

R. J. - *Sunco, Tues., March 12, 1935.*

The Census

APPROPRIATIONS

16
The financial plans of the Administration took a step forward in Congress today. The President is asking for a number of appropriations - to be expended for various purposes. And the first of these requests was passed by the House Appropriations Committee. The Committee sends the bill to Congress with the suggestion that it should be passed, and it's altogether likely that it will be.

This bill provides for the expenditure of a hundred and twelve million dollars. About ninety-four million of the amount will be paid to war veterans. The pension and bonus systems will be liberalized a bit, and then the veterans will get a bit of cash.

Another chunk of money will be apportioned to the United States Coast Guard, to finance a more vigilant watch against liquor and drug smuggling. Finally, some of the money will go to the immediate construction of an airplane base in the Hawaiian Islands -- financing ~~for~~ the Navy's program of seadrome activity at Pearl Harbor, part of a larger scheme of national defense in

the Pacific. ^H And Congress today came across with more than a billion dollars for home owners -- funds to keep the home loan corporation going.

UTILITIES

7
Today President Roosevelt began his attack on utility holding companies. In a strong message to Congress the President urged legislation to regulate these companies. And he presented to the lawmakers a report by the National Power Policy Committee, which has been studying the utilities situation.

The holding companies have long been one of Mr. Roosevelt's pet aversions. He looks at it this way: Suppose there's a holding company owning stock-control in a number of power and light companies in various cities. The President claims that this tends to link up the local utilities units into great combinations, empires of utilities. That enables a few big men to control a whole network of companies. The President regards the holding company as a way for many industries to be controlled by a few owners.

That belief is behind Mr. Roosevelt's forceful message to Congress today, in which he not only asks that holding companies shall be regulated, but that they shall be largely abolished. "Except where it is absolutely necessary," the President declared, "the utility holding company, with its present powers, must go."

18
Meaning -- that only such companies as have a useful economic function should be retained, and not when they are merely a means of financial control. ~~The whole Democratic side of Congress stood up and cheered the President's message.~~ ^{It} It all ties up with general industrial philosophy, -- the usual case of advantages on one side and dangers on the other. Combining industrial units may frequently be an aid to efficiency -- the greater efficiency of unity; ~~--- the dangers are those of monopolistic control.~~

INSULL

Once more Samuel Insull ^{is} ~~was~~ proclaimed by a jury to have been merely a victim of the depression and of his own mistakes:— Another verdict of - "Not Guilty", in the prosecution of the former utilities king for embezzlement in connection with the collapse of his financial empire.) ~~XXXXXX~~ ^{Chicago} Before the ^A jury retired to deliberate, the judge told them that Insull's hasty flight to Europe and the necessity of bringing him back by extradition, should not be considered as necessarily evidence of guilt. ^{ff} This time it's a victory for him in the state courts. He ~~had~~ ^{has} already ^A been exonerated on federal charges in a federal court.

9
This second acquittal probably ends the story of Samuel Insull and the law. There are still two more charges pending against him, but it isn't likely that the Chicago prosecutor will use up any more of the taxpayers' money in pressing the remaining indictments.

Although Insull is seventy-five, he says he's going to devote his remaining years to the rebuilding of that vast structure of utilities finance which collapsed when the depression caused the ground to sink from beneath ^{it.} ~~it.~~ ^A

FATHER COUGHLIN

The most interesting point in General Johnson's reply to Father Coughlin today is the General's statement that his original address was read by high Catholic ecclesiastics before he turned it loose on the air and was approved by them. This is General Johnson's central contention in denying that there is any religious issue in his bitter controversy with Father Coughlin.

We all know that some of Father Coughlin's most outspoken critics are Catholics, and high churchmen at that. While the radio priest's own huge following includes people of every sort of religious belief -- and non-belief for that matter. Father Coughlin made one of his most telling utterances last night when he paid his acknowledgements to the fact that his message was not only for Catholics, but also for Protestants, and Jews - for the irreligious too. And therein lies the greatest element of his strength. The very opposition of many of his own fellow church men keeps him from being a figure within one religion, and classifies his personality and doctrines along economic, and not religious lines.

There's one cheery angle to this battle on the radio. It certainly has brought the lively old art of public debate back into dynamic prominence. And that ~~xxx~~ always adds to the gaiety of nations. It is something new in this modern world, when the whole country snaps to a vivid interest in the polemics of three gentlemen who are belaboring each other -- an oratorical clash of personalities. And it's only made possible by this same machinery through which I am speaking right now. What wouldn't Demosthenes and Cicero have given for a radio?

My guess is that in the battle ~~xxx~~ of words all three of the contestants are helped, rather than harmed. General Johnson has propelled himself from the shadows of retirement, right out into the utmost rays of the spotlight at that Waldorf-Redbook dinner. Huey Long was given an immense national audience - by far the greatest he's ever had. And last night Father Coughlin's personality and art of debate took on proportions of a nationwide phenomenon, no doubt his greatest radio audience too. In fact the General, by starting the ball rolling must have given his two antagonists a greater audience than he himself had with the opening gun.

It was, of course, of the keenest dramatic interest to hear how the radio priest, attacked by the rough, scathing phrases of General would strike back. Father Coughlin's retort was sometimes of the blasting variety, but more often deft and subtle. General Johnson's way suggested the hammer. Father Coughlin's thrust is stinging.

There were notes of corrosive sarcasm throughout, as when the radio priest called the General, "the sweet Prince of Bombast."

Politically, Father Coughlin's most important statement was his fervent defense of President Roosevelt personally, his pledge of changeless loyalty to the chief executive. And here also his approach was deft, with the Father blaming the things he complained of on the President's advisors. There are familiar pages in history in which protests against the royal policy praise the king and attack his ministers. And the defense of the President seemed to leave Huey Long on the spot.

Many people are inclined to smile at Father Coughlin's denunciations of Bernard Baruch as a sinister power of Wall Street.

But let's remember that we're not witnessing abstract philosophy but a heated thrust and counter-thrust of battle. In giving an impression of Father Coughlin's address one thing of the old word "Philippic" -- the kind of oratorical attack made immortal by Demosthenes in his relentless and embittered assaults upon Philip of Macedon.

COMPTROLLER McCARL

The newest scrap in Washington is a flourish of high comedy. It revolves around a beguiling character -- Comptroller-General McCarl. He is tangled up in a neat little ~~xxx~~ rumpus with Secretary Swanson of the Navy.

Imagine an expense account watch-dog who cannot be fired by his bosses. That does make it quite a problem.

John Raymond McCarl is a Republican. He was put into office fourteen years ago during the Harding administration. His term of office is for 15 years.

He is a kindly^{ly} faced Nebraska lawyer, a cornhusker with a sense of rectitude that recognizes nothing too big or nothing too small. It is related that on one occasion he vetoed a ten million dollar

government expenditure as being illegal. That same day he ordered five hundred telephones taken out of the government Claims Office -- because the girls were not writing out slips recording the calls they made. After office hours that day, he was still at his desk when a girl employee on the outside, got him on the wire and said that because the 'phone had been removed she ~~xxxxxx~~ couldn't call the office where she worked.

"What do you want to call the office for," demanded the Comptroller of the United States.

And she replied. "A man sent me some flowers. They are in the office now and I wanted one of the girls to put them in a vase of water."

"All right," responded the Comptroller. And he trudged up two flights of stairs with a ^{pitcher}~~vase~~ of water in which he put the flowers the man had sent the girl.

54

~~During the present administration~~ He has performed ~~similar~~ prodigies of economy. He refused to let the government pay for the shower-bath installed for the use of Secretary of the Treasury, Morgenthau. He cut the Navy pay of Dick Byrd, when

Byrd took time off to make his historic flight across the Atlantic. He reached an exquisite climax when he vetoed a bill for ice water. Where was the ice water to be installed? Why in the old prohibition office. They weren't allowed any water to drink, conscientious scruples forbade their drinking brandy or champagne, so what? Those prohibitionists had to be like their emblem, the camel.

~~So this is the watch-dog of the expense account who has gotten into an embroglio with the Secretary of the Navy and once more it's because of expense.~~ ^{How} Some of Secretary Swanson's gold-braided admirals sent in their expense accounts and Comptroller McCarl immediately got out his big blue pencil. And he ~~fixed~~ ^{fixed} them up plenty. The Secretary of the Navy was indignant. As for the admirals, you can imagine their explosions of sea-dog wrath. Secretary Swanson rose up in defiance. "I shall pay those expense accounts anyway", he declared. "I am not going to abide by the Comptroller-General's rulings any longer."

The Secretary is so mild and suave that Washington

gossip refuses to believe he issued the declaration of war all by himself. They surmise that the White House itself is behind the decision to ignore the Comptroller's blue pencil.

And that ^{takes} ~~checks~~ up to a neat bit of strategy. Of course Mr. McCarl cannot be removed from his job. Everybody agrees that there is no way of making him change his rulings. But suppose you simply don't pay any attention to his mandates? What can he do? Government lawyers have figured out that the only thing he can do is ~~to~~ take legal action against the offender, sue in the courts. The only way any government officer can prosecute a case is through the Attorney-General's Department of Justice. So the Comptroller would have to have the Attorney-General act for him. But the Attorney-General is on the other side of the fence. Suppose he refuses to act, refuses to press the Comptroller's prosecution against his own fellow cabinet member, the Secretary of the Navy, what then? The answer ~~is~~ seems to be -- nothing.

So Washington gossip is saying that ways have been found to checkmate the irremovable and indisputable Comptroller-General. They say he will stay in office for the remaining year of his term, but will be a man without power, his blue penciling just so much exercise.

56

GREECE

The Greek revolution seems to be pretty much at an end --
with the flight of the aged former Premier Venizelos. A dispatch
from Italy tells us the patriarchal statesman, who was a central
figure in the outbreak against the government at Athens, has fled
from his ^{home and} revolutionary headquarters on the Island of Crete. With a
large company of his followers ~~he~~^{he} has taken refuge on the Island
of Cassos, which is a possession of Italy. There he is quoted as
saying that he will never enter into politics again and that he will
never go back to Greece as long as he lives.

*I wonder what
his ambitious wife is saying about it? —
the one who is said to have played a
role in starting the Hellenic fireworks?*

We haven't had much news of the Kingdom of Siam since King Prajadhipok abdicated the throne, and a prince was put in his place. But today we have some news about the ^{new} small monarch. His first kingly action has been to ask for an increase of the royal budget -- his allowance. As a prince, he was getting fifteen cents a day, but he feels as a king he is worth twenty cents a day at least. ~~And~~ This may sound like a joke, but it isn't. A nickel is a good deal of money in Siam ^{ese} currency.

And the tiny Asiatic potentate has announced plans for the future improvement of his kingdom. He declares that in his reign Siam will have a first class fire department. ^{Bangkok} ~~Siam~~ needs fire engines. During his education in Europe, he saw some first class hook and ladder wagons roaring down the streets -- also the big hose squirting magnificent streams of water. So ^{to} ~~that~~ the boy king western civilization means fire engines, and ^{he'd like to drive one.}

As for his own royal pleasure, he has told his ministers he wants some of those mechanical toy trains to play with. And he has given them a list of books he wants to read. The literary tastes of the new King of Siam include "The Three Little Pigs", "Felix the Cat" and "Mickey Mouse."

TROUT

And now about the world's most scientific scientist. That's the way he was described to me by Don Marquis at the luncheon today. He is Edward Cooper Hewitt, one of America's leading commercial chemists. Don Marquis, the veteran humorist, leaned across the table and remarked solemnly: "With Hewitt, everything is scientific. At his place up in the Catskills he raises trout which he brought from Scotland. Several years ago, he noticed they weren't doing so well, so he made a trip to Scotland to study the native habitat of those particular trout. He ended by buying a loch, draining it dry and shipping the soil back to the United States. He used the soil as a new lining for his trout streams. And now his Scottish trout flourish in American waters on Scottish soil."

Then Scientist Hewitt added that his Scottish trout were being fed on Japanese silk worms. It seems that each year the Japanese have a lot of silk worms left over after they've unrolled the silk in cocoons. So in recent years they have been drying the defunct worms and using them for food. Scientist Hewitt got the notion that since trout eat worms, they might like silk worms.

And now he imports them.

So we have the scientific fact that Caledonian fish eat Nipponese worms in the Catskills. And now the scientific thing for me to do is to say -

SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.