

Radio Speech, May 11, 1941

Good Morning, Friends:

Throughout the week, the debate on the convoying question raged in ^{Congress} both the House and the Senate, ^{quickly} through the press and (over the radio.) Admiral Land, ^{Chairman of the Maritime Commission,} touched off a rolling controversy over the amount of America's aid which is being sunk before it reaches Great Britain. Admiral Land said that according to the reports which had come to the Maritime Commission, only a small percentage of the ships clearing American harbors bound for Great Britain had been lost in the last four months. Isolationists ^{quickly} seized upon this and said that it torpedoed the argument that convoys should be used to keep the aid which we were providing from going to the bottom of the Atlantic. Admiral Land later modified his statement somewhat by saying that he was speaking only from the reports of sinkings which had been made to the Maritime Commission. Senator George, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, ^{significantly} said Great Britain should give the United States detailed information as to the amount of this country's supplies which were being sunk. This incident served to draw attention to the tremendous amount of propaganda which is being showered upon the country from all sides. > Meanwhile, the Maritime Commission approved the transfer of 50 tankers to British registry. The urgency of tanker need is no doubt accelerated by the war in Iraq which has resulted in the cutting of the oil pipe lines from the Arabian wells to the Mediterranean. It takes enormous quantities of oil to supply the air force and mechanized divisions of Great Britain which ^{which they} must import in addition to the gasoline needed for the every-day uses of the British people. The Maritime Commission is going forward with plans to make other ships available to Great Britain. This problem is made more difficult by the with-drawal of so many foreign ships

~~being withdrawn~~ from world commerce. For instance, this country imported 16 million tons of strategic materials in 1938, and two-thirds of this amount was brought to us by ships flying foreign flags. In the year 1941, we are scheduled to import 21 million ^{strategic} tons and practically all of it must be carried in our own bottoms. This means that we will have to carry approximately four times as much strategic freight as we did in 1938. Unless we import manganese, we can not make steel. Unless we import rubber, that supply will run short. In other words, unless we can ^{get} ~~keep~~ our strategic imports ~~going~~, we can not make finished products available to Great Britain in maximum volume. This makes a tremendous strain upon the ^{Maritime} ~~merchant marine~~ Commission. They are determined to handle it, however, and to also make ~~the ships~~ available to Great Britain the ships which the President requested for them.) The production of ships is getting underway in a very satisfactory ^{manner} ~~fashion~~. According to a member of the Maritime Commission, there is a tremendous shortage of ^{technical labor} ~~ship building~~ which has been brought about by the fact that in the ten-year period from 1926 to 1936, only nine ships of as much as two thousand ton capacity were built in the entire United States. During 1942, we expect to place in the water three and one-half million tons of new ships. But that is next year, and many more ships are needed now. X In an effort to alleviate the present shipping emergency, the House passed a bill during the week to give the President authority to take over and pay for 83 ships belonging to foreign countries and tied up in our ports. When there is at stake the life-line of food and ammunition to Great Britain on the one hand, and the bringing of

~~fighting and~~ ^{vital} necessary strategic materials to the United States on the other, it certainly stands to reason that this country should be allowed to put to use idle ships stored within her ports.) We are all acquainted with the power of condemnation, or eminent domain as the lawyers call it, by which a portion of a man's farm can be taken for the purpose of ~~building~~ the erection of a school building or the building of a road. The owner, however, must be given fair compensation for his property. This bill not only gave the President authority to take these ships for our use, but it also gave him authority to pay the owners a fair price for the property thus taken. Congressman Pearson of Tennessee offered an amendment which reads as follows:

"Provided further, that in the event any vessel taken over under the provisions of this act belongs to any government now indebted to the United States, the compensation to be paid for such vessel or vessels shall be paid by crediting the same upon such existing debt and not by the payment of cash."

In support of this amendment, Congressman Pearson made a very effective speech, and only a few of the speeches in Congress are really effective. Congressman Pearson is in the studio and has agreed to present to you the argument for his amendment as he did in the House.

Congressman Pearson of Tennessee -

"I do not think anybody is suffering under any delusion that this bill does not go directly into the fact of international law, as we have understood it since the inception of the foundation of this Government. Neither do I think that more than a few of us feel such action is not justified under conditions

as they exist throughout the world today. If other nations are to confiscate and take over properties belonging to other nations, there is no reason why our Nation should not do likewise, if we are convinced that such a step is in our own national interest and defense. If we are to enact this legislation, there is no reason under heaven why this Government should act contrary to what any other creditor would act in dealing with one who is indebted to it. If you were transacting business with an individual who owes you money, and you entered into a transaction in which you expect to pay him, you would take credit on what he owes you before the transaction is completed.

"There are 83 ships involved in this bill. Thirty-seven of them belong to nations that are overwhelmingly indebted to the United States Government. One is from Belgium, which owed us \$453,000,000; 14 are from France, that owes us \$4,000,000,000; 2 are from Germany, that owes us one and a quarter billion dollars; 2 are from Estonia; 2 from Italy, that owes us \$2,000,000,000; 1 from Lithuania, which owes us seven and three-quarters million dollars, and 1 from Rumania, which owes us \$64,000,000 - 37 out of a total of 83 from nations that owe us millions and billions of dollars and who have never offered us a sound reason for the non-payment of these obligations. Mr. Chairman, if we are going to offend other ~~portions~~ nations by taking their property which is in our ports, we will not offend to any greater extent by saying to them, 'You are going to pay us by delivering property to us in kind,' and applying the obligation of that ~~property to the indebtedness these~~ property to the indebtedness these nations owe us. I insist it is good business on the part of the Nation and the Congress,

as its spokesman, to require them to pay us now while we have an opportunity to at least recoup some of the loss which we should not be called upon to suffer at their hands. I insist upon the adoption of this amendment."

Thank you, Congressman Pearson. That was a logical argument.

The House adopted the amendment and ^{why shouldn't it.} ~~passed the bill.~~ The bill ^{passed and will} ~~will probably~~

^{probably} be taken up in the Senate within the next few days where it will precipitate a long debate on the whole question of foreign affairs and particularly that of convoys.

Away back in 1789 that salty statesman, Benjamin Franklin, said; "In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes." For days and days the House Ways and Means Committee has been holding hearings on a tax bill from which they hope the government will collect \$3½ billion. Experts have appeared, congressmen, statesmen and would-be statesmen have ^{testified} ~~appeared~~, but the most effective witnesses yet to appear were a group of tobacco farmers from Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, and North Carolina. These farmers did not speak in congressional platitudes or technical phraseology. They simply stated the truth and appealed to the committee's sense of justice. It seemed to have a good effect.

From Tennessee came Mr. ^{Jack} Bell of Springfield and Mr. Rudolph of Clarksville, Mr. Owen of Gallatin and Mr. Graydon Morris of Springfield. Mr. Morris who is a director of the Eastern dark tobacco growers Association of Springfield is also in the studio.

Mr. Morris; Why do you think there should be no additional tax on tobacco?

Do you think additional taxes would be an added burden to the farmer?

Do you not think that it is fair and right to tax according to ability to pay?

Thank you, Mr. Morris.

There, ladies and gentlemen, you have briefly the tobacco farmers viewpoint on the proposed increase of tax on tobacco. The tobacco tax, however, is only one of the many controversial proposals. *which goes to prove that* It is a great deal easier to spend than to tax.

And now, let's for a moment turn from taxes and ships and war and men, because this day is set apart for Mothers Day. So high and holy a title ~~is~~ as Mother can not fall too reverently from man's lips. That he might live, the Mother has gone down into the valley of the shadow of death; that he might go among his fellow-men on equal footing, she has worked and strived and toiled; that he might have everlasting life, she has instilled into his mind that saving fear of God. !

Remember this power?

When pain and sickness made me cry,
Who gazed upon my heavy eye
And wept, for fear that I should die?

My mother.

Who ran to help me when I fell
And would some pretty story tell,
Or kiss the part to make it well?

My mother.

Who taught my infant lips to pray,
To love God's holy word and day,
And walk in wisdom's way?

My mother.

When thou art feeble, old and gray,
My healthy arm shall be thy stay,
And I will soothe thy pains away,

My mother.