

WSM - April 4, 1943

Good Morning, Friends:

The Japanese Cherry Trees around the Washington tidal basin and along the banks of the Potomac have been in full blossom for about a week. They are exquisitely beautiful, and in former years, thousands upon thousands of sightseers have thronged about them. But there is scarcely a mention of them now. *and only a few straggling observers.* The blossoms have the same fragrance and delicate beauty, but the enjoyment thereof is dulled by the revolting thought that they came to us as gifts from ^{*repulsive*} the treacherous Japanese. And while ^{*speaking*} thinking of the Japanese, it is interesting to note some figures regarding our air combat casualties with the planes of Japan which were released a few days ago by the War Department. During the last three months, the United States Army Air Forces shot down 384 Jap planes while losing only 54 of their own. This is a ratio of almost 8 to 1. In our first air encounters with Japan, the Jap Zero fighter was considered a superb fighting plane. Its speed and maneuverability made of it an allusive target and a dangerous opponent. But our planes have been steadily improved. The American scientific and industrial genius has been unloosed. I have watched the improvements in ^{*each successive*} the ~~various~~ models of fighter craft which I have been permitted to see. Today, as a result of this improvement and as a result of the careful training of our aircraft forces, the army is able to make this amazing announcement that over a period of three months, for every United States plane lost almost 8 Japanese planes have been shot down.

The week in Congress began with a defeat of the Ruml Plan by which everybody's income tax liability would be canceled and ~~start all over anew~~ by collecting on a pay-as-they-earn basis from people drawing salaries and wages. After the defeat of the Ruml plan, which was supported by an almost solid Republican block, the committee bill ^{supported by a majority of the democrats} was rejected also and the whole question was sent back to the Ways and Means Committee. The debate was one of the bitterest in recent Congressional history. The bitter partisanship which has developed in Congress is most unfortunate. Perhaps, it was inevitable since the lines between the parties are drawn so tightly, but it is, nevertheless, regrettable.

On Friday, the President vetoed ^{and sent back to Congress} the Bankhead Bill, designed to increase certain farm prices, ~~and sent it back to Congress~~. The question of overriding the veto will first be taken up in the Senate. It requires a two-thirds majority of both the House and the Senate to override a presidential veto. Upon the reading of the veto message, ^{on last Friday} Senator Bankhead of Alabama, author of the bill, began immediately seeking the necessary votes to pass it over the veto. The question is scheduled to be taken up in the Senate on Tuesday. If the Senate passes it over the veto, it will then come to the House to be voted upon in a similar fashion. Along with the return of the veto ^d bill, the President sent a strong message outlining his position and pleading with the Congress not to pass the bill. The President said that his War Labor Board could not hold wages down, as they are trying to

^{to} to, if the cost of living were allowed to continue to go up. The President

said that a runaway inflation with farm prices and wages racing each other

^{up the inflationary ladder,} to see which could get the highest would endanger the war program, greatly

increase the cost of the war, and threaten ^{our chance of} the winning of the ^{war} peace as

well as a ^{winning} loss of the ^{peace} war. Many members, even though they ^{may have} voted for the

bill when it originally passed the House and the Senate, will be reluctant

to override a Presidential veto in time of war, and especially so when

^{the commander in chief} the President ^{says} that to do so will endanger our chances of winning

the war. The President pointed out that increased prices would not

create more steel to make the farm machinery which the farmer needs,

nor would increased prices alleviate the scarcity of labor. Regardless

of these arguments, it is generally predicted that the Senate will over-

ride the veto. Should this occur, there will be a determined fight to do

the same thing in the House.

If by passing this bill over the president's veto it means that wage control will go out the window, as was implied by the president, then the congress would be running the risk of taking a dangerous chance of an economic back-up.