifty years -- yet he never learned to talk English, not a word.

Day before yesterday he was going from one synagogue to another, when he grew tired. You can get tired easily at seventy-seven, so he sat down on a bench in the park to rest. Nearby were several other men, loitering, loafing -- which is against the law. A policeman came along, ^{and} arrested them all -- including Levy, the synagogue custodian. Understanding no English he didn't know what it was all about.

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Up before a magistrate he still didn't know. The Judge asked him -- did he have anything to say? This was translated to him by an interpreter. To which Levy ~~replied~~ responded helplessly, "What can I say?" What did I do?"

Apparently this was taken to mean that he didn't have anything to say, and the Judge promptly sentenced him to jail

for ten days. And he was taken away to a cell.

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When Joseph Levy failed to appear at his home, his family made a search for him -- and at length discovered what had happened. They appealed to the Judge, who immediately took action. He cut the sentence to two days -- which would make Levy ~~illegal~~ eligible for immediate release. But the jail authorities refused to accept the Judge's mandate -- because of an old law which was enacted to keep politicians from getting prisoners out of ^{prison.} jail. With much rushing about the case was taken before ~~just~~ a Justice of the State Supreme Court. Upon examination ~~of the case~~, he found a flaw in the procedure, that enabled him to release the aged custodian of the synagogue today.

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Upon being turned loose the patriarch Levy said -- he didn't mind. Because yesterday, which he spent in jail, was a Jewish fast day anyway. *And now Hugh James.*

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