

National News

Sen. Melcher blasts Butcher on interest rates

Sen. John Melcher (D-Mont.) used the occasion of Senate Policy Forum hearings June 25 on the impact of the Volcker measures on agriculture to lash out at the chairman of Chase Manhattan bank, Willard Butcher, for misrepresenting the implications of high interest rates to America's allies abroad. Butcher has been "telling the Japanese that interest rates will remain high for the next several years, and it's a price worth paying," said the senator.

He told the June 25 hearings, "I don't think it is a price worth paying for, and I find it interesting that he goes to Tokyo where their prime rate is 6.75 percent, even though their inflation rate is about as high as ours. They manage their money in an entirely different way. They make certain that there is credit to keep basic industry going."

The hearings were filled with adverse forecasts for American food-production if the Volcker measures are allowed to continue. "The amber waves of grain will soon be deep brown," reported Sen. David Pryor (D-Ark.). Sen. Edward Zorinsky (D-Neb.) declared: "The American farmer is being hit with a double whammy. We have to send a signal to this administration. The end is in sight for the family farm. We won't have to have hearings like this in the future because there won't be anybody out there in that field of endeavor."

Texas passes tough antidrug laws

The state of Texas has put into law five pieces of antidrug legislation ranging from stiff penalties for sale of narcotics to minors to the revocation of professional licenses for medical doctors and pharmacists convicted of illicit drug sales. All but one of the bills has been

signed into law by Texas Gov. William Clements, and will take effect Sept. 1.

Drug dealers have moved into southern states, including Texas, in growing numbers since Operations "Grouper" and "Greenback" by the federal Drug Enforcement Administration curtailed kingpin trafficking in Florida. Governor Clements initiated the legislative package, calling it the "Texas war on drugs."

The bills sped through the state assembly in four-and-a-half months, thanks to a mobilization of Texas citizenry in their support. Legislators who normally received only 10 or 20 letters on a given issue received thousands of letters on the drug bills, according to Rick Salwen, counsel for the war on drugs program.

H.B. 729, the Delivery to Minors Act, makes possession or delivery of narcotics to a person under 17 years of age a 1st degree felony with a 5-years-to-life sentence. Probation and parole are available but not deferred adjudication, which would wipe away the criminal record of a well-behaved first offender.

The remaining three laws prohibit the manufacture, delivery, and possession of "drug paraphernalia," require prescriptions made out in triplicate, and provide for professional license revocation in case of violations.

Paraquat revealed as posing no health hazard

Dr. Ernest Shapiro has prepared a study of HEW and National Institute on Drug Abuse tests of the herbicide paraquat, and concludes that it is impossible to consume enough paraquat-contaminated marijuana to pose even the possibility of a health hazard.

Joseph Califano, the Carter administration's HEW secretary, deemed paraquat a potential hazard, prompting the 1978 Percy Amendment against U.S. antidrug aid to countries using the herbicide or illicit crops. Paraquat is the most effective killer of marijuana and opium poppy plants.

Dr. Shapiro's study, commissioned by the National Antidrug Coalition and corroborated by other leading medical experts in the field, will be presented to government and private-sector leaders in Colombia.

State, White House react to P-2

Nationwide distribution of a leaflet—including 3,000 in Washington, D.C.—implicating Alexander Haig, Henry Kissinger and David Rockefeller in the P-2 Masonic lodge's criminal activities in Italy, provoked frantic denials from the State Department, and later, the White House.

The leaflet was distributed by the National Democratic Policy Committee, which intends to issue one million. *EIR* reporters with copies of the leaflet in hand raised the issue at the June 19 State Department press briefing.

The State Department spokesman fielding questions was David Passage, whose unflappable Aristotelian demeanor has earned him the nickname "Mr. Spock." But at the mention of P-2, he lost control.

"These allegations are absolutely preposterous. As a fervent believer in democratic principle, I abhor this kind of nonsense." He also called the allegations pending against Haig "balderdash" before he was through. Nothing had ever been so "fervent" about David Passage before.

"As a member of Sierra Club," he continued, "I object to cutting down trees to print such trash." He waved the leaflet the whole time.

On June 22, Passage again lost control. He asserted that any allegations against Haig were "poppycock," "stuff and nonsense," and, once again, "balderdash." The White House still had no comment.

At the White House, spokesmen were not informed about P-2, they said. Finally, the next day, a White House spokes-

man called the P-2 affair, which had toppled a government and placed leading bankers and politicians in jail, "absurd." Have you investigated Mr. Haig's connection as charged in Italian press? "Unnecessary," came the reply. "You're barking up the wrong tree."

Postal strike looms as negotiations lag

Negotiations between the United States Postal Service and the postal unions began late last month, nearly three months behind schedule. Sources close to the negotiations doubt that an acceptable pact will be reached by the July 20 deadline. If they are right, the Reagan administration will face a strike of 600,000 Postal Service employees, or wildcats that could tie up the nation's mail.

"It couldn't go on for long," said a Postal Service spokesman. "Reagan would have to call out the troops to move the mail"—as Richard Nixon did in 1970.

Moe Biller and Vince Sombrotto were leaders of the 1970 job action. Biller is now president of the American Postal Workers; Sombrotto is president of the Letter Carriers. Both have promised their membership they will lead strikes if no contract agreement is reached.

Biller, who headed the New York City postal union in 1970 presided over an organization rife with drug- and gun-running networks featuring the so-called Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party.

The U.S. Postal Service, headed by Postmaster General William Bolger, appears to be encouraging such "militants" in the unions. He has refused to negotiate, demanding that the National Labor Relations Board designate one of the four unions as sole bargaining agent. The NLRB took nearly three months to decide against the Postal Service.

Bolger has claimed that the service has no money, and has demanded give-backs, as well as a cap on the cost-of-living adjustment.

LULAC's membership rejects Global 2000

The oldest and largest Hispanic lobby in the United States, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), resolved at its national convention June 20 to "vigorously condemn the *Global 2000 Report* and demand its repudiation by government and any other agencies propagating it." *Global 2000* is the State Department document that recommends a reduction of world population.

While the vote reflected the sentiments of the membership of LULAC, the organization's leadership was not pleased.

Arnoldo S. Torres, LULAC's Washington lobbyist, had endorsed *Global 2000* this May in congressional hearings, saying that "LULAC stands ready to offer its assistance and concern to *Global 2000's* effort. . . . We are in total agreement with *Global 2000.*" LULAC membership was not informed about the congressional testimony.

The anti-*Global 2000* resolution was introduced by Fernando Oliver of the National Democratic Policy Committee. Torres attempted to get the resolution voted down. Failing that, he covered himself quickly by offering a "counter-resolution" that copied Oliver's, declaring that LULAC "vigorously condemns the *Global 2000 Report*" for failing to consider "inexhaustible sources of energy" and for discrimination against Hispanics.

A second NDPC resolution dominating discussion called for tightened international and domestic law enforcement against illegal drug traffic and use. The leadership succeeded in amending it before passage to omit a call for recriminalization of marijuana.

Altogether, Oliver pushed four resolutions through, the remaining two involving an oil-for-technology approach to U.S. relations with Mexico, and repudiation of "I.D. card" approaches to migrant Mexican labor.

Briefly

● **JENNINGS RANDOLPH**, Democrat of West Virginia, introduced a formal resolution into the Senate June 25 calling on the administration "to establish a non-partisan working group of the administration and Congress to find a quick solution to the problem of high interest rates."

● **CHARLES BENNETT**, Democratic congressman from Florida, has introduced a modification of the *posse comitatus* law in order to allow military backup for interdiction of drug traffickers. Submitted as an amendment to the military authorization bill, it has already passed the House Armed Services Committee. Under the new interpretation, for example, naval intelligence regarding suspected narcotics smuggling could be forwarded to drug-enforcement agents, and sophisticated technology including satellites could be made available to fight illegal drugs.

● **PHILIP GEYELIN**, board member of the Council on Foreign Relations and *Washington Post* columnist, told a reporter that Carter Defense Secretary Harold Brown briefed Alexander Haig before Haig's trip to Peking. During their discussion Brown urged Haig to carry out the Carter policy of arming China, establishing a joint monitoring station on Soviet military activities, and allying with Peking's policy for Southeast Asia. "Carter would have done what Haig did if he had been re-elected," Geyelin added.

● **JOHN GAVIN**, U.S. ambassador to Mexico, said that Mexico could serve as "communicator between the North and the South" at a San Diego symposium on immigration June 20. He characterized the meeting between Mexican President López Portillo and Ronald Reagan as "a hopeful starting point."

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