

# POWERFUL LOBBY CRACKS WHIP OVER CONGRESS FOR LAWS TO HELP VETERANS

Legion Wields Tremendous Influence in Washington, With Smooth-Working Propaganda System.

HEAVY BILL PAID BY RANK AND FILE Ambitious Program Is Mapped for Coming Year to Bring Further Benefits to Ex-Service Men.

BY TALCOTT POWELL

Veterans' relief legislation, now costing the nation's taxpayers a billion dollars a year, is secured by the lobby system. That system has been growing steadily and rapidly in our national life. And while it has resulted in a tremendous cost in relief for ex-soldiers, it must be recognized that the same system applies also to every other form of legislative activity in which cohesive groups are involved.

There is the oil lobby, the tariff lobby, the utility lobby, the wet lobby, the labor lobby, the this and that lobby. The only persons not represented by any lobby at all are the millions who make up the great rank and file of the unorganized.

The lobby system—vicious as it is—is a perfectly legal institution. Yet the growth of that system in this country has served to change the operation of the government from the pure democratic form into a government of powerful minority groups.

These groups put on pressure for legislation which frequently is against the interest of the great rank and file of unorganized citizens who nevertheless pay a major portion of the bill.

## Lobby Is Powerful

The veterans' lobby in Washington is especially powerful in that it has on its side that political tradition which says that it is political suicide to vote against anything the ex-soldier may desire.

Memories of the G. A. R. and of the political power it represented a generation ago are still fresh in the minds of many who today make the nation's laws. And earlier history tells the same story, back to Washington's time. So the lobby that grew out of the World war has been consistently successful in getting the laws it has wanted.

Until the depression hit, and the government went into the red, and the budget became unbalanced, and congress was faced with the stupendous task of making income meet outlay, there was little resistance. Then it suddenly was realized what a billion dollars actually means, and the great, unorganized rank and file began to be heard from.

## Nation Is Aroused

The nation as a whole awoke to the fact that the expensive veterans' relief had risen to the billion mark, that it had become the most costly activity of the government, that the total price exceeded already the cost of the dole to the British government, that it had passed the total expense for the army and the navy, that no other country in the world war, despite very much great casualties, paid so much—those facts become vivid.

And on top of all that appeared the two and one-half million bonus proposal.

The American Legion lobby in Washington makes no effort to conceal its energy in behalf of veterans, nor is it modest about its ability to get results. It frankly represents a particular group and is proud of its efficiency and effectiveness. An example of that efficiency is its liaison system. It keeps its million members—one fourth of the number of men in the World war forces—informed weekly of the attitude of individual congressmen, and stimulates its members to bring pressure to bear on senators and representatives.

## Is Quasi-Official Body

Since its organization immediately after the World war, it has succeeded in obtaining appointive powers of officials paid by the several states to look out for disabled veterans, thus becoming a quasi-official body.

It has succeeded—by congressional change in the law—in gaining access to confidential medical records of veterans without asking their permission. These intensely personal files are guarded carefully from the rest of the public.

Of its past—and future—activities, the legion lobby is cheerfully outspoken. Any responsible citizen inquiring at the legion in its simply furnished offices in Washington will be told all about its legislative achievements and its aims.

The lobby frankly considers that it is maintained for the purpose of taking care of ex-service men, to see that their interests are fully protected and promoted. That's the lobby's job. That's what its officials are paid to do.

## Year's Program Mapped

Here is a summary of the orders for this year, compiled from the official legion record.

The passage of legislation to put widows and orphans of men who died of non-service-connected disabilities on government pensions. Thus the widow of a man killed by a taxicab today would be on equal footing with the wife of a soldier killed in the Argonne.

To oppose any effort to have legislation passed which would make the amount of a veteran's compensation dependent on how much he needed it. In other words, under the legion policy, a man with a \$10,000 a year income is entitled to just as much for a given disability as a man on the breadline.

To make men disabled because of "wilful misconduct" eligible for compensation. Thus the man who shot in the foot to get out of action would be placed on the same basis with the man disabled in a bayonet fight with the enemy; the man who fell down a coal chute while absent without leave would be on all fours with one permanently injured in a single-handed attack on a German pill-box; all permanently

injured cases of venereal disease would be compensable, instead of just the bedridden ones as now.

## Seek Insurance Concession

To remove the time limit under which suits can be brought on war risk insurance claims. Raising of the time limit, which expires this year, already has cost the government millions of dollars in judgments.

To furnish veterans of all wars with outpatient treatment—having already gained free hospitalization for all World war veterans suffering from disability. It also wants more hospitals, so that veterans with non-service-connected disabilities will not have to wait their turn, as they do now occasionally when there are no beds available.

To get a reduction in interest rates on bonus certificates. This would reduce or even wipe out the dividend of 600,000 veterans who were thrifty enough to invest in converted government life insurance and who now receive premiums from their bonus certificates.

To extend the time limit on marriages to 1941, in which marriages in World war veteran cases may take place and the widow still be eligible to compensation award.

## Prohibition on List

To oppose the reduction or army appropriations, build the navy up to London treaty strength and promote a prohibition referendum.

That is the program for the year, and economists will not hazard an opinion on just how many hundreds of millions of dollars it would cost if passed.

These measures are brought to the attention of congress by a very simple method. First the bill is introduced in the house, almost invariably by a legionnaire. The legislation then goes to the committee on World war veterans.

This committee is made up of twenty-one members, of which a majority of twelve are members of the legion.

It then is turned over to a subcommittee, usually well represented with legionnaires. The subcommittee now considering the widows and orphans' pension bill has seven congressmen on it, five of them legion members.

After the committee has reported favorably, the bill comes before the house and usually is passed under suspension of the rules. This means that debate is limited and no amendments are permitted from the floor. It then goes to the senate.

## Everything Is Set

Everything is arranged carefully in advance. The lobby checks on every member of the house and senate. Those who are opposed, or who are noncommittal, begin to receive letters and telegrams from their home districts. These are promoted by a legion bulletin which reaches all posts once a week, asking local ex-service men to register.

One word further about the mandate of the legion convention under which the lobby works: The bonus proposal was a major issue in the last convention, in Detroit. It was voted down. But agitation for it continued actively. And much of that agitation was within the posts of the American Legion, which, in national convention, had declared that the bonus plan should not be asked.

A few days ago Commander Henry Stevens of the American Legion issued a statement, saying that the Legion, as a national organization, stood squarely against the bonus. The statement was made from Washington. It preceded by only a short time the presentation of the petitions for the bonus in behalf of the veterans, with names mounting into the millions.

## Protest Is Strong

So dramatic was the timing of the commander's statement, issued as it was just ahead of the hearings on the bonus bill, that a heavy fire of protest has been directed toward him, not only on the part of many of the members in the posts

# Philadelphia Lads Foil Kidnapers



Kidnapers didn't fare so well when they tried to abduct Thomas Walsh, 12 (right), and his brother Edward, 14 (center), in Philadelphia the other day. Thomas tore himself away from three men who sought to pull him into an automobile, and Edward, though seized and imprisoned in a barn, managed to escape through an unbarred window while his kidnapers were away. Here the two boys are shown, safe again, with their mother and father, and Francis Clerkin, 12 (left) who was with the brothers when the kidnaping attempt was made.

of the American Legion, but of those veterans generally who are eager to receive the bonus money. The incident is cited to show the importance of the mandate as the directing force in legion activities. For it has been under mandate that the various legislative enactments in behalf of veterans' relief have been brought about.

It is customary for congressmen to blame the legion for the ills of veterans' relief legislation, but the most radical departure from the theory that only service disabilities were compensable was taken by congress without any prompting. The legion was much surprised at the passage of the disability allowance bill.

## Gift of Congress

The lobby had asked to have certain diseases placed on the list in which the law says an individual suffering from one of them shall be presumed to have contracted it during his war service.

Both the house and the senate discussed the measure at length and in a number of enthusiastic speeches members declared for making it even more liberal. Then the bill failed.

But, shortly, another was introduced and passed with a rush, which granted pensions to all permanently disabled veterans whether the disability was incurred in battle during the war, or in an automobile collision last week.

Up to that time the legion had been opposed to service pensions, and, in general, favorable to liberal care for the service-connected disability cases. It promptly accepted the pension theory, however, as pushed upon it by congress, and the proposed widows and orphans' bill is the result. Many legislators believe it will be only one more step to service pensions for all men who were in the war.

## Local Hospital Cited

Majority of patients at the Indianapolis United States Veterans hospital are being treated for ailments incurred while not serving in the World war, records of the institution disclosed today.

Of 138 patients receiving treatment, 114 of them, although World war veterans, are victims of maladies suffered after discharge from the service, according to information given by Dr. C. F. Bayer, chief medical officer, and M. D. Cummins, rating specialist.

These revelations support assertions of Talcott Powell, who, in a series of stories for The Times on veteran compensation and hospitalization costs, charged more than half of the facilities of government hospitals are being used by veterans whose maladies only are connected remotely with the war.

Talcott stated that this service is free to all veterans and that the

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# MAJOR G. O. P. SHIFT ON WET ISSUE IS SEEN

Hyde's Declaration in Favor of Resubmission Is Viewed Significant.

BY RAYMOND CLAPPER

United Press Staff Correspondent WASHINGTON, April 18.—The Hoover administration's flirtation with anti-prohibitionists is now taken to foreshadow a major shift in the Republican party's attitude on the liquor issue.

One of the most significant indications was the declaration by Agriculture Secretary Arthur M. Hyde, the dryest member of the cabinet, in favor of resubmission. Hyde will urge the Republican national convention to adopt the "Missouri plank," urging reconsideration of the eighteenth amendment by a national constitutional convention restricted to that one issue.

## Under Instructions

Hyde is credited with having had a part in working out the "Missouri plank." As head of the Missouri delegation to the national convention, he is under instruction to urge its inclusion in the national party platform.

Though Hyde said that President Hoover had nothing to do with the plank, it is a part of Republican strategy to utilize such a well-known dry as Hyde to batter down the opposition of dry forces.

Practically all of President Hoover's political advisers favor a shift on prohibition. Their difficulty, however, lies in mollifying the organized dries who, almost without exception, have supported the Republicans in presidential elections.

Under the leadership of Senator William E. Borah, Mrs. Mabel Walker Willebrandt, the Anti-Saloon League, the W. C. T. U., and Bishop Cannon, the dry votes were mobilized for Mr. Hoover in 1928.

## Regard It Failure

The danger of offending these dries and provoking retaliation is the greatest difficulty which the Republican high command faces.

It explains the way in which this group, privately regarding prohibition as a failure in its present form, gingerly is approaching the resubmission issue.

Their desire to break away from the traditional Republican law enforcement platform plank is increased by the expectation that the Democrats will nominate an anti-prohibition candidate on a referendum platform.

# Murderer



Glen Donald Shustrom, 23, confessed he attacked and strangled 12-year-old Alberta Knight of Whiting, Ind., daughter of a neighbor.

Shustrom went through many hours of grilling denying complicity in the murder when police confronted him with his fingerprints, photographed at the murder scene.

# ROOSEVELT TO ANSWER AL ON 'CLASS CHARGE'

Democrats of Four States Rally at St. Paul to Hear New Yorker.

By United Press

ST. PAUL, Minn., April 18.—Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt today carried his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination into the northwest, where concern for the "little man" long has been characteristic of the thriving progressive movements of this wheat country.

It was Governor Roosevelt's demand for consideration of the plight of the "little man" as well as large interests which drew the ire of his fellow New Yorker, former Governor Alfred E. Smith.

Tonight, Roosevelt is expected to reply to the charge that he is arraying class against class. Governor Roosevelt received an enthusiastic welcome today when he arrived to open his middle western campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination.

More than 2,000 persons cheered when the New York executive left the union station for his hotel headquarters.

Here is a partial list of food orders for the Jeffersonian day banquet at which Roosevelt will speak: One and one-quarter tons of chicken.

Forty crates of head lettuce. Twenty bushels of potatoes. Three thousand rolls. One hundred gallons of coffee. Democrats of four states, as well as progressive sympathizers, have rallied to hear the Governor speak.

# MANN OUSTER RULING SLATED

Johnson County Judge to Give Verdict This Week.

Ruling in the Marion county commissioners' fight to oust Charles W. Mann, county highway superintendent, is expected to be handed down this week by Judge Charles B. Staff of Johnson circuit court.

Staff, sitting in the case at Franklin Saturday, overruled three of the four points of law advanced by Charles B. Clarke, Marion county attorney, who has been advising the commissioners in their efforts to oust Mann.

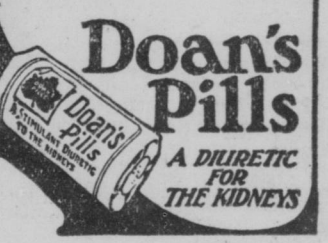
The judge announced he will rule this week on the fourth question and instructed Clarke and Clinton H. Givan, Mann's attorney, to file briefs immediately on the question of whether money was appropriated legally and received in the county treasury to pay highway workers in Mann's department.

The mandate suit was brought by Mann to force the commissioners to pay salaries of county road employees. Refusal to pay the employees' wages for January was branded as part of the "plot" of Dew W. Varies and Thomas Ellis, Democrats, and George Snider, Republican, to oust Mann and give the job to John W. Mann, a "deserving Democrat," in court testimony.

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