

WSM, MARCH 30, 1946

Good Morning, Friends:

*March  
W.S.M.*

Throughout the week the United States Congress kept busily at their legislative functions, the Senate considering the Minimum Wage Bill and various Committees of both House and Senate considering extension of price control, extension of the draft and other perplexing problems, But everyone ~~kept~~ ~~in~~ ~~Washington~~ kept a wary eye peeled toward the United Nations Security Council meeting in New York. Everyone recognized that the United Nations Organization was being put to severe test *and rejoiced at signs that its structure* ~~was~~ *showed signs of bearing up under the strain.*

Secretary of State Byrnes <sup>has</sup> risen in stature as a result of his diplomatic firmness. I say diplomatic firmness advisedly because though standing firm, Secretary Byrnes <sup>has</sup> avoided intemperate utterances and harsh words calculated to further injure the feelings of Russia. I have known Mr. Byrnes for several years. I saw him perform in the United States Senate where he earned the reputation of being a great compromiser. Some said he was a great fixer, meaning of course that he could fix a pattern of legislation that would compose differences and result in legislative action. Although he was recognized in this capacity, no one who <sup>really</sup> knew Mr. Byrnes as Senator would under estimate his capacities and vigor nor ~~his integrity~~ did I ever hear his integrity impuned in any respect.

His appointment to the United States Supreme Court was a great loss to the U.S. Senate; and it is said that the relative inactivity and staid quality of the judicial position did not particularly appeal to Justice Byrnes. A man of action for so long, he literally galled in inaction, so when



President Roosevelt called him to come to the White House and be <sup>come</sup> his strong right arm during the war, Secretary Byrnes must have welcomed this opportunity to return to the arena of action. ~~and~~ Since then he has been a principal actor upon the theater of national and world affairs.

Since becoming Secretary of State the principal criticism of him has been that he was too prone to compromise, too prone to yield in order to compose. Even some of his friends spoke of his apparent inability to muster real firmness in a difficult situation. This, however, is exactly what Secretary Byrnes has done in New York and the mixing of firmness with his <sup>naturally</sup> ~~necessary~~ good humor, <sup>up</sup>affiability and restraint has added <sub>up</sub> to a quality of diplomatic adroitness in which America can truly ~~be~~ have pride and about which even Russia can raise no quarrel over an ill spoken word, a harsh gesture or an intemperate phrase. Evidently Secretary Byrnes was not interested in banging doors, stamping his feet, beating on the table and uttering ~~harsh~~ headline making phrases; he has shown himself devoted to maintaining the integrity of the Charter of the United Nations without giving undue offense to Russia and thereby keeping the door open for every fertile avenue <sup>of negotiation.</sup>

I believe it would be a mistake to interpret too widely the actions of the Security Council as a rebuff to Russia. <sup>or a victory for America.</sup> I think the cause of peace would be better served if all of us not only referred to it as but regarded it as a victory for the integrity of the Charter to which all of the United Nations have subscribed. In the deliberation of the Security Council in New York, it is plain that Russia has endeavored not to break the United Nations Organization



but to bend its functions to their will. <sup>+ purpose.</sup> The Security Council members, led  
by the able <sup>man</sup> Secretary of State, have refused to bend and in doing so they have  
rendered <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ glorious victory for the peace organization. This victory is  
calculated to strengthen the confidence of every small nation in the United  
Nations Organization for if that Organization stands firm for the rights of  
a very small and a very weak nation, Iran, against determined efforts of a very  
great power, Russia, to tilt the scales in her <sup>favor</sup>, then every other small  
nation can take heart, can <sup>see</sup> ~~find~~ evidence that their rights will also be  
respected against even the greatest of powers. I hope that the Council will  
continue to stand firm for the rights of Iran, but I hope also that, flush with  
the applause of world public opinion, they will not lean over backward in  
being fair to Iran and thereby be unfair to Russia. For instance, there may  
have been room for the giving of more consideration to Russia's request that the  
hearing of the issues be postponed until April 10. That Iran <sup>would</sup> not be permitted  
to present her case <sup>was</sup> utterly untenable, but it seems to me that the Security  
Council might have thought a little longer before refusing to postpone it  
for a few days when a member nation, whose cooperation with the United Nations  
Organization is essential for <sup>its</sup> success, asked ~~the request~~ that it be postponed.  
The Security Council has ~~now~~ requested both nations to answer certain questions  
on next Wednesday. <sup>Now</sup> ~~Also they~~ Suppose that either Russia or Iran replies  
on that date that they are unable to prepare ~~and~~ their answers in such a  
short time and requests, say a week more, which would be about April 10.<sup>5</sup> If  
such a request should be granted, <sup>situation</sup> it would amount to about the same ~~thing~~ as if



in the beginning consideration of the question had been postponed until April 10.

I make these comments not in criticism; indeed, I praise <sup>not only</sup> our own Secretary of State <sup>but</sup> and the other Members of the Security Council for the temperate judicial manner, the statesmanship with which they have proceeded thus far. I only express the hope that they will continue to manifest this high level of statesmanship but that in their determination to be fair to Iran they do not fail to be both tolerant and fair to Russia.

The United States Senate is engaged in a hot fight over the ~~Amx~~ Administration supported Minimum Wage Bill. The passage of the first national wage bill back in the early days of President Roosevelt was a hot political fight. That bill, as you know, fixed 40¢ an hour as the minimum legal wage for concerns engaged in interstate commerce. The bill pending in the Senate would amend that bill by increasing the minimum to 65¢ now and to 75¢ later.

Again the issue is a hot one. As usual, there are two ways to look at the question and, as usual, the <sup>or</sup> perspective is determinative of the viewpoint.

What I mean is this. If one looks at the problem of raising the minimum wage for industrial workers from 40 to 65¢ an hour from the standpoint of the fellow who is going to have to pay it, he gets one viewpoint. But if he looks at it from the standpoint of how <sup>worker with</sup> a family can pay house rent, grocery bills, doctor bills and have anything left for clothing and school books, then a different viewpoint will be seen.

Only a few Senators <sup>are</sup> ~~were~~ resisting some increase in the minimum wage of 40¢ an hour, but there was a strong move developing during the week to fix the minimum at 55¢ instead of 65¢. On last Friday, Senator Ryssel offered



an amendment to the bill to add the cost of labor, including family labor, to the calculation of parity on agriculture commodities. This immediately developed into another hot controversy. The Senators advocating passage of the amendments argued that the government had adopted a new wage-price policy in order to give to the United Automobile Workers, the Farm Machinery Workers, the electric workers, the coal miners, meat packing workers and organized labor in general an increase of  $18\frac{1}{2}\%$  an hour and that the pending bill provided ~~to~~ <sup>an</sup> increase <sup>of</sup> the wages of several million other workers from 40 to 65¢ an hour. Why then, they asked, should not farm prices be increased? Opponents of the measure were hard put to give an answer. They argued, however, that parity was a price relation concept and that in the long run the farmer would suffer if he allowed parity to descend from the high level of price relationship to a political formula. The amendment did not have the support of either ~~the~~ <sup>leading</sup> farm organizations, ~~Administration,~~ The American Farm Bureau or the National Farmers Grange.

The Administration opposed Senator Russell's amendment vigorously. Chester Bowles, Stabilization Director, said that it would raise retail food prices 15 per cent and that it would lift the cost of living for everybody 6 percent. Senator Barkley arose and said that President Truman was anxious to see the Minimum Wage Bill enacted and that in fairness to the Senate the President ~~had~~ wanted the Senate to know that if the Russell amendment, adding cost of labor into the parity formula, were adopted as a part of the bill, the President would be compelled to veto the measure. This in turn brought about some bitter exchanges. Senator Russell and other Senators denounced the threat



of a veto as an effort to intimidate the Senate in their action. Senator Russell said that it was considered all right to raise retail meat prices <sup>pay</sup> to/a 16 percent pay increase to ~~packer~~ packing house workers but <sup>that</sup> when the farmer asked more for raising pork, beef and lamb, the political action committee thought this wildly inflationary.

The cogency of the appeal brought support from most farm state Senators, and Senator Russell's amendment was adopted. The Senate promptly adjourned until tomorrow when they will resume consideration of the Minimum Wage Bill.

*And that*