

Berton -
L. T. - SUNOCO, THURSDAY, JUNE 20th, 1935

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

After yesterday's news, it's only natural that today's news should be featured by the date line, Washington. The President's tax proposal, one might almost say tax revolution, tosses a bombshell. Today is a bit like a day after war is declared, when the battling begins.

As for immediate news dispatches from the battle front from Capitol Hill, they're here. The President's sweeping tax-The-Wealth program received something of a set-back today. Senator LaFollette came forward with the proposal to stick those taxes on big incomes into the Nuisance Tax Bill, which the Senate is considering, the measure to continue the imposts on petty luxuries -- so-called nuisance taxes. The Wisconsin Senator wanted to turn the bill instantly and at once into that immense levy on inheritances, gifts and high

incomes. But the Senate Finance Committee decided -- nothing doing. The committee voted to ~~not~~ handle the five million dollar nuisance tax proposition all by itself. The White House asks that the nuisance taxes be extended for two years. The Finance Committee voted -- one year.

47
It is to be observed that the rejection of the LaFollette proposal to jump right into the Tax-The-Wealth proceedings was spoken by Senator Pat Harrison. He is a White House leader. This fits in with a communication from the White House that the President wants Congress to deal with the Giant taxation in its own sweet way. He would like to have the Legislators pass it quickly, pronto, but he wants them to have plenty of freedom of action.

What's the response of the country at large? Today doesn't bring any clear picture of pro and con. The general impression seems to be one of bewilderment, nobody quite knowing what to think of the huge plan to level off wealth by the taxation route. Some are saying it will give the Republicans a powerful weapon at the next election. Others say it's a powerful weapon

for the New Deal. Some are pointing out that the President, having been criticized for not balancing the budget, now ~~he~~ wants to ~~he~~ balance it -- with a vengeance. Vengeance may be no mere figure of speech. This sort of budget balancing is not likely to appeal to business, which has been crying out in the wilderness: "Balance the budget!"
~~Maybe not the wilderness any longer. They may find it worse than wilderness.~~ But these are merely haphazard remarks heard here and there. The picture of opinion ^{today} is not much of a picture. Mostly a blank canvas of bewilderment.

There's gossip about the suddenness of the Presidential move. The surprize tactics of abruptly presenting to Congress something so big and unexpected. Is there any explanation? Sure. There's not merely one explanation. There are two. They happen to be contradictory, so often the case with explanations. One is that the President jumped in all of a sudden, without any warning, so that Congressional leaders wouldn't have any chance to ask him not to do it. If they knew about it in advance, they would have asked him to go easy. So he plunked the tax message on the table before they ever suspected it was coming. The other explanation is that the

White House leaders in Congress knew about it and said:- "Please don't." Then urged President Roosevelt not to come forward right now with those enormous taxes on incomes, earnings of corporations, and inheritances. The President answered by sending the message to Congress.

49
If the program of limiting great wealth by taxation should go through, it would be a good deal like what happened with England right after the World War. The crushing financial burdens of the greatest conflict in history were met by imposing tax burdens that ~~h~~ virtually wiped out the upper brackets of wealth.

Barton -

SOCIAL SECURITY

Another Washington date-line -- social security.

A joint conference of Senators and Representatives tried to work out an agreement concerning the Clark Amendment today. This amendment proposes that no old age pension taxes shall be levied on business houses that already have old age pension systems. The Senators have tacked the amendment on and they are for it. The Representatives are against it.

I have letters asking me to explain what the Social Security Bill will mean, so here are the several points for Old Age Pensions; the federal government and the states will contribute equal amounts of money. Needy persons of sixty-five or over will receive fifteen dollars a month from the federal government and fifteen a month from the state. Such ~~states~~ states as have no pension laws right now would have to enact laws to put up money to equal the federal money or their needy aged would get no pension.

50

The unemployment insurance would pay up to eighty-five dollars a month depending upon the normal salaries of the persons

Barton -
SOCIAL SECURITY - 2

in the unemployment class. The money would be raised by taxation both on employees and employers, the employees to pay a percentage of their wages, and the employers to pay a percentage of their payrolls. The percentage in question would begin at one percent and would increase gradually to three percent by 1949.

PHILADELPHIA

There will be a revolution tomorrow in Pennsylvania, not a social revolution, but an American Revolution - or rather a replica of one. The Pennsylvania Society of the Sons of the Revolution are celebrating the anniversary of the British evacuation of Philadelphia, and they're doing it in an appropriate way, in a log hut. It's precisely like the log huts that Washington's ragged Continentals occupied during that historic Valley Forge winter. They've constructed, from Washington's own specifications, a building of "shelter," worked out from descriptions found in contemporary diaries of officers and soldiers. Infantry men of the Pennsylvania National Guard will take the part of the ragged Continentals. Dressed in the blue and buff uniform of Washington's army, they'll stand on duty as sentries. There will be a military review and also speeches.

51

One investigation is on and another gets going -- plenty of investigation into those charges against the Department of Commerce. Ewing Mitchell, the ousted Under-Secretary was on the stand again today testifying before the Senate Commerce Committee. And while he was continuing ~~in~~ to tell his story, Attorney-General Cummings came forth with a statement that he is going to investigate on his own account. The Attorney-General said in fact that his ^{own} ~~own~~ inquiry is already under way. He promises to elucidate every angle of those charges -- waste, inefficiency and corruption in the Department of Commerce.

Youth will be served, also challenged. Some Senators want to throw youth out.

52
—

Senator-elect Rush Holt of West Virginia tried to take his Senate seat today. Why shouldn't he? The Senate age limit is thirty. And Yesterday was Rush Holt's thirtieth birthday. He was under^Aage when elected; and he's been waiting for that venerable Senatorial age of one score and ten. You'd think that he would automatically be entitled to put on his toga today, but some of the Senators raised an argument, ^PThe Senator-elect is a Democrat. So when he appeared in the Upper House he was challenged by Senator McNary, the Republican Leader, on the ground that he was not thirty when he was elected. And Senator Hastings entered a motion to declare his election null and void because he wasn't thirty when the West Virginia voters said "Yea."

But Rush Holt is used to hearing himself called too young. He tried to enter the University of Cincinnati when he was fifteen, but was refused -- too young. When he graduated from Salem College at eighteen, his father said he wasn't old enough. At twenty-three he lost a race for the Virginia State Legislature

53

because he was too young. Later he grew a beard, was elected, and then shaved the beard off. When and if he gets into the Senate he will be the youngest member. He is unmarried!

Too young, I suppose. His Washington hostess is his sister, Jane. She's twenty-one, the youngest official hostess in the capital. Many say she's too young.

So Rush Holt is cursed by youth, which many of us would like to be. ^{TP}I suppose fifty years from now ~~Rush~~ will be the country's youngest octogenarian.

Don't expect an early decision in the Hauptmann trial. The New Jersey Court of Errors and Appeals will take its time. The case was opened and was completed today, but there will be no decision until October.

Fourteen judges of the appeal court have begun proceedings, behind closed doors. But the general tenor of the Hauptmann argument can be told. The lawyers for the Bronx carpenter in their appearance before the judges, stripped the case of all its emotionalism. That was to be expected. An appeal board considers cold legalistic aspects. There are no theatrical fireworks as at an exciting public trial, with forensic lawyers working up drama and heart throbs to impress the twelve men and women good and true. So Hauptmann's lawyers today stuck to strict legalities. They presented a long brief of thousands of pages citing voluminous phases of law and legal opinion to support their contention that Hauptmann did not receive justice in the crowded, feverish court trial at Flemington. That is necessarily their point of argument. The Jersey Court of Appeals concentrates on the question: Did or did not the convicted man

receive a fair, impartial and legally proper trial?

In that *long* Hauptman brief, the heaviest emphasis is laid on the point that was familiar enough at the Flemington affair, meaning, the prosecution theory of *Must* how the Lindbergh crime was committed, Hauptmann's appeal charges that the state advanced varied theories of ^{the} crime in accusing Hauptmann, and did not stick to any one clear definite picture of how the kidnapper had got into the room and abducted the baby.

The presentation of the appeal was completed at just one court sitting, no long drawn-out orations and wranglings. The arguments are presented in that voluminous brief. The judges upon adjourning today, took the documents with them. They'll have all summer to study the case. They'll take months in deciding whether to sustain or not to sustain the Hauptmann death penalty. They'll announce their decision when they meet again in October.

Hauptmann's attorneys argued for three hours. The brief is several hundred pages long. Hauptmann's lawyers advanced their own theory of the crime, the familiar theory -- that it was an ~~ix~~ inside job.

Barton -

ABYSSINIA

Abyssinia is a long way from Geneva, but the historic old city on the Swiss lake becomes more and more important in East African - Abyssinian events. This is indicated by today's news. There must be a good deal of probability of League action - when we have a strong and insistent rumor today that if Geneva interferes in Italy's dealings with Ethiopia, why then Italy will resign from the League. Abyssinia's appeal is based on article ten of the League Covenant, which specifies that member nations shall respect each other's boundaries.

~~57~~

Here's something

~~has pictures, but just as~~ significant; ~~so~~ the

rumor that airplanes are moving across the borders of French Somaliland - fighting planes manned by European flyers, on their way to Addis Ababa. The Italians have been charging that European nations have been arming and aiding the Abyssinians. This may be so, if there's any truth in the rumor that European sky fighters are joining up with the King of Kings.

56

ABYSSINIA - 3.

57

Today's reports of war preparations in Abyssinia bring us one detail that seems to be of the most ominous war-like significance, so say travelers who know that part of Africa, although most of us would hardly apprehend the Bellicose importance of it all. Yes, ~~■~~ Bellicose, though it applies to the foot - an Ethiopian variation of the barefoot boy. ^{TP} The fighting men of the King of Kings are mobilizing, and they haven't any shoes on. The news headline is that the Lion of Judah is massing his soldiers and tribesmen along the disputed borders, and will have eight hundred thousand of them in defensive positions by the time the rainy season ~~■~~ ends and the military season begins this fall - and that is accompanied by the word that the Abyssinians are throwing away their shoes. They fight better barefoot. ^{TP} Among the ~~■~~ dusky warriors of the tribes are many who wear shoes in orderly peaceful pursuits, but when the war-cry shrills forth, they charge into battle with unadorned tootsies. That's the significance of the news about shoes in East Africa;- bare Ethiopian feet, the Dogs of War.

ENDING

It's an old axiom - that there are no holidays on the radio. And I can prove that by the fact that I haven't had a day off for the past three years, haven't skipped a broadcast. But I can disprove it by still another fact - that I'm going to have a day off. How so? By means of a pinch hitter - somebody who steps to the plate and bats for you.

My holiday tomorrow comes as a reward - a reward for calling some particularly husky and hardy gentlemen a lot of liars:- Those Maine Guides, at the time of the Fall Story Contest in the backwoods, when we crowned fish-and-moose-expert Fred Robinson as the champion whopper teller. As a result, the Maine Guides have invited me to come up and listen to them. They also intimate they might show me where to catch a fish or two. My ^{true blue-Sunoco sponsors} ~~sponsors, the Sun Oil Company,~~ said okay - that I shouldn't miss the chance, [^] although I might miss the fish.

How about the pinch hitter? I used to be a world traveler, before my travels settled down to the daily dash from my office to the N. B. C. studio. But Rex Barton is a world

2/10/50

traveler fresh from the long, long trail. He's only a couple of days back from a year's journey around the world, observing affairs in forty different countries, in Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia - writing his World Letters that have been widely read. So he'll be able to look at the news tomorrow with quite an international eye. If there's any new flare-up in the East African trouble, why Rex Barton has been to Abyssinia. He's been up and down the Far East, with an angle or two to add - if China and Japan should give us a headline. The same applies to news items from almost any old place around the globe - from the Tasman Sea to Finland.

So, Rex Barton will be wrestling with the news tomorrow while I'm wrestling with a giant salmon - or Lake Trout - maybe. It's all a matter of fisherman's luck. Anyhow World Traveller Barton will be on the air tomorrow, and, with fish or without fish, I'll be back on Monday.

Until then -- SO LONG.