WHAT GOES ON IN THE WORLD

by Norman Blair

THE UNITED STATES

In Washington the full blast of the veteran's pension tornado is whistling around the corridors of the House of Representatives, and the Congressmen—taken somewhat unaware—are looking for dugouts and cyclone cellars. In the past they have been protected against such pension demands by House Committee rules which prevented such legislation from coming to the floor for discussion.

But the first act of the 81st. Congress was to curb the power of the Rues Committee; and now unhappy representatives shiver in the sudden discovery that they will have to stand up and be counted in regard to a super-colossal pensions "grab" that would cost the Treasury, in the next 50 years, as much as one hundred and twenty-five BILLION dollars. (That's $125 with nine O's after it.)

The Rankin Bill—the measure sponsoring the "grab"—calls for $90-a-month pensions of World War One and Two at age 65—regardless of need. The powerful American Legion, with over three million members, is strongly backing it; and while the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization, with a membership of one and a quarter million, does not directly support it, that body is pushing for big pensions on a somewhat different basis.

The chief trouble is that the Rankin plan runs directly athwart of the vast Administration program for integrated old-age and unemployment insurance for everybody. Some people argue that both ideas are wrong. However, the scheme which the House had had laid in its lap would give special benefits to a special class—and would give them to this class, the veterans, regardless of physical handicap or financial necessity.

It seems certain that President Truman will veto the Rankin Bill, should it ever get to him in its present form. But this seems unlikely, for the present at least, although it might be different if the United States were going through a depression instead of full employment.

The fact remains, however, that the average Congressman would greatly prefer just to forget the whole thing. No matter how far the Rankin bill gets before it is finally greatly modified or killed, they will have to vote one way or the other—and from past experience they know that these Veterans Associations have long memories, especially for those who do not fall in with their demands, however grasping the latter may be.

EUROPE

There is at least one man who takes an optimistic view of European affairs. He is British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin who—almost on the eve of his departure for the United States—told a cheering House of Commons that the West has won the struggle to save Europe. He said that:

Western Germany is now safe from Communism.

France has surmounted its disruptive forces and is fast righting its economy.

Italy has overcome its strikes and produced a stable government.

The Atlantic Pact's machinery is ready to organize a western unity which would have been thought impossible two years ago.

In short, said Mr. Bevin, by peaceful means, by pacts and firm resolve, western Europe has been saved from communism and chaos.

In the course of Parliamentary debate, Government spokesmen said that the Berlin airlift would be increased to higher tonnages. "The airlift has been cheap," Mr. Bevin commented. "One year's cost of the airlift has about equalled the cost of one day of war." Anglo-American aid to Greece is to be stepped up; and if Russia and its satellites seek to close in on Yugoslavia's Marshal Tito, the west will render any possible economic assistance, but not on terms that would embarass Tito or bring about his undoing.

Which all sounds very promising, and it is hoped that all Mr. Bevin's dreams come true. However, this observer somehow cannot help being reminded of the small boy who thought he had been snubbed at a party. "What's the idea of Johnny Jones high-hatting me," he tearfully demanded of his mother. "Ain't I just as good as he is?"

"You certainly are, Willie," replied the mother. "The trouble is that Johnny Jones doesn't know it."

So we are quite willing to accept the British Foreign Secretary's word that Europe has been saved from the dangers of Communism. The only trouble is—Does Russia know ?

JUST-SO STORY

In Cambridge, England, Rudyard Kipling's daughter, Mrs. Elsie Bambridge, went to court to complain that her wine cellar was being depleted by a tippling butler. Not only did the butler liberally sample her rare vintages, Mrs. Bambridge charged, but he refilled the half-empty bottles with water, tea, and ink.

Lets Sleeping Dog Lie

"Lucky dog," snorts Woodfair Farms' Sport Page as he passes a habitue of Hialeah Park race track snoozing in the sun. The dog was altogether unimpressed with hard-working Sport Page, who had just finished an early-morning workout. Those in the know say the horse may prove an upset victor if he goes to the post in the Kentucky Derby.

SPORTS-&c

by A SIXBIT CRITIC

We see by the papers that we are on our way to have at least a spot or two of Television on this side of the border; and just what drastic changes its coming is liable to make in our beloved Canadian sporting picture is something to worry about, that is if you are the type which worries about such matters. Personally, we doubt if we will be able to get more than 11 or 12 hours sleep per night until we find out.

* * *

For according to the announcements our Television is not going to be of the every-man-for-himself variety, with the field open to anybody with a bankroll and nerve big enough to build a telecasting station. No, it is to be controlled by the CBC or some similar body, in which case the kind of sport we will be able to observe via the ether waves is more than likely to depend largely on the kind the Sports Director happens to fancy most himself.

* * *

Think of how it will be should said Sports Director, when, if and as appointed, turn out to be the sort of gent who thinks that Cricket is the noblest of all games, and dish out telecasts of that sport to us low-brows who are far more interested in what is happening in the 7th. heat at Dufferin Park or some such. Although, to be perfectly fair, we notice where a couple of cricket fans recently argued so rabidly that one carved up the other with highly fatal results, which sounds as though the old game must be hotting up a trifle since our last visit.

* * *

But to try and write sense, for a change, is Television eventually going to have a beneficial effect on sport—or rather on sports attendances—or the reverse? That's a $64 question which nobody—even down in New York—seems to be able to answer with any certainty.

* * *

Television has the sports promoters doing flip-flops and nip-ups in their efforts to find out whether or not they should encourage it, or try and nip it in the bud. A quarter-century ago they were in a similar sort of dither over Radio, fearing that folks would sooner stay home and listen to oral descriptions of sports than come out and pay cash to see them.

* * *

Those fears proved groundless, as we all know. Instead of knocking off cash customers, Radio made countless thousands of new fans. In fact the evidence is almost unmistakeable that Radio has been the greatest boon that the business of promoting sports has ever known.

* * *

But does the same apply to Television? The Television folks, quite naturally, say that it does. But men who have money invested in sports, and who had a bit of experience with Video, are by no means certain. "Radio provokes curiosity, but Television satisfies it," one spokesman is quoted as saying; while another puts it that "Radio has made sports fans; but Television will only make Television fans."

* * *

"A sports fan, getting a football game on his Radio," as one writer puts it, "hears some sportscaster with a musclar larnyx describing a thrilling touchdown run. The listener finally topples over the goal-line with the ball-carrier, emotionally exhausted. Once he gets his breath he's as likely as not to say 'Gee, I wish I'd been there to see that run.'

* * *

"On Television, though, he has already seen it; and his reaction is much more likely to be a casual 'Nice run, eh? Does anyone need a fresh drink?'"

* * *

The Dempsey-Tunney fight at Soldier's Field in Chicago set up an all-time record for boxing attendance and receipts—and to the people in the back rows the ring looked about the size of a dish-rag. To people sitting in those seats, Gene and Jack must have appeared about ant-size, and what was actually on in the ring they could only guess. If Television had been operating then—and if those same folks, free of charge, could have had as good view of the contest as those in the front rows, is it likely there would have been 104,000 people crowd through the turnstiles to the tune of $2,658,000 gate?

* * *

Big league baseball promoters have little to squawk about regarding Television—as yet. They're doing quite nicely on the ever-growing sums which advertising sponsors are paying for the privilege of televising their games. But ask Newark and Jersey City, in the International League, what they think about it. They've been losing customers in wholesale quantities, simply because the folks would sooner watch the Yankees, the Giants, or the Dodgers from a comfortable seat in some saloon, than sit on a hard bench in the hot sun and look at minor leaguers in action.

* * *

Well, as we said earlier, we're going to try and not lose too much of our beauty sleep over it. Crowds attending all sorts of sports, in regions where there is Television, have been falling off lately; but whether or not it is because the fans have less loose change in their pockets, or because they prefer to take it on a Television screen rather than in person, only time can decide. So we'll conclude this discourse, not any too soon, by quoting part of a ditty sung at a recent meeting of the New York Baseball Writers' Association—sung to the tune of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." It ran;

Take us home to the ball game;
Take us home to the wife;
Get us our slippers, they're just the style
Plug in the gadget and spin the old dial;
Then we'll root for plenty of action,
If a tube blows out, it's a shame;
But no matter what happens, we'll never go out
To the old ball game.

The drastic regulations in effect in Denmark by which two-thirds of much production is earmarked for export are going a bit to far, according to the story of a young Dane who had just become the father of triplets. Exhibiting the bonny infants to him at the hospital, the nurse inquired, "Which one do you want to keep?"

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RADIO Men, Amateurs, Experimenters and Electricians. Write for your copy of Special Parts Bulletin No. 6. Radio Trade Supply Co. Limited, 595 Yonge St., Toronto.

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FISH STUFF

With his job as chairman of the Hoover commission over, ex-President Herbert Hoover leaned back in his chair, puffed on his pipe and said he guessed he'd go fishing. "There are only two occasions in life when people have a regard for one's privacy," he said. "One is when you are at prayer, the other when you go fishing . . . Whatever your associations are, you are in the presence of optimism, gladness, joy, and of course fish . . . There are three distinct social levels in trout fishing. The real aristocracy use only a dry fly. A step lower are those who use wet flies. And the lowest of all are the bait fishermen . . . Mr. Coolidge . . . used worms. This raised a dreadful outcry from bait fishermen."

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