

Congressional Closeup by Ronald Kokinda and Susan Kokinda

Senate approves Garrison Diversion

The Senate voted to keep the North Dakota Garrison Diversion water project under construction, tabling an amendment which would have cut \$22 million from the project. The June 22 vote was 62 to 35. While this nearly two-to-one margin was a sound rejection of the "fiscal conservatism" arguments of Gordon Humphrey (R-N.H.) and the Heritage Foundation, the developing alliance of environmentalists and the Heritage/free enterprise networks has become a serious threat to continued infrastructural development in this nation.

The arguments Humphrey used in the Senate floor debate demonstrate how flagrant this alliance is, and at the same time make clear why this nation would never have developed without a dirigistic national policy.

The Garrison Diversion is an irrigation project, Humphrey said, and we already have too high a level of agricultural production. Second, he argued that the cost of credit under the prevailing high interest rates should be the basis for calculating the costs of a project.

Humphrey, despite his claims to status as a conservative, then went on to assert that "the project will inflict unacceptable damage on our wildlife habitat," and proceeded to list all the national environmentalist groups that oppose it, to bolster his argument.

The House, more seriously affected by the lobbying of the environmentalist-free enterprise coalition, has not approved the Garrison Diversion for either FY83 or FY84. However, it is anticipated that the funding will be retained in House-Senate conference.

The last major water project undertaken in this nation, which environmentalists had unsuccessfully at-

tempted to stop for years, the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, is rapidly nearing completion. No new money had to be authorized for Tenn-Tom in the FY84 authorization.

Jamie Whitten (D-Miss.), chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, rose at the end of the Tenn-Tom debate on June 7 to thank his colleagues for their support of this project. "This is a great day for us and for the Congress," said Whitten, "for we will point out once again—our country and its development is our real wealth and Tenn-Tom will greatly increase that wealth. . . . Everything depends upon protection and development of our own country, for it is on our country that all else depends.

"We must return stability to our nation, to its money, and to its budget, but we must ever keep in mind that we could leave to our children all the money in the world and a worn out land—and they would never make it. But if we leave them a developed and rich land, they could set up their own medium of exchange."

Senate Committee freezes farm target prices

With the American farm sector being destroyed between high interest rates and below-parity farm prices, the Senate Agriculture Committee voted June 21 to give Agriculture Secretary John Block the power to freeze 1984 and 1985 target prices on grains, rice, and cotton.

The administration argued that such a freeze on target prices, which determine the amounts of subsidy payments to farmers, will save about \$1.4 billion over the two years it is in effect.

At the committee hearing after the 10 to 7 in favor of the freeze, North

Dakota Republican Mark Andrews protested, "I am getting damned sick of selling our wheat to the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China at less than the cost of production. You ought to be raising the price support. This is just one more kick in the head to wheat farmers."

The measure passed with the support of some grain-state senators who accepted, as a sop, a \$600 million plan for U.S. agriculture export promotion. Democrats on the committee who opposed the freeze, such as Montana's John Melcher and Oklahoma's David Boren, have indicated that they may attempt to filibuster the bill when it reaches the Senate floor.

It now appears that administration opposition will kill legislation intended to establish a year-long moratorium on farm debt.

The Senate Agriculture Committee passed farm debt moratorium legislation this spring sponsored by ranking Democrat Walter Huddleston of Kentucky's and claims that it is ready for floor action "at any time." But Senate sources report that administration opposition to the proposal will ensure that it is never brought to the floor.

Percy announces arms control end run

At hearings featuring premier "Soviet handler" Averell Harriman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Charles Percy (R-Ill.) announced that he will use his committee to force action on certain arms control treaties with the Soviets regardless of administration opposition.

The June 17 hearings were the second in Percy's round on U.S.-Soviet relations and, besides Harriman, heard Harriman's wife Pamela and former Carter administration ambassador to

Moscow Thomas Watson, of IBM.

Both Harrimans, just returned from private talks with Yuri Andropov, stressed that the Soviet leader "senses imminent danger . . . and fears war through miscalculation." The Harrimans argued that Andropov is ready to negotiate with the United States on the basis of mutual initiatives and reciprocity.

Watson, who recently traveled "socially" with Percy to London and Venice, called on the U.S. Senate to create a bipartisan consensus on arms control around which the country could rally. "If you don't like the ground rules set out by Henry Kissinger, then you, the Senate, should change them," he urged, arguing that the administration's arms control approach has led to a frightening deadlock. As an example of independent, bipartisan Senate conciliation, he called on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to take the initiative and ratify the Peaceful Nuclear Explosives Treaty and the Threshold Test Ban Treaty which have been signed by both the United States and the Soviets but have not been ratified because of serious problems of verification.

Watson, Harriman, and Percy all call for near-term conciliation with the Soviets on any issue, with the PNE and TTBT treaties the immediate targets. Percy announced that he has demanded an explanation from the administration as to why the United States is not moving ahead with ratification of those treaties. If he does not receive a satisfactory answer in a matter of weeks, Percy will start Committee hearings on the treaty.

Harriman recounted his experiences as President John Kennedy's negotiator on the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1962 as evidence that Secretary of State George Shultz was

wrong when he testified, two days previously, that the United States must not permit the Soviets to think that we want an agreement badly. Harriman pointed out that he arrived in Moscow in 1962 and announced that the United States and Great Britain were eager for a treaty, and had completed negotiations two weeks later.

Beware quick House vote on IMF

Capitol Hill sources are warning opponents of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) quota increase to beware a possible attempt to railroad the legislation through the House immediately after July 10, when the House returns from its July 4 recess. As we go to print, the House Rules committee has not yet given a rule to the IMF bill, and House floor action is not yet scheduled. But sources warn that a decision to place the IMF bill on a "fast track" could come at any moment.

House Banking Committee Chairman Rep. Fernand St. Germain (D-R.I.) has reportedly been delaying a scheduling decision in order to force administration support for funds for a housing bill. Members, the argument goes, have to have something to show to their constituents after their support for the IMF.

The higher-level reality of this bargaining effort is that it could be used to force the President to come out and give unambiguous support to the IMF, which could hand full responsibility to Reagan for economic disaster when the debt blowout occurs.

Many Republican House members are reportedly agonizing over their vote on the IMF bill now that Secretary of State George Shultz and Treasury Secretary Donald Regan seem to have the President "signed on" in sup-

port. The Republicans' offices are reporting that they are being "lobbied heavily" for a pro-IMF vote, particularly by the State Department. The implications for the nation's economic security implications if it continues down the IMF road have left many of these members undecided on the issue.

Labor racketeering bill passes Senate again

In what could become a yearly ritual, the Labor-Management Racketeering Act of 1983 (S. 336) passed the Senate on June 20 by a vote of 75 to 0. Senate Labor Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and ranking Democrat Edward Kennedy strongly supported the legislation, which would force a trade union official from office upon conviction of a felony—rather than allowing him to complete the appeals process.

In arguing for the legislation on the Senate floor, Hatch singled out AFL-CIO chairman Lane Kirkland for "special thanks," noting "his commitment to an honest trade union movement . . . and support for this bill."

Although the Teamsters union had led the opposition to the attempt to get the legislation through the House, last year, in early June, newly installed Teamster President Jackie Presser announced at Senate Labor Committee hearings that the Teamsters would support the legislation if two substantive changes were made. The changes included leaving the length of disbarment time of a convicted official to the judge's discretion, and if penalties were equal for management officials.

While the Senate Labor Committee did not accept these amendments, and did not get official Teamsters support, Hatch praised Presser's efforts toward cooperation.