

Good Morning, Friends:

The House of Representatives went on a rampage against the OPA, that is, the Office of Price Administration, in a session last Friday which went well into the night. The attack was led by the Republicans, who were joined by a few Democrats - enough to give them a voting majority. The following amendments were adopted: (1) To forbid payment of food subsidies by the OPA; (2) to cut 35 million dollars from the proposed appropriation for the OPA during the coming fiscal year which, under the circumstances, what with some definite commitments for specific purposes, amounted to a 40% reduction in OPA administrative funds; (3) to block grade labeling, or standardization, of products and commodities. (4) to require that any person having anything to do with the formulation and promulgation of price-fixing policies have at least five years of business experience in the business particularly concerned with the policy. The amendment didn't require that the business man should have been a successful business man or whether he be a responsible head of a business or just a clerk in a business establishment. This bill now goes to the Senate where some of the amendments will likely be knocked out. Should all of the amendments become law, the Office of Price Administration would be virtually wiped out.

On the same day, ~~At the same time,~~ by ~~a~~ *and sent up to the White House* virtually unanimous action, of both houses of Congress, ^{passed} the largest Navy Appropriation bill in history - twenty-seven billion, six hundred and thirty-seven million dollars. And the House Appropriations Committee reported out an unprecedented Army Supply Bill of seventy-one billion dollars. The Senate added twenty-two million dollars to the

interior Department's appropriation bill for the purpose of developing irrigation projects in order to put every possible acre into food production. So, ^{you see} whenever a measure is unquestionably a war measure, it receives well nigh unanimous support. But when the question is one of domestic concern, it is a dog and cat fight nearly every time.

On Friday, the War Labor Board finally made its decision on the Coal Worker's demands for higher wages. It refused to grant John L. Lewis' demands for portal to portal pay, or his demand for a \$2.00 per day increase in basic wages. The decision came just two days before the expiration of Lewis' deadline for a possible third general coal strike. Announcement of the Board's decision produced a flurry of work stoppages. On yesterday, approximately fifty thousand miners had ~~refused~~ ^{quit} to work. About 12 or 13 mines were closed in Pennsylvania, two in Ohio, some in Alabama and some in Tennessee, and nearly all of the metallurgical mines in West Virginia. The decision of the War Labor Board was a split decision, the board voting 8 to 4. The 4 members representing organized labor voted against the decision, but even these 4 made it plain that, although they disagreed with the decision, it was a majority decision of the Board and must be considered as the final decision of the government in this case.

John L. Lewis set out not only to get his demands, but to destroy the War Labor Board just as he destroyed the National Mediation Board two years ago. The War Labor Board realized that it would stand or fall with its decision.

If John L. Lewis' demands were met, it meant that all of the decisions which the Board had made in refusing wage increases would have to be reconsidered. It meant the whole wage stabilization program, which the Board is responsible for administering, would go out the window. The Board has stood its grounds. Many people have been surprized that they have done so. The deadline for work stoppages comes tonight. Another one of Lewis' so-called truces expires at midnight. > Meanwhile, the President faced a momentous decision *perhaps one of the most important in his long public career.* on the Smith-Connally anti-strike bill. He had three courses open to him: (1) he could sign it into law; (2) he could allow it to become law without his signature, or (3) he could veto it.

(editorial)

During the week, the RFC announced a definite scale of subsidies to be paid to meat packers. The purpose of the subsidy program is to compensate the meat packers for a reduction in the price of meat to the consumer. In other words, retail prices of meat have been ordered reduced by 10%, and in order that this 10 per cent reduction not result in a reduction of the price which the farmers receives for his *live stock* ~~meat~~ animals, the government proposes to step in and pay the difference. This ~~diff~~ payment of difference is called a subsidy. Nevertheless, the announcement of this subsidy scale seemed to have little

on the live stock market.

affect. The price of hogs on the livestock market ~~was~~ reduced. It seems

*suffered further
from ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~week~~ ^{the week}*

to me that if the government is going to step in and pay a subsidy to the packer in order that meat prices in the grocery store be reduced, the government is going to also have to step in and be sure that the prices are not reduced to the farmer. As it is, ~~the~~ packer is getting the subsidy and cutting the price down on the farmer too. The system is just not working as it is.

Washington was considerably worried by word that several of the country's large packing houses were closed down. These plants must operate in order to provide meat for the armed forces as well as for civilians. And another thing, the reduction in the price of hogs and the inability to get feed is discouraging the feeding of hogs. I know this to be true, because I

was at home on my farm in Tennessee the first three days of last week, and I found my neighbors ~~trying to sell~~ ^{ing} their sows and pigs and ~~shoats~~ ^{feeding} because they said they just couldn't make ends meet by feeding them. I understand from

~~Congressman from other sections of the country that~~ A similar situation prevails in many parts of the country. If this ~~coal~~ ^{situation} mess isn't straightened out and straightened out soon, the nation's meat supply may be drastically curtailed.

to obtain trained employees. It is common knowledge that a vast amount of time is lost because of the mistakes and inexperience of green workers. It is also common knowledge that many Government agencies have tried to establish their own recruitment systems because they were not able to obtain qualified employees from the eligible lists of the Civil Service Commission.

Practically all the recommendations of the Byrd Committee, apart from the suggested reduction in personnel, are designed to improve the functioning of the Civil Service Commission. The report closes with an injunction that the commission, with the aid of the Bureau of the Budget, take steps to eliminate the evils noted and prevent the "wasteful personnel malpractices prevalent within the Federal service." Otherwise, it adds, "the entire personnel servicing and management functions of the Federal Government should be reorganized." Weighed down as it is, the commission has been given an assignment that it cannot shirk.

Supreme Test

President Roosevelt is about to make one of the most momentous decisions of his long career in the public service. He must veto the Connally-Smith bill or permit it to become law. He must assert the determination of the Government to move forward with the war effort in spite of minority obstructionists, or he must yield to the sophistry of professional labor leaders who would deny the Government the means of dealing effectively with saboteurs on the home front. Only the blind can fail to see that the fate of the Nation will be greatly influenced by the way in which the President meets this test.

It would be idle to pretend that this is not a Gethsemane for the President. The union leaders who are begging for a veto of the so-called antistrike bill are his friends and political associates. Apparently they are applying every known pressure to prevent the Government from asserting its power to carry on the war without further interference from little dictators like John L. Lewis. They are slandering as a "slave-labor bill" a measure which specifically reserves to workmen their right to work or to leave their jobs, even in wartime. They are threatening to withdraw from the War Labor Board if the bill becomes law. No President who has stood for the cause of labor as staunchly as has Mr. Roosevelt could be unimpressed by this importuning.

But the clamor of organized labor for a veto is not the only stir in the land resulting

do not believe that he will do so. We believe that his sense of responsibility to the men and women who are fighting and working to bring this war to a successful close will guide him to the right decision. It is true that he needs the strength of Hercules. But the loyal devotion of millions of Americans who expect the Commander in Chief to do his duty regardless of how painful it may be can and will give him that strength if he leads the way.

Elk Hills

Secretary Knox has acted promptly to cancel the Navy's contract with the Standard Oil of California for exclusive operation of the Elk Hills Naval Oil Reserve. His action came on the heels of an opinion by Assistant Attorney General Norman M. Littell holding the contract to be illegal and invalid. This opinion throws no light on the fairness of the contract per se. Concerning that moot question, sharp differences of opinion have been expressed. A spokesman for Standard Oil declares the agreement to be fundamentally fair to both parties. He says further that the contract was proposed by the Navy Department and was "designed to consolidate the area under Navy control in the interest of conservation and to insure perpetuation of the area as a naval reserve in the public interest." On the other hand, Representative Voorhis expresses strong opposition to the monopoly feature of the contract and further asserts that under the terms of the contract the Navy could obtain no oil from its own reserve except by selling it to the Standard and then repurchasing it. And this situation, he charges, would have held not for merely five years but for the "future life of the oil field."

It is impossible for an outsider to judge whether the Standard or the Navy got the better end of the deal. In any case the question does not now require an answer, since the Department of Justice has expressed the opinion that the contract is illegal and the Navy Department has decided to cancel it. The most puzzling aspect of the affair is that the Department of Justice was not consulted months ago when the contract was pending. To be sure, the Department of Justice would be swamped if every contract between the Government and private enterprise were to be submitted for its approval. Nevertheless the Navy Department displayed very poor judgment in negotiating the important Elk Hills contract without first getting an authoritative opinion as to its legality. The mere fact that the agreement was made with a com-

would deny the Government the means of dealing effectively with saboteurs on the home front. Only the blind can fail to see that the fate of the Nation will be greatly influenced by the way in which the President meets this test.

It would be idle to pretend that this is not a Gethsemane for the President. The union leaders who are begging for a veto of the so-called antistrike bill are his friends and political associates. Apparently they are applying every known pressure to prevent the Government from asserting its power to carry on the war without further interference from little dictators like John L. Lewis. They are slandering as a "slave-labor bill" a measure which specifically reserves to workingmen their right to work or to leave their jobs, even in wartime. They are threatening to withdraw from the War Labor Board if the bill becomes law. No President who has stood for the cause of labor as staunchly as has Mr. Roosevelt could be unimpressed by this importuning.

But the clamor of organized labor for a veto is not the only stir in the land resulting from passage of this bill to suppress uprisings against the authority of the Government to carry on the war. The voice of the people is also being heard. Millions of workingmen who are making airplanes, tanks, munitions, clothing and other equipment for the armed forces are sick of the treasonable conduct of John L. Lewis and his ilk. They are crying out to their Government to end this cat-and-mouse game with obstructionists who lay greater store upon raises of \$2 a day than upon the blood of American boys fighting in Europe and Asia. With firm determination to win the war and only contempt for those who try to provoke industrial war on our own home front, they are looking to the President to prove that he is leader of the Nation and not of any one faction.

In their foxholes, at their gun stations on land, sea and in the air, several million American men in uniform are also waiting to see whether the President will let them down. These men cannot understand why any group that is safe at home, holding good jobs at high wages, should slow down war production by going on strike. And as for a traitor who would lead an industrial revolt to prevent operation of a plant or mine which the Government has been forced to take over, a mere fine or jail sentence such as the Connally-Smith bill provides seems much less than he deserves. The men at the front know that they will be helpless unless the Government keeps a constant stream of weapons and supplies flowing to them, and that these supplies cannot possibly be forthcoming unless coal is mined, steel is made, and finished products are turned out from thousands of plants. So it is not surprising that the mere thought of leaving the operation of our military machinery at home at the mercy of ruthless fanatics of the John Lewis type is incomprehensible to them.

In short, these men in soiled and often

terms of the contract the Navy could obtain no oil from its own reserve except by selling it to the Standard and then repurchasing it. And this situation, he charges, would have held not for merely five years but for the "future life of the oil field."

It is impossible for an outsider to judge whether the Standard or the Navy got the better end of the deal. In any case the question does not now require an answer, since the Department of Justice has expressed the opinion that the contract is illegal and the Navy Department has decided to cancel it. The most puzzling aspect of the affair is that the Department of Justice was not consulted months ago when the contract was pending. To be sure, the Department of Justice would be swamped if every contract between the Government and private enterprise were to be submitted for its approval. Nevertheless the Navy Department displayed very poor judgment in negotiating the important Elk Hills contract without first getting an authoritative opinion as to its legality. The mere fact that the agreement was made with a company that has been so often a storm center of controversy ought to have caused the Navy to watch its step.

Italy On The Eve

What has happened in the central Mediterranean recently is enough warrant for the warning issued to the Italian people by their press and radio to be ready for an imminent invasion. To be sure, Sicily may hold out for some time, and an Allied landing on the peninsula itself may therefore have to be postponed. Sicily is many times larger than Pantelleria and is believed to be garrisoned by seven, and possibly eight, divisions. But the fury of the present Allied assault on the largest of the Italian islands suggests that Sicily's fate may be sealed much sooner than is generally expected. Much, of course, will depend on Italian morale.

According to the Rome radio, "every Italian is ready to fight and fight until final victory is won." But the report made by the Fascist directorate, which concluded a three-day session on Monday, does not quite jibe with this claim. The Blackshirt leaders vehemently assert the necessity of ruthlessly repressing "all attempts against the Italian people's morale and material resistance to the enemy," thus making it clear that this resistance has been weakening. They demand strong measures to enforce discipline in industrial production, indicating that laxity and lack of discipline obtain. The other points in their manifesto also show, indirectly but clearly, the inefficiency, corruption and war-weariness which exist in Italy. The remedy that the Fascist directorate proposes is that the party militia be given the "immense honor" of "assuming the entire responsibility for the defense of the country."

It remains to be seen whether the brave

the President to prove that he is leader of the Nation and not of any one faction.

In their foxholes, at their gun stations on land, sea and in the air, several million American men in uniform are also waiting to see whether the President will let them down. These men cannot understand why any group that is safe at home, holding good jobs at high wages, should slow down war production by going on strike. And as for a traitor who would lead an industrial revolt to prevent operation of a plant or mine which the Government has been forced to take over, a mere fine or jail sentence such as the Connally-Smith bill provides seems much less than he deserves. The men at the front know that they will be helpless unless the Government keeps a constant stream of weapons and supplies flowing to them, and that these supplies cannot possibly be forthcoming unless coal is mined, steel is made, and finished products are turned out from thousands of plants. So it is not surprising that the mere thought of leaving the operation of our military machinery at home at the mercy of ruthless fanatics of the John Lewis type is incomprehensible to them.

In short, these men in soiled and often bloody uniforms expect their Commander in Chief to do his duty with the same selfless devotion to the national welfare that he asks of them. They expect their Commander in Chief not only to accept the weapon Congress has given him against obstructionists but also to use it whenever the authority of the Government to carry on the war is challenged. These men will be heartened by the courageous decision of the War Labor Board in the coal case. But that gain and much more would be lost if the President should yield to the tornado of propaganda designed to keep the Government weak and helpless in facing the demands and the threats of reckless-labor minorities.

It is true, of course, that the WLB may have to be revamped as a result of the Connally-Smith bill. Heretofore it has been an instrument of the White House in carrying out the agreement between labor, employers and the President. With the Connally-Smith bill on the books, it will become a statutory body that ought to represent the public rather than special interest groups. Basically that is an argument in favor of the bill.

More important than anything else, however, is this bill's assertion of governmental power to fight the war to a successful close regardless of minority obstruction. For the President to throw down that principle would be nothing short of a calamity. We

be garrisoned by seven, and possibly eight, divisions. But the fury of the present Allied assault on the largest of the Italian islands suggests that Sicily's fate may be sealed much sooner than is generally expected. Much, of course, will depend on Italian morale.

According to the Rome radio, "every Italian is ready to fight and fight until final victory is won." But the report made by the Fascist directorate, which concluded a three-day session on Monday, does not quite jibe with this claim. The Blackshirt leaders vehemently assert the necessity of ruthlessly repressing "all attempts against the Italian people's morale and material resistance to the enemy," thus making it clear that this resistance has been weakening. They demand strong measures to enforce discipline in industrial production, indicating that laxity and lack of discipline obtain. The other points in their manifesto also show, indirectly but clearly, the inefficiency, corruption and war-weariness which exist in Italy. The remedy that the Fascist directorate proposes is that the party militia be given the "immense honor" of "assuming the entire responsibility for the defense of the country."

It remains to be seen whether the brave postures of the Blackshirt hierarchy at this juncture will be expressed in deeds. We rather doubt it. The seeds of corruption and decay have long been present in Fascist Italy. Watered by a heavy rain of Allied bombs, they should blossom rapidly.

DEEP TIDE

*Change it is,
And strange it is,
Sweet water green and salt,
To find at flood in time's bay
A tide that sunders love away;
And the heart at halt.*

*Then No is good
And slow is good;
But another love to build.*

*And who that heard those waters pour
Built not upon the same deep shore
When storm stilled?*

*Island love
Or inland love,
The end of it is known.
Better the wind and weather hard,
Or sky soft and night starred,
But danger met alone.*

*Strange it is
And change it is,
Drag or hurry the blood,
To live against time's ocean side
In a house of sand near ebb tide,
And expect flood.*

JOHN HOLMES.