



This Week In Washington

by Ralph E. Church
Representative, 16th Congressional District
Washington, D.C., May 4 — On April 3, 1939, Congress delegated to the President power to reorganize the Executive branch of the government.

Last year the President submitted Plan No. 1 and Plan No. 2. Congress took no action and both became effective. This year the President submitted Plan No. 3 and Plan No. 4. And it now appears that Congress is glad it did not listen to the New Dealers and has a check it can exercise.

In substance the Plan submitted by the President would abolish the Air Safety Board, strip the Civil Aeronautics Authority of its independence and place regulatory control of air transportation and civil aeronautics under the Department of Commerce.

An analysis of the President's reasons for the proposed change in the Civil Aeronautics Authority seems justified. On the surface his five reasons seem sound, but upon careful reflection it will be found they have little merit.

In the first place, the President said that by placing the Civil Aeronautics authority in the Department of Commerce it will have representation at the Cabinet table. The answer to that is that we have already had experience with the politics-ridden Bureau of Air Commerce, and it was in order to improve air transportation that Congress saw fit to make the Civil Aeronautics Authority independent in the first place.

The President said that the reason for selecting the Department of Commerce is to give civil aeronautics a closer relationship to the Coast and Geodetic Survey in that Department, pointing out that the Survey makes air-navigation charts. That is not a valid argument, it seems to me. A few maps made by the Survey is not so important. After all, charting work represents only 4% of all the work of the Survey. It would be just as valid to contend that the Authority should be under the Federal Communica-

tions Commission because it regulates radio, or under the Post Office Department because of the air mail. Another point emphasized by the President in his public statement this week is that the Civil Aeronautics Authority would continue to appoint and control its own personnel and submit its own budget. But the very words of the President's Plan No. 4 state the contrary to be the case. I will quote them: "The budgeting, accounting, personnel, procurement, and related routine management functions of the Civil Aeronautics Board shall be performed under the direction and supervision of the Secretary of Commerce through such facilities as he shall designate or establish."

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NOTE—Assets carried at \$221,390,536.99 in the above statement are deposited with various public officials under requirements of law or regulatory authority. Canadian business embraced in this statement is reported on basis of par of exchange.

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