THE PRESIDENT ON THE JOB

by FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE

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1. Government By Facts

By Frank Parker Stockbridge
(Special to The Enterprise)

Washington, D. C., Mar. 31.—I came to Washington to see President Hoover. He had just completed his first year in that office. I wanted to ask him personally what he believed he had accomplished in that year, what he hopes or expects to accomplish in his remaining years at the head of the Government.

The President was frankness itself. In the course of a conversation which stretched on toward two hours he answered my every question with such fullness and such precision of detail that one of my unasked questions answered itself.

That question was: "Does President Hoover realize what he is up against?"

And the answer is: "He does."

Since the United States became a nation we have had just two business men in the President's chair. One of them was George Washington. The other is Herbert Hoover.

George Washington had won financial independence in business before he became President. Herbert Hoover started on his own with nothing and from a large proportional income was independently wealthy at forty. He got his independence out of the ground, as George Washington did; Washington as a farmer and dealer in land, Hoover as a miner.

And, like George Washington again, Herbert Hoover is an engineer.

In our time it is a new experience to have at the head of the Nation a man trained in the operation of great enterprises, accustomed to the management of men and money on a large scale.

One does not have to agree with Mr. Hoover's point of view nor indorse the policies of his party, to recognize his ability or even to concede his greatness in the sphere of his life's work. And that sphere is that of the administrative engineer.

It was apparent that such a man must have a different approach to the problems of administration than that of the politicians who have previously filled the Presidential office. Managing the affairs of 120,000,000 of the richest and most prosperous people in the world perhaps might not seem so much different, to him, from managing the affairs of a big corporation.

I wanted to find out. We have been talking so much, in America, about a "business Government," that I was curious to discover whether a man with a practical, business point of view could get away with it in reality.

There has been a lot of loose talk to the effect that the President, because he has never been a politician, is being bamboozled, horswoggled, befuddled and otherwise fooled by the political gentry who inhabit Capitol Hill. Don't you believe it. Herbert Hoover not only knows what is going on, but why, and who is behind it. And he knows, better than some of them do themselves, just which Senators are going to come back to Washington and which are going to be slipped gently into political oblivion.

Nobody quotes the President unless he has personally prepared the statement for publication. No newspaper man who hopes to have another chance to talk to him writes what the President says to him in confidence. But you can stick a pin in this:

President Hoover is no political amateur.

He does not play politics with a brass band or a big stick. There is nothing of the playactor about him. The arts of the politician which appeal to the emotions are totally foreign to his nature. It is impossible to imagine his posing for dramatic effect or engaging in verbal denunciation of his political opponents. But the man who organized and administered the Belgian relief and made Germany like it, who ran our own Food Administration and persuaded us that sawdust was good to eat, who as Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council which absolutely ruled all Europe during the eight months between the Armistice and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, figuratively as well as literally had the nations of the world eating out of his hand, who as Secretary of Commerce for seven years told the business and industrial leaders of America where they got off and made them like it—and him—must of necessity be master of the supreme art of the politician, the art of understanding people and making them want to do what he wants them to do. And this is a subtler and higher type of politics and in the long run more effective and more enduring in its results, than more than one or two men have ever brought to the White House.

Herbert Hoover approaches the problems involved in running the Government of the United States exactly as the president of a great business corporation approaches his own business problems. And that is the method of the engineer.

Engineers deal in facts. They don't build bridges by guesswork or dig tunnels with their emotions or erect skyscrapers by sentiment. It is an old saying among engineers, to which the President himself called my attention, that if one can get all the facts, and be sure that he has all the facts, about any engineering problem, and arranges them in their proper perspective, then the one correct solution becomes apparent to everybody.

That is true, as far as it goes. But it takes another kind of ability to convince other people—a board of directors, say, or the Congress of the United States—that the facts, are facts and therefore that the solution offered must be the right one. That is particularly true when that board of directors—or Congress—has been in the habit of running things by guesswork, sentiment and emotion.

That is President Hoover's hardest job. He deals in facts. The truth which the assembled facts reveal is the only truth he recognizes. His job, as he sees it, is to get all the facts about every phase of the Government, then to convince, persuade or otherwise impress upon Congress, the politicians and the people that these are the facts and that they point to only one sane and sound solution of the problem in hand.

To do that takes skillful team work. Don't run away with the idea that Mr. Hoover has any quarrel with Congress. That is team-work, but Herbert Hoover is driving the team.

And so far as his hands are not tied by legislative restrictions, he goes ahead on his own initiative—after first finding out all the facts—just as the president of the Western Union or the Steel Corporation does.

The impression one gets upon entering the Presidential offices, in the ugly old structure known as the State, War and Navy building, across the street from the White House, is precisely that of the executive offices of a big corporation. In the old White House offices, in the wing which recently burned, there was a different atmosphere under previous Presidents. Ante-rooms were usually crowded with politicians seeking favors, or with tourists hoping for a chance to shake hands with the President. The general effect was social and political and not that of business. President Hoover's office might be that of any big business man, except that most big business men's offices are more elaborately furnished and decorated.

Behind a big desk on the window side of the big room the President sits in a big swivel chair. As he rises to greet his visitor one sees that he is a big man. Six feet exactly, broad of shoulder, deep of chest, he weighs around 185 pounds, and mighty little of that is fat. In his pictures he gives the impression of being a bit soft. But that round face isn't fat. The bony structure behind it is broad from cheek-bone to cheek-bone, from the angle of one jaw to that of the other. He is in good training—not as an athlete going into a contest but the sort of good training in which intelligent business men try to keep themselves.

Over the radio one gets the impression that the President's voice is rather high-pitched, almost a tenor. In conversation that impression vanishes. It is not a vibrant voice, it lacks the reasonance which makes for oratorical effect. But it is a baritone rather than a tenor, with the deeper tones predominating in conversation.

The President's clear, blue eyes are fixed upon his visitor, as he talks. They are deep-set eyes, the bony pent-house of the forehead projecting considerably above the long upper eyelids. And the forehead goes straight up from the eyebrows, a long way up before it curves backward abruptly where the sandy hair begins. There is no sign of thinning over the dome of Mr. Hoover's head, but a little patch of gray is discernible on each temple.

His manner is dignified and easy without being genial. One tries to imagine him slapping anybody on the back, or anyone outside of his most particular intimate personal friends and family calling him by his first name. It is too much of a strain on the imagination. It can't be done. Yet there is no impression of coldness. The impression is rather that he has his emotions under perfect control, and that in dealing with and discussing public affairs he is discussing them in the light of reason applied to facts and not as matters to grow excited about. It is not hard to imagine him becoming angry, but it is impossible to imagine him "bawling out" anyone or giving any outward sign of loss of temper.

Mr. Hoover, we are told, is sensitive to criticism. I would put it differently. Dealing all his life in facts, he cannot tolerate lies. Remember that he is a Quaker, and the members of the Society of Friends have as one of their guiding rules of life the admonition of St. James: "Let your yea be yea and your nay, nay."

Mr. Hoover, is sensitive to misrepresentations. It makes him writhe to be lied about. But honest, friendly, constructive criticism he welcomes, when it comes from sources he believes to be sincere. My estimate of him in that respect is confirmed by men who are closest to him.

He swings back in his swivel chair, thrusts one hand into his trousers pocket and answers his visitor's questions without the slightest hesitation and with a degree of detail that is surprising. One gets the impression of a mind which functions like a well-oiled machine, silently, swiftly, and with perfect accuracy. He has the facts there in his head, about details of Government and administration which most presidents would have had to refer to an assistant secretary of some department.

We talk about facts and their importance. The President has appointed a dozen or more commissions of experts for the purpose of finding out the facts about various governmental problems. There will be more such commissions. The facts which they gather and collate will save the President and especially save Congress a great deal of time and serve as a guide for intelligent legislation. There is such a mass of public business continually passing through the Congressional mill, so many details of administration being put up to the President, that the regular standing machinery of the Government has not the time for direct and thorough investigation of every legislative and administrative proposal.

Mr. Hoover has gathered some interesting facts about the growth of the President's job. When the Federal Government moved to Washington in John Adam's administration, Congress and all its attaches numbered 250 persons and the President, to execute all of the laws then on the books, had a staff of 125. Today there are 3,000 persons on Caupitol Hill, but the Executive departments, not counting the Army and Navy, employ 650,000 persons to administer the laws which Congress has instructed the President to enforce. Twenty times as many people, in proportion to population, are needed today to enforce the laws now on the statute books, as in Jefferson's day. Some of that is due, of course, to the growth of the nation. President Jefferson's administration granted only a dozen or so patents; today we grant 175,000 patents a year. But a lot of the burden upon the President and upon the taxpayers is due to the huge grist of laws which have only sentimental reasons for having been enacted.

One of the serious faults in our governmental system is the habit of legislation by emotion.

To illustrate: somebody had the emotional idea that it would be nice for the Government to provide free medical attendance and hospitalization for every veteran of any war, so long as he might live and regardless of the cause of his illness or disability. We are already taking care of every veteran whose disability can be in any degree traced to his military service. But this new project would make it incumbent upon Uncle Sam to take care of every case of senile dementia, hardening of the arteries, pneumonia, smallpox, ingrowing toenails or any other ailment which might attack any man who had ever worn a uniform, no matter if he had been in perfect health for fifty years after his military service.

President Hoover quietly appointed a commission of physicians and actuaries. They started with the known facts of the present number of veterans, their probable average longevity and the probable incidence of disease or disability among them, and the present cost of hospitalization per patient per day. When they got all of those facts tabulated and projected it figured out that the scheme, over which it was extremely easy to sentimentalize, would cost the taxpayers of the United States somewhat more than Six Billion dollars at the lowest possible computation. And that was that, so far as that particular piece of legislation was concerned.

Mr. Hoover believes that only by finding out all the facts and shaping the Government's course by them can Governmental expenses be reduced and the burden on the taxpayers relieved. At the same rat[illegible] of progression at which Federa[illegible]ses and personnel have grow[illegible] past 100 years, at the e[illegible] century everybody i[illegible]ates would be on th[illegible]roll.

REPORT OF C[illegible]A-TER BOA[illegible] YEAR O[illegible]

Superintendent's [illegible]oo[illegible]

Assessments for 1929	$13,[illegible]
Delinquents for 1928	1,100.[illegible]
	$14,891.29
Rents collected and turned over to Treas.	$13,914.64
Delinquent for 1929	976.65
	$14,891.29

Treasurer's Books

Receipts:	
Balance on hand Dec. 31, 1928	$ 5,550.31
Cash received from Superintendent	13,914.64
	$19,464.95
Disbursements:	
System	$ 1,642.77
Pump House	3,462.45
Office	1,241.53
Interest on Bonded Debt	1,725.00
Bonds matured and paid	2,500.00
Transferred to Savings Account	2.300.00
Miscellaneous	902.85
Balance on hand Dec. 31, 1929	5,690.35
	$19,464.95
Savings Account	
Balance on hand Dec. 31, 1928	$ 5,240.89
Transferred from Active Account	2,300.00
Interest	281.10
	$ 7,821.99
Disbursements	
Balance on hand Dec. 31, 1929	$ 7,821.99
	$ 7,821.99

The Books of the Superintendent and Treasurer have been examined and found correct as per the above statement. Vouchers for all disbursements in the report are on file at the office of the Treasurer of the Water Board, and they and the books are open to inspection.

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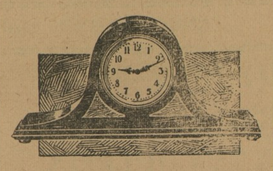

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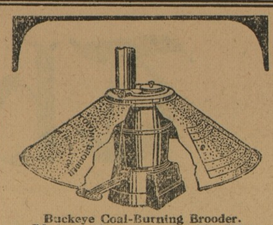

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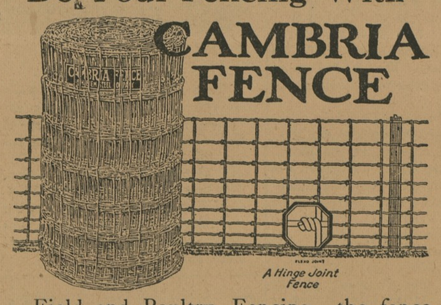

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P. M.	X A. M.			A. M.	P. M.
	7.10	Lv.	HURLOCK	Ar.	8.00
	7.25		FEDERALSBURG		7.45
	8.00		DENTON		7.05
	8.20		GREENSBORO		6.45
	8.30		GOLDSBORO		6.35
	8.45		INGLESIDE		6.20
	9.00		SUDLERSVILLE		6.05
	9.15		CHURCH HILL		5.45
	9.30	Ar.	CHESTERTOWN	Lv.	5.30
4.15	9.35	Lv.	CHESTERTOWN	Ar.	5.25
4.30	9.50		FAIRLEE		5.10
4.40	10.00	Ar.	TOLCHESTER	Lv.	5.00
P. M.	A. M.			A. M.	P. M.

XThis run one-half hour later on Sundays.

TOLCHESTER—CHESTERTOWN—CENTREVILLE
EFFECTIVE SEPT. 3, 1929

READ DOWN — READ UP

	A. M.				P. M.	
	10.15	Lv.	TOLCHESTER	Ar.	4.40	
	10.25		FAIRLEE		4.30	
	10.40	Ar.	CHESTERTOWN	Lv.	4.15	
Daily Except Sunday	10.40	Lv.	CHESTERTOWN	Ar.	3.55	Daily Except Sunday
	10.55		CHURCH HILL		3.40	
	11.20	Ar.	CENTREVILLE	Lv.	3.15	
	P. M.				P. M.	

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