

THE FRONTIER

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Believe it or not lamb chops cost 60 cents a pound in Washington.

Costs of painting of government building here go up rapidly. In 1940 they are going to paint the capitol of the United States again. It will cost about \$35,000. Four years ago the same job cost around \$29,000. The increase is mostly in labor cost. Painters who worked only eight hours a day four years ago work only seven hours here now. They get \$11.00 a day.

Secretary Wallace told American fats and oils representatives the other day that he feared the heavy corn and hog crop will result in lard going down to a nickel a pound. The southern cotton seed oil men felt that cotton seed oil will also hit the nickel bottom. They asked Wallace if he thought the importation of a billion pounds of foreign oils has an effect on the lower American market. He thought maybe it might just a little. The representatives held a meeting and invited a lot of prairie states members to see what they can do about holding down the importation of foreign competitive oils.

The commissioner of agriculture of a southern state who believes in free trade, tells farm district congressmen that he wouldn't take off the three cent excise tax on Filipino coconut oil. He thinks that tax helps to protect the price of cottonseed oil. The cotton state men are here asking members what they should do about the millions of bales of surplus cotton that now practically belong to the people. Among them is a man named Johnson who manages the Jobson ranch in Mississippi. That ranch hires about a thousand families and consists of many thousand acres of land. They raise cotton principally. Believe it or not that American ranch is owned by a syndicate which is located in England.

The National Defense authorization bill is in the house for action with very little fight against it, except some insistence upon the part of members who want to know just what "national defense" is. The committees held long hearings. There are party conferences on the bill. It now looks like this government is aiming at protecting the principles of the Monroe doctrine and won't stand for any foreign

power getting advantage of any economic, military or naval control in Central or South America. Nothing will be said about Canada. So our line of defense will be centered from the Alaskan islands on the north to Wake Island and south through the Panama canal and thence to Puerto Rico and north along the Atlantic. It is proposed to fortify Wake Island and merely make the harbor in Guam sort of a commercial airplane base with more improvements there later. Much stress is placed upon the competitive pace of airplane construction.

Our navy will have about 3300 and our army will have about 5500 planes when our airplane building program is completed according to discussions by members who are in close touch with our national defense plans. It is going to cost a lot of money to build and maintain these planes. Experts figure modern airplanes become obsolete in about five years in these days of rapid scientific changes and advancement.

There were only 103 votes in the house against the bill permitting reciprocal taxation of salaries of all federal and state employees. This legislation prevents retroactive taxation of certain state employees who could have been taxed and penalized under a recent court decision. Some of the many lawyers who are members of the house were divided on the constitutionality of the bill which now must be acted upon by the senate before it becomes law.

It takes thousands of charwomen to keep the marble and spacious rooms of the many buildings here cleaned up. These women get 50 cents an hour and work three hours a day. They say that many of them hold other jobs and some of them are the bread winners of families.

A lot of "leaks" in the taxpayers' purse are found by inquisitive members of the Appropriations committee. One of them found that one regular department which gets what he thought was too much for regular appropriations was also drawing employees from the WPA who were getting far above the average WPA salary and no report of it was given to the committee. Now a demand for explanation has been made.

It costs \$995,525.18 per fiscal year to get out the Congressional Record. Now a committee has been told that the Record can be printed for \$135,000, per session less, making a saving close to a quarter of a million dollars per congress. But suddenly opposition develops against this attempted saving.

With the first regular appropriation bill carrying over a billion dollars out of the way other similar bills are facing congress. Members of the appropriation committee who are listening to demands from every department for increases are worried over the public debt. They are told that for nine years we have been going into the hole at the rate of 2 1/2 billions of dollars a year. New tax bills are in the making. In 1929 taxes took 12% of our national income. Now taxes take 21% of our national income, and we haven't started to reduce the debt. The unemployment, farm relief, railroad and

other problems are as acute as ever.

According to official figures Uncle Sam spent \$5,176,000,000 since last July 1, 1938. He took in only \$3,205,000,000 making a deficit of \$1,970,000,000. Our government debt now is \$39,717,000,000. The Secretary of the Treasury says we can absorb a debt of fifty billions. The statutory limitation is five billions less than that.

Why there should be so much attention paid to Congress and by the people to foreign affairs when we have so many problems here at home is not plain, but domestic affairs seem to be relegated to the rear for the present. The farm question and that of unemployment foreclosures of mortgages on homes and farms, revival of industry, and expansion of credit, are only a few of many pressing problems uppermost in the minds of millions, but all are subordinated to the discussion of foreign affairs in Europe, Asia and South America. Only recently the Reconstruction Finance Corporation made another advance to the export bank to finance purchases of industrial commodities by South America and other countries. There are many small business concerns which have pending before the RFC applications for loans which are not acted upon. Were \$25,000,000 to be spent in relieving farmers who are losing their homes by foreclosure, it would do more good than it will in expanding our South American trade.

Officials of the Federal Reserve Banks are again professing alarm over the possibilities of a boom. They point to the more than three billions of excess bank reserves and warn that such reserves would be ample to provide an expansion of credit to the point of a "disastrous inflation." Those same officials have similarly expressed themselves during the depression. There are billions of idle money which ought to be working. Not many people want a boom and probably none desire "disastrous inflation." But if the federal reserve officials can and will devise a plan to use the idle billions to put ten million men back to work, give the farmers living prices for their products, and set the wheels of industry humming, they will touch a responsive chord in the minds of many who would be willing to risk a boom and a bit of inflation to see all that accomplished.

THE NEBRASKA SCENE

By the Lowell Service

Lincoln, Nebraska — Asserting that Nebraska's general fund deficit will total two millions by June 30, Chairman Frank Brady of the senate appropriations committee last week demanded that steps be

taken to keep the state from being submerged in debt.

State Treasurer Bass declared to the appropriations committee that if the legislature voted \$900,000 in emergency allotments the deficit would total three millions. The treasurer said that a million dollars in general fund warrants await payment.

"The cash account is running dry," said Bass. "State tax receipts have reached their peak until July or August. The warrants will have to be registered, and that means the state will have to pay 6 per cent interest."

"It looks like somebody has to take the initiative to keep the state solvent," Brady declared. "Apparently the governor isn't doing it. The general fund is being bled to death and if it keeps up we'll have to make a special levy to replenish the fund."

Ten years ago, Governor Weaver was compelled to urge a special levy to pay off a \$5,000,000 deficit.

Acrimonious debate over the resolution to endorse the Townsend old age pension plan was a feature of legislative proceedings last week. By a vote of 31 to 7, the unicameral approved a meaningless resolution which disclaims endorsement of the Townsend plan itself. The resolution asks the Congress to hold hearings and study the Townsend idea. Senator Reavis introduced the amendment which protests approval of Dr. Townsend.

Several weeks must elapse, according to observers who listened to the verbal fracas, before the solons will actually get down to business and work out something for the old people. The debate indicated that more than thirty legislators are pledged to an old age pension of not less than \$30 a month on a basis of need.

A unique political contest may be staged between Senator Burke and H. G. Keeney, of Cowles, re-elected for a fifteenth term as president of the Nebraska Farmers Union. Senator Burke has announced that he will be a candidate for re-election in the Democratic primary. Friends of Mr. Keeney assert that the latter will be in the republican primary.

Both Burke and Keeney favor the "principle of parity of price and the

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cost of production." The delegates to the farmers' union meeting failed to endorse the federal agricultural bill by a vote of 77 to 61 at the Omaha meeting. They also asked abolition of state and federal crop reporting on the theory that "overestimating crops in the past has depressed prices."

A beautiful and militant scrap is brewing within the ranks of the Nebraska national guard.

Senator Amos Thomas has a bill in the legislature to revamp the organization. As ranking officer he would become commanding general, according to the provisions of his measure, and would receive \$2,500 a year. He told a senate committee that he would waive the pay during his incumbency as commander.

Mace Brown, president of the Omaha Central Labor union, entered a vigorous protest against the plan of Senator Thomas. He declared that the latter was no friend of labor.

At the committee hearing, there were frequent hints of trouble and strife. Dr. David C. Hilton, of Lincoln, commander of the medical division of the guard, opposed the bill. He argued that the present law affords sufficient checks and balances. Dr. Hilton declared:

"If the governor is dissatisfied with his chief of staff, he can ask for his resignation. And he has done that recently."

This was, in effect, a statement that Governor Cochran had requested the resignation of Adjutant General H. J. Paul.

To hear disputed unemployment compensation claims, Governor Cochran has appointed the following four Nebraskans as members of an appeals tribunal: Roy Brew-

er, Grand Island; R. W. Freeman, York, president of the York Foundry company; John W. Welch, Omaha, secretary of the Nebraska Humane society; and Guy C. Evans, Omaha, plumber. Omaha claims are to be heard by Evans and Welch, according to Labor Commissioner V.B. Kinney, and claims arising outside Omaha by Brewer and Freeman. Donald Miller, junior unemployment compensation counsel, will act as appeals referee.

Although the unicameral legislature is supposedly a non-political organization, it killed the non-political county officer bill last week by a vote of 23 to 12. Senator Callen declared that the chief opposition to the bill came from party

leaders who wished to maintain an organization of party workers in the counties and townships. Edwin Schultz, who led the opposition to the bill, insisted that it would remove responsibility in the local offices.

W. H. O'Gara, of Laurel, formerly speaker of the legislature, led a battle launched against the teachers' retirement pension bill at a preliminary hearing on the bill held before the legislative education committee. He declared that \$97,000 would have to be appropriated by the legislature for the present biennium in order to put the plan into operation. Among those speaking for the proposed measure were Archer Burnham, secretary

(Continued on Page 5, Column 3)

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