

Washington Digest

Budget Bureau Assumes New Importance to Nation

Director Harold D. Smith Responsible Only To President; Real Value Lies in Counsel Given to Nation's Lawmakers.

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A budget that bites.

That is what the United States government will have if Harold Dewey Smith, director of the bureau of the budget since April, 1939, when America started its astronomical spending, has his way.

He is not concerned with the size of Uncle Sam's bill alone—his job is to see that the dollars appropriated by the congress go to work, that no dollars are appropriated which aren't needed to do the job the congress wants done, that no two dollars are doing the same job.

I thought it would be interesting to take a look at the man who had just given his oke to the biggest budget in American history while the ink on the report was still damp. So I wended my way up the curling staircase of the solemn old State Department building to his office (second-floor front) and was ushered into the presence of Mr. Smith, a bland-faced gentleman from Kansas with a middlewestern accent like the one which echoes through my natal corn fields. The last conversations between Mr. Smith and the President were taking place just before the 1943 budget message was completed. Mr. Smith, who budgets his own time as well as the government's money, gave me some fiscal philosophy between pipe-puffs.

"A budget should be an administrative tool," he told me quietly, speaking with a happy combination of the poker-faced accountant and the old-shoe corner-store croup.

Budgeting for governments—municipal, state, nation—were, the result of the efforts of the reformers, he explained. But, as usual, when the reformers had the laws passed they ran off and left them to administer themselves. The result was that budgeting dried up into book-keeping routine.

"I have a new concept of budgeting," he said with a forthright modesty that characterizes his remarks about his work, "any clerk can add up figures." The real job of the budget bureau is to examine the programs of the administrative agencies for which the cash is to be spent, to weigh their significance in terms of economic service—not just publish a report every year as big as a dictionary that serves to confuse the public.

The year before Smith came into office the bureau of the budget had an appropriation of 187 thousand dollars—30 thousand of that went into the publication of the bound report. In other words, the agency which bottlenecks the spending of billions had 150 thousand to spend on itself.

Separate Entity

The bureau by law is a separate entity which is under no department. The director is responsible to the President. The bureau reports to congress.

"It is a staff agency," Smith pointed out, "detached, objective, critical."

Today in Washington there is no doubt that this detached and objective element in the writing of laws of the land. Before a bill is passed it goes under the microscope of the budgeteers. Smith, it is generally admitted, has as much influence on the President, when it comes to the formation of policy which is frozen into law, as any man in Washington. He reviews every bill which is passed and advises whether the President should sign it or veto it.

But the real, constructive value of the bureau of the budget which has been given a dynamic force under Smith's direction, is the advice and counsel it can render in advance of the passage of legislation.

Proponents of a bill ask the budget bureau's advice before they present their testimony to the committees which pass life or death sentences on a measure. And it is Smith's idea to make this an increasingly positive function; to compile frequent important technical reports on proposed programs for the guidance of the committees.

The budget bureau has always consulted with the departments and agencies and the common practice of a department head is to ask for more than he expects in the hope he won't get much less than he wants. Smith's idea is to provide active co-

operation by obtaining data on how current programs are functioning before renewing or increasing appropriations. Thus the budget becomes a tool of administration.

Confusion

He gave me an example of one problem he is working on now.

"Today there is confusion and conflict between many government departments and agencies. Examination of their methods is clearing this up. There is even conflict and confusion between agencies and their own field forces. This the budget bureau with a field force of its own can eliminate," Smith believes.

"When an agency doesn't like the way we examine the administration of its program and says, 'you are getting into operation,' I tell them, 'No, we are not. We don't want to operate but we do intend to be constructively critical.'"

Another constructive job that Smith feels is important is reconciliation between the government agency asking congress for money and congress trying to keep down costs on the one hand, or trying to bring new benefits to its constituencies, on the other.

"Congress has a tendency to shy away from bureaucracy, the bureau heads have a distrust of congress. Congress frequently gets facts mixed with policy. But facts are facts. Our job is to get the facts and to present them objectively."

Politics doesn't worry Smith. He served under three governors of Michigan, of highly different temperament, party and policies and he says that politics entered very little into the decisions made by any of them on the recommendations he made.

He said that the same thing applies to his experience with President Roosevelt.

"We may not have made all the recommendations we should," he said, "but 90 per cent of those we have made the President has accepted."

Since his college days, when he specialized in engineering, and later in civil administration, Smith has been engaged in some phase of the work he is doing now: regulating the "ways and means" of government.

Plans are started which may result in many prospective women veterans, the WAACS, the WAVES, the WAFS, and the SPARS, who will have been living under regular military discipline for the duration—a form of existence about as different from anything that home offers, as could possibly be.

From a Commentator's Mail:

Draft boards seem ruthless. . . . We have four small children under 12 years of age. One a tiny baby and I wonder if I am selfish in needing his (the father's) advice and help to raise the children.—Colorado.

The Fish and Game commission rides on rubber. Why cannot their trucks, tires, etc., be turned over to the government?—New York.

My husband is classed as 3A and is just 36. He has had both shop and metal experience and follows both as a hobby. He would give anything just now to get into defense work, but he has 15 years seniority in one of the biggest insurance companies. His job is guaranteed if he is drafted. . . . but they will not release him to go voluntarily into a vital industry.—California.

As farmers, we work from 70 to 100 hours a week and a good deal of this effort is for interest on borrowed money. Honestly, during wartimes we do not feel that we are a "favored" class but are doing our best to do our share.—Colorado.

It is my humble opinion it is time we plant our feet on the ground and eliminate some of this Sunday School letter news and give the people facts.—Louisiana.

My husband owns and operates a liquor store. . . . Since liquor is non-perishable and meat is, I can't see why we stay open 365 days of the year and a butcher shop closes its doors every Sunday and holiday.—California.

During the recent scrap drive I have seen copper toys with rubber tires displayed in store windows. The irony of it!—Louisiana.

BRIEFS . . . by Baukhage

The Forest Service has reported to the secretary of agriculture that about 80 per cent of all cutting on private timberlands is "still without conscious regard to perpetuating timber growth."

The census director has estimated that 54,000,000 persons in the United States are without legal proof of birth.

The War Production board has set up an office to handle complaints about its questionnaires.

A new floating match box has been developed for United States soldiers expecting mountain or jungle duty. The new container has an emergency compass built in to the top, and it is so strong it will not break if a man falls on it.

History in the News

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON
Released by Western Newspaper Union.

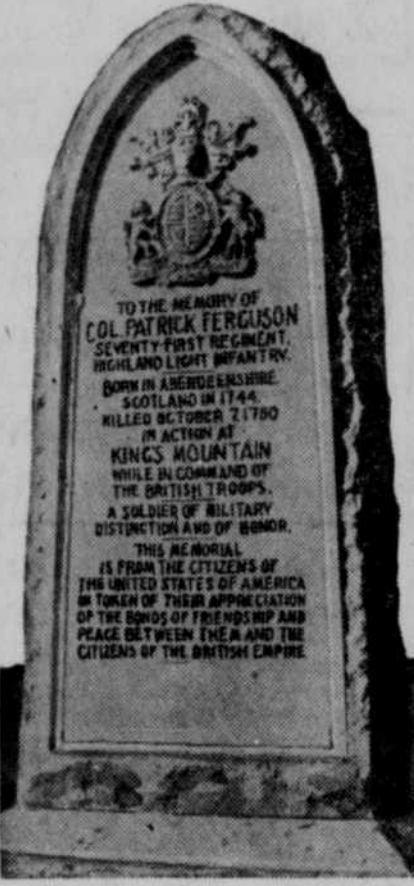
First Breech-Loader

THE recent announcement that the Smithsonian institution in Washington had acquired the first breech-loading rifle ever used in warfare was an item of particular interest to collectors of old weapons. But it had significance in another field also—that of Anglo-American relations, especially at a time when Americans and Britons are united in fighting a common enemy.

This rifle was the personal weapon of Maj. Patrick Ferguson of the 71st Highlanders of the British army. He used it at the Battle of King's Mountain on October 7, 1780, when a force of 900 American frontiersmen surrounded his army of more than 1,100 British Provincial troops and Loyalist militia. When the battle ended the Americans had killed and wounded 334 of Ferguson's force, including the commander himself, and taken the remainder prisoners while suffering a loss of only 28 killed and 62 wounded.

There was a time when Ferguson's name was anathema to many Americans, principally because of his association with the cruel British leader, Tarleton, during the campaigns in the South. But when the passions aroused by fratricidal nature of the Revolution in that part of the country subsided, there came a more generous attitude toward the memory of the British leaders. One American historian recently asserted that keeping alive the hatred of Ferguson's name is unjust to a brave and gallant officer.

Moreover, he cited one letter in the Ferguson family archives to show that the major deliberately spared the life of George Washington at the Battle of Brandywine.



Ferguson memorial on the Kings Mountain battlefield.

when he had it in his power to kill the commander-in-chief of the Continental army. In a letter to relatives in England, Ferguson wrote:

We had not lain long when a rebel officer, remarkable by a huzzar dress, passed towards our army within 100 yards of our right flank, not perceiving us. He was followed by another dressed in dark green and blue, mounted on a good bay horse, with a remarkable high cocked hat. I ordered three good shots to steal near to them and fire at them, but the idea disgusted me and I recalled the order.

The huzzar in returning made a circuit but the other passed within 100 yards of us, upon which I advanced from the wood towards him. Upon my calling he stopped, but after looking at me proceeded. I again drew his attention and made signs to him to stop, leveling my piece at him, but he slowly continued his way.

As I was in that distance which in the quickest firing I could have half a dozen balls in or about him before he was out of my reach I had only to determine; but it was not pleasant to fire at the back of an unoffending individual who was acquitting himself very coolly of his duty, so I let him alone.

The day after I had been telling this story to some wounded officers who lay in the same room with me, when one of our surgeons who had been dressing the wounded rebel officers came in and told us that General Washington was all the morning with the light troops and only attended by a French officer in huzzar dress and he himself dressed and mounted in every way as above described. I am not sorry I did not know at the time who it was.

So visitors to the Smithsonian who see the Ferguson rifle may reflect upon the fact that had it not been for a British officer who was too honorable to shoot in the back "an unoffending individual who was acquitting himself very coolly of his duty" the American Revolution might have had a different ending and George Washington might never have become the "Father of His Country".

Significant of the changed attitude toward Ferguson is the inscription on the monument erected during the sesquicentennial celebration of the Battle of Kings Mountain in 1930. It reads:

To the memory of Col. Patrick Ferguson, Seventy-First Regiment, Highland Light Infantry. Born in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, in 1744. Killed October 7, 1780, in action at Kings Mountain while in command of the British troops. A soldier of military distinction and of honor. This memorial is from the citizens of the United States in token of their appreciation of the bonds of friendship and peace between them and the citizens of the British Empire.

WHO'S NEWS This Week

By Lemuel F. Parton
Consolidated Features.—WNU Release.

NEW YORK.—Effervescent Utopians talk now and then of the day when homes will be traded in as freely as automobiles. Cheap, demountable and having a resale value according to age they will, it has been predicted, be swapped for new and slicker ones as owners tire of them or spurt up the economic ladder from the business coupe to the town sedan rung. When, if and as this happens, happy buyers will do well to toast the memory of John B. Blandford Jr., for it cannot happen without a strong drift away from present-day housing and Blandford is the lad whose bellows is helping that drift nowadays.

Big Drift Away From Orthodox Housing Is Seen

Thirty thousand war workers move into public housing accommodations each month. That's Blandford, the national housing administrator. In the past 12 months 278,000 new war-housing units have flown the green sapping that means "finished" in the symbolism of builders. That's Blandford, too. And if plans now on the griddle cook to the right turn there will be thousands more. And the old-fashioned house that a man bought to raise and marry his children in, and shelter himself in his slippered retirement will have tough competition.

Blandford, only 45, is the graduate of Stevens Institute of Technology, called by President Roosevelt a man of "amazing executive ability." A thick, solid amazer with perky ears he smiles his way along as a man should under such praise.

EVERY home could use a Dr. Walter H. Eddy these none too cheerful days. It is luck that he is only professor emeritus of physiological chemistry at Columbia university. Off the active list, he has time on his hands as well as "a kind and gentle heart—to comfort friends and foes." War rationing will make us all pull in our belts but, Dr. Eddy says, we need not worry because the health of Americans should not suffer. Well! Maybe "foes" carries the comfort farther than even the doctor would have it go. The Nazis won't be comforted. Not much!

A while back Dr. Eddy was comforting a crowd only a little less needy than today's butter-meat - canned-goods - and - sugar-shy nation. He told a conference that both tea and coffee made for vim and vigor and also helped as much toward sleep as counting sheep. Both, he said, were stimulating morning drinks but at night tended to induce sleep, when taken in moderation. These happy conclusions, and his grand one touching on war rationing, are not those of a Johnny-come-lately, but of a fellow whose record in his own field almost matches Babe Ruth's.

Find a Bright Side to All This War Rationing

Now the newly-appointed chairman of the Institute of Dietetics, Dr. Eddy was a major in the last war and is an expert consultant to the quartermaster general of the army in this one.

COL. MERIAN C. COOPER is back from China, and Washington correspondents are left in no doubt about his admiration for his chief, Brig. Gen. Claire Chennault. Colonel Cooper knows just what he wants to say, and says it. Twenty-odd years ago, while the rest of the newspaper reporters were wavering in front of the steam table at Hannon's restaurant in Minneapolis his mind was always clear. Roast beef! And a good dish, too, for 15 cents.

He has eaten better, and worse, since, and China, like Minneapolis, is just another way station in a succession of bounces which have taken him around the world and to spare. When he was in Abyssinia, Haile Selassie gave him a palace and wanted to throw a hunting party for him, but Cooper didn't have time. Before that he flew a fighting plane in France with the AEF, and later headed up the barnstorming pilots who rolled across Europe in boxcars to join the Poles, then fighting Red Russia. Afterward he went exploring in Asia and India.

A couple of motion pictures grew out of these treks and so, finally, he landed in Hollywood. There he stayed until this new war, when he again donned a uniform. His wife was easily one of Hollywood's prettiest actresses. Cooper wasn't bad looking himself, while he had hair. They have a couple of sons, small fry, and when one of these wrote to China that he wanted a pig for a pet he got it with no fuss at all. Colonel Cooper is 49 now, and the older he grows the worse tobacco he smokes. General Chennault's fliers named his pipe Auld Reekie.

PATTERNS SEWING CIRCLE



Barbara Bell Pattern No. 1692-B is designed for sizes 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 years. Size 10 jumper requires 1 1/2 yards 54-inch material, short sleeve blouse 1 1/2 yards 36-inch material.

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ASK ME ANOTHER? A General Quiz

1. What name is given to a boat that peddles provisions to ships in harbor?
2. If a piece of music is cacophonous, it is what?
3. In what state is Buncombe county, whose congressman gave the word a new meaning?
4. When was music first printed?
5. The Irish potato originated where?
6. For every 1,000 one-dollar bills how many other small denomination bills are there?
7. How many wives did Napoleon Bonaparte have?
8. Seven states are visible from the top of Lookout mountain in Tennessee. Which states?

THE ANSWERS

1. Bumboat.
2. Discordant.
3. North Carolina.
4. Music was first printed in 1465, the notes being hand lettered.
5. The Irish potato originated in Peru, the name potato being a corruption of the Indian name batatas.
6. For every 1,000 one-dollar bills in this country today, there are 33 two-dollar bills, 400 five-dollar bills, 427 ten-dollar bills and 208 twenty-dollar bills.
7. Two—Josephine Beauharnais and Marie Louise of Austria.
8. Alabama, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia and Tennessee.

IN THE PARATROOPS they say:

"UMBRELLA" for parachute
"HIT THE SILK" for jumping
"WHIPPING SILK" for shaking chute to remove dirt and air pockets
"CAMEL" for the favorite cigarette with men in the service

CAMELS ARE FIRST WITH ME ON EVERY COUNT. THEY'RE MILD—AND THEY HAVE PLENTY OF RICH FLAVOR

FIRST IN THE SERVICE—
The favorite cigarette with men in the Army, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard is Camel.
(Based on actual sales records in Post Exchanges and Canteens.)

CAMEL

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- (4) You may turn them in and get your cash back at any time after 60 days. The longer you hold them, the more they're worth.
- (5) They are never worth less than the money you invested in them. They can't go down in price. That's a promise from the financially strongest institution in the world: The United States of America.

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Greatest Fault
The greatest fault is to be conscious of none.—Carlyle.

SNAPPY FACTS ABOUT RUBBER

Driven under 35 miles an hour, properly inflated and on a car with wheels in alignment war tires of reclaimed rubber should return up to 10,000 or more miles of service. Care should be the watchword of the "war tire" user!

Rubber is considered one of the three most important strategic materials in war by officers in the Army's ordnance department.

Progress in reverse is the reopening of a street car line in Brooklyn, N. Y., that had been converted to motor buses several years ago. A war measure that will save 1,300,000 bus miles a year—and of course a relative amount of rubber.

Caster, camber, toe-in and king-pin inclination are factors in wheel alignment tire users are going to hear about now that periodic tire inspections are mandatory. They mean much to tire conservation.

Jerry Flaw

In war or peace

B.F. Goodrich

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