

Radio Program, WSM, May 30, 1943

Good Morning, Friends:

*was not broadcast*

Perhaps the briefest but the most significant statement of the week in Washington contained only one sentence. It was a very brief statement by the President that the United States and Great Britain had agreed upon a plan to prosecute joint warfare against ~~the~~ the enemy. Just why the President and the Primeminister Did not issue a joint statement, as has been their usual custom, <sup>at the close of their conferences,</sup> is not known here. It should be enough for us to know, however, that the plans have been made and that they have been agreed upon. It is <sup>only</sup> natural for us to wonder and speculate upon the details of the plan, upon when and how <sup>where</sup> the enemy will be attacked. But if it arouses our curiosity and wonderment, it must give our Axis enemies the jitters. They know they will be hit and hit hard, but they know not where. And knowing not where, they must prepare everywhere.

Once again, the President's trusted friend, Jimmy Burns, has been given a new post. This time he is placed in charge of the nation's entire war mobilization program. He <sup>has</sup> become, in fact, deputy President, <sup>to</sup> thus relieving the President of many of his worries in order that he may devote more of his time to war strategy. <sup>Over</sup> ~~the~~ whole war program has been plagued by bureaucratic jealousies. Each new administrator and each new agency created immediately becomes ambitious to grow, expand, and become more important. They are <sup>extremely</sup> jealous of <sup>what each considers to be its own</sup> ~~their~~ rights and pretty soon someone gets mad, some Director or Czar becomes angry with some other <sup>director</sup> ~~Czar~~ and they get into a quarrel about who is stepping on whose toes. Some of them are as fussy <sup>peculiar</sup>



as @ setting hen? There was the long drawn out row between William Jeffers and Under Secretary of War Patterson. Then, there was the peeve between Leon Henderson and Harold Ickes. For the last few days, a row has been going on between Prentice Brown, OPA Administrator, and Chester Davis, War Food Administrator. When these quarrels flare up, each side wants to take it to the President, and he just doesn't have time to fool with <sup>it.</sup> ~~such carrying~~ on. He has now given Mr. Burnes full authority to deal not only with these troublesome problems but with many other <sup>bigger problems of the</sup> ~~on the~~ home front.

To succeed Mr. Burnes as Economic Stabilization Director, the President again went to the courts and appointed Judge Fred Vinson, who before his appointment as Judge <sup>Served</sup> ~~was~~ in Congress from Kentucky for 14 years. Judge Vinson is regarded as an able man, and an able man is certainly needed to handle the natty problems of stabilization. The first <sup>quelling rebel</sup> ~~thing~~ on his doorstep is John L. Lewis' demand for a \$2 a day wage increase for the United Mine Workers. Then, there is the Rubber Workers Controversy, <sup>the</sup> railroad employees controversy - in fact, a thousand and one demands. He'll have to make up his mind either to hold the ~~line~~ <sup>line</sup> where it is, or relax it. <sup>and they seek to reestablish it some where else</sup> ~~It looks to me as if the line is already breaking.~~ Judge Vinson has a real task on his hands.

The Senate has been conducting a vigorous debate on the extension of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Program. They have agreed to start voting on next Tuesday. <sup>And</sup> The indications are that the Act will be extended without crippling amendments.



The House and Senate Conferees finally came to an agreement on a tax program which will be voted upon in the House on Tuesday. It is generally expected that the agreement of the conferees will be ratified by both the House and the Senate, *which is necessary before it can become law*, though there is considerable opposition to the agreement in the House, <sup>a</sup>and/lively contest may be expected.

The Conally-Smith Anti-strike Bill is on the calendar for House action on Wednesday. It is easy to see a lot of political maneuvering, *behind the scenes* on this bill. One of the amusing developments is the decision of the House Military Affairs Committee, which reported the Bill, to call before it the government officials who signed a round-robin, saying the bill would hurt the war effort. This committee reported the bill 21 to 0. They thought the bill to outlaw strikes in war industries was necessary to further the war, and they are ~~making~~ *Donald Nelson* calling these men, Admiral Land, Secretary Knox, Secretary Stimson, before the Committee to go over the bill with them, ~~EXAMINE~~ sentence by sentence, and ~~finding~~ out just what provisions would be hurtful to the war program. This has provoked some understanding smiles, because most everyone around the Capitol thinks that the letter of the war leaders was couched more in politics than in merit. Anyway, it will be interesting to see just how these gentlemen can point out the danger which this *anti strike* bill entails to the war program.



The Office of Price Administration <sup>was taken</sup> took a significant step, during the week. They <sup>announced to a</sup> rolled back the retail prices of potatoes and onions by about 7%, and, at the same time, increased the price paid to the potato farmer by 30¢ per hundred pounds. This was not done by paying a subsidy to the middle men, either. Upon investigation, the OPA found that there was an unreasonable markup in the price of potatoes between the producer and the consumer. So, the OPA stepped in and limited the number of distributor mark-ups and fixed the maximum mark-up to 60¢ per one hundred pounds on potatoes and 80¢ for one hundred pounds of onions. Now this is at least one thing the OPA has done that should be encouraging to farmers. Our system of mark-ups is, <sup>somewhat</sup> ~~as~~ <sup>generally</sup> you know, based upon percentages. So, when the price of potatoes to the farmer advances from \$1 a bushel to \$2 a bushel, the profit of the processor is increased in like ratio. For instance, say one middle man <sup>has</sup> made a 20% mark-up. His profit, then, would not be the 20¢ which he had made on potatoes when they <sup>cost</sup> were \$1.00 a <sup>bushel</sup> hundred, but it would be 20% of \$2.00 which would be 40¢. <sup>just double what he had been making for buying a bushel</sup> The next man in line, <sup>then,</sup> would mark up his percentage on \$2.40. So, you see it <sup>equates</sup> looks more or less far like compound interest. Just how/the OPA will go in this direction, I do not know. But if they expect to get very far in Congress with their subsidy program <sup>by which they plan to</sup> subsidize the <sup>processing</sup> distribution <sup>of food</sup> process, they may as well make up their minds to go ahead and ring a lot of excess water out of <sup>our</sup> the system of distribution, which I have been trying to get them to do for

several months. <sup>During this time</sup> countries labor leaders asked the president to step in and roll a lot of prices back. Now this rolling back of prices brings on plenty of complications - In fact, it just can't be done without hurting lots of people - badly.



On last Thursday, the House passed a resolution authorizing and directing the House Agriculture Committee to make a thorough investigation and study of our whole problem and system of distribution in order that we might get at the core of the problem. This committee <sup>will soon start work and it</sup> has an opportunity to do a wonderful service <sup>to the country.</sup>

<sup>this week</sup> Washington was again host to another foreign President ~~during the~~ week, Edwin Barclay, the President of Liberia. The knowledge of the world which this war has provoked among we Americans is not the least of its side products. We have become more aware, for instance, of this little republic of Liberia, whose President addressed Congress during the week.

Liberia is a Negro Republic on the West Coast of Africa and was set up under United States sponsorship and settled by freed American slaves.

When we entered the war, one of our early acts was to come to an agreement with this entirely Negro Republic, and its Negro President, the Honorable Edwin Barclay, has extended very helpful cooperation to the United States.

He and his government gave us all the facilities we required on Liberian soil - and they have been many - for Liberia is an important stop on

commercial and military airways between the United States, West Africa,

and beyond. <sup>Many of our trans ocean</sup> Planes land here and from there fan out and proceed to various

parts of North Africa, Europe, and Asia. We have a considerable number

of troops there, as well as maintenance and service personnel for airports

and other facilities. President Barclay made a brief, but appropriate

speech to Congress, and we can but hope that his visit to this country



which is returning a visit to Liberia by President Roosevelt, will be an enjoyable stay.

The gasoline shortage in the East is <sup>still quite</sup> ~~very~~ acute. Many an automobile gas tank, including my own, has been dry as a chip. <sup>In such a situation</sup> If there was not some control of the price of gasoline, the limited supply might <sup>now</sup> easily be <sup>selling</sup> ~~sold~~ in Washington for \$1.00 a gallon. The prices have remained steady, though, except perhaps for a few black market operators, and the limited distribution has been in an orderly fashion. It's surprising how little grumbling there is. <sup>That is the remarkable thing.</sup> People are taking it as an unavoidable consequence of the war. ~~and~~ They know that tremendous moves are pending across the waters and that stupendous amounts of gasoline are necessary.

Empty gas tanks are as nothing compared with the <sup>many</sup> empty places in American homes which will come from ~~the~~ <sup>impending</sup> ~~future~~ battles. ~~and~~