

What Congress Will Do for Us (IF IT GETS A CHANCE)

By BERTRAM D. WOLFE

WHEN the worker and farmer cast their votes for congressmen and senators in the forthcoming election, they should not only keep in mind the astounding record of both parties in the last congress in vying with each other in subservience to big business and in their eagerness to reject any measures of benefit to the worker and the poor farmer, but they must also keep in mind what the next congress proposes to do to them if the same balance of forces prevails.

There need be no guess work as to the program of the next congress because it has already been frankly stated and no worker or farmer who supports the old parties need complain of being taken by surprise when the next session of congress begins its work.

A few days ago, Mr. Snell, chairman of the powerful house committee on rules, after a friendly chat with President Coolidge made a frank and fairly complete statement as to what the next congress proposes to do to the workers and farmers and the resources of the country if the present servants of big business continue to "represent" the people in the next sessions.

According to Mr. Snell, Number One on the order of business is "The disposition of Muscle Shoals." "Disposition" in this connection is a tremendously polite word. The Muscle Shoals power development cost the American government over \$150,000,000. It is such a gigantic power center that a former secretary of war of the U. S. government declared: "If I were greedy for power over my fellow men, I would rather control Muscle Shoals than be elected president of the U. S." But congress has safely tucked away in its archives the recommendation of the majority of the Muscle Shoals Joint Congressional Committee proposing to give this enormous development into private hands—into the hands of the Muscle Shoals Power Distributing company which is controlled by the Electric Bond & Share Co. Now the Electric Bond & Share is a modest little company which controls 1,700 power companies in 40 states of the United States (that was in last April, they may have covered the other eight states by now). And Electric Bond & Share in turn is controlled by the General Electric Co. And the General Electric Co. is controlled by J. P. Morgan & Co. And incidentally the Muscle Shoals Power Distributing Co. is made up of 13 associated South Eastern companies that sweep from Kentucky to the gulf including Georgia and Florida. Still incidentally it is interesting to note that one of these 13 companies is the Tennessee Electric Power Co., which according to Pour's Public Utility Manual is linked with the Aluminium Co. of America owned by the "master mind" of the Coolidge administration, Andrew W. Mellon.

The second order of business for the next congress, according to Mr. Snell, is the "passage of bills increasing salaries of judges."

The third order of business is the "Radio Control Bill." What that will mean in the matter of thought control and in the matter of insuring the success of another monopoly we can judge from the practices of Mr. Hoover so far, from the difficulties already put in the way of the Chicago Federation of Labor's establishing a broadcasting station of its own (even before Mr. Hoover had the power to stop them) and in the refusal to permit Giltow and Norman Thomas to broadcast speeches after they had been invited by broadcasting companies in New York City.

Next in line comes the "River and Harbor Bill" some of which may involve useful appropriation but which by and large, can be summed up with that picturesque term drawn from congressional vocabulary—"pork barrel."

Next according to Mr. Snell comes "Farm Relief Legislation." What this will be like we can judge from the fate of the Haugen McNary Bill in the

sessions just ended and from Mr. Coolidge's repeated statements of his program for what he calls "farm relief." But Mr. Snell is taking no chances on being misunderstood so he hastens to add, "In my survey of the farm situation I find that the condition in the west is now as good as desired and the republican party will do everything possible consistent with sound procedure (emphasis mine, B. D. W.) to alleviate the condition of the western agriculturist." What Mr. Snell means by sound procedure his vote and the vote of the majority of the last congress on even such a pitifully inadequate measure as the Haugen-McNary Bill clearly indicate.

But let us return to the order of business. Next in the ambitious program comes the "Consolidation of the Railroads." This means a single super-railway trust, of course, under a system of private ownership, the disappearance of the last vestiges of competition between roads and the creation of one powerful railway super-trust means that the old railway motto of getting from the farmer as freight rates "all that the traffic will bear," will be amended so as to read "just a little more than that."

Next come the "annual appropriation bills." Last year they amounted to about \$4,500,000 at the same time that Coolidge was blabbing about his economy. By economy he means economy at the expense of the workers and poor farmers but a liberal and free hand when it comes to big business and the "pork barrel."

The next point in Mr. Snell's modest little program is "a measure to reorganize the prohibition enforcement unit and strengthen the laws as to search and border control." This means another few thousand additional snoopers on the already enormous government payroll. When Coolidge took office, there were 600,000 persons on the payroll of the national government and he has since added 20 or 30 thousand more. Taken together, the national, state and city bureaucracies, we find that for every ten men gainfully employed in other industries there is one on the payroll of the government—national, state and local. We have thus the largest and costliest bureaucracy in the world and all Coolidge's economy blab does not prevent the high cost of government from being one of the great burdens upon the farmer and worker in the United States.

Finally, Mr. Snell admits that this is a short session of congress that is coming and that time will not permit him to do everything that big business requires of him, so his official statement, as reported in the press adds that "the session would be too short to consider much more than the above measures. This leaves out the proposal to regulate wage disputes in the hard coal field and to distribute coal in case of strike." In other words, he promises that a measure forbidding strikes in the coal industries similar to the Watson-Parker Bill in the railroad industry will soon be put across but big business cannot expect everything in one short session of congress. Moreover this reveals that congress is not only planning to outlaw strikes in the coal fields, but also to break strikes by distributing coal in case one should occur. To distribute coal in order to lessen a coal famine, to distribute coal at cost in order to limit the sufferings of the poor in our big cities in mid-winter, to distribute coal in order to break the monopoly of the coal trust over this most necessary of products—all this would be, in the language of Mr. Snell, "paternalism" and "inconsistent with sound procedure to alleviate the condition." To distribute coal to break a miners' strike—that is politics and good government as Mr. Snell and the majority of the present congress understands it.

Now the issue is up to the workers and poor farmers. Mr. Snell has spoken after conference with Coolidge and he has spoken with a rare frankness for which we should be grateful. If the same kind of con-



The Farmer W

By JOHN B.

CAPITALISM'S reactionary farm papers, printed by the millions of copies and sold for almost nothing, have proved one of the most subtle and vicious weapons for lancing the growing feeling of solidarity between the farmer and the city worker. This flood of capitalist propaganda has perplexed the man who toils in the fields, and for many years has rendered his groping toward a united front with the city proletariat sterile.

But capitalism by one of its inherent contradictions has produced a farm population intelligent enough to tear the veil of ignorance from its eyes. The flood of capitalist "dope" is about done for. The young farmers—those who are not driven off their farms and into the cities—will have none of it; economic pressure is so severe that even older men, minds dulled by long hours and little time to think, are vomiting up this poison.

"The Country Gentleman"—the name is a ghastly joke and an attempt to falsify the farmers' position and give him a set of ideals that will line him up with his enemies, the exploiters, in the class struggle—is one of these farm papers that drips capitalist poison.

To begin with, "The Country Gentleman" is published by the Curtis Publishing company, Philadelphia, which also turns out the Saturday Evening Post—leader of the blackest kind of reaction.

In the advertising pages of "The Country Gentleman" you will find Fisher Bodies, Timken Bearing, Mobil oil, Westinghouse, Crane, Johns-Manville, Western Electric, Gold Medal, Fisher Bodies, Timken Bearing, Mobil-Swift, and the run of auto and tobacco ads.

What you will not find is anything about the farmers' revolt, about the rising mortgages and for sale signs, the delinquent taxes and the crops spoiling on the ground because of the marketing system and the freight rate barriers.

No, instead, there are the usual editorials about our grand constitution, about the millions of homes of "free" men and women, about the "rule of reason and law rather than force," about the community churches, the "centers of spiritual revival"—one final effort to hoodwink the farmer, to interest him in the "sweet bye and bye," so he won't struggle when the economic blindfold is slipped over his eyes. A rural pastor gave this game away when he told a farmer who had become interested in co-operative projects that such things would never work out because the Almighty had given humanity many tongues at the tower of Babel and people would not be able to work together but must seek individual salvation—not forgetting the rural pastor's salary as dope dispenser.

These so-called farmers' magazines advice building more buildings to help the lumber manufacturers; buying more machinery—to help International Harvester; borrowing more money—anything and everything except attacking what's wrong.

Another example is "The Farm Journal," also loaded with the advertising of American Telephone and Tele-

gressmen of the republican and democratic parties are returned to the next session, we know in advance what they will do for and to the American people. At least everyone will know what kind of congressmen and what kind of congressional program he is voting for and if the workers and farmers do not revolt at such cynical frankness and elect representatives of their own, then they will have nobody to blame but themselves when the next congress represents the interests of big business and not the interests of the workers and farmers of America.