

National News

Parity law could boost farm sector

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman met with House Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) and other House GOPers on Jan. 23, but failed to come to any agreement on a new national agricultural policy law. As of the end of 1995, no farm law (usually enacted every five years) had been passed, and the "permanent law" of 1949, which continued the 60-90% farm commodities parity prices that prevailed during World War II, is in effect. That law allows intervention by the government to buy, store, and otherwise deal with farm commodities in a way to give farmers 60-90% of parity (cost of production), depending on the commodity.

However, Glickman, Roberts, and others have said that they will not enforce the parity law. Glickman told the *Washington Post* that the law is "totally unacceptable in the modern world." Roberts said that the law "isn't going to happen." Parity pricing was abandoned in the United States in the 1950s, in favor of various so-called "market-based" national farm policies. Its enforcement would significantly boost family farm income, without spending taxpayers' dollars.

Roberts is pushing his "Freedom to Farm Act," which would inaugurate a totally free-market approach, with no farm supports of any kind, in seven years, as the Heritage Foundation and Conservative Revolution demand. Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) is committed to prevent this.

Kevorkian murders victim number 27

Jack "Dr. Death" Kevorkian murdered his 27th victim, Linda Lee Henslee, 48, of Wisconsin, in January. She had multiple sclerosis, and was not "terminally ill." Oakland County, Michigan authorities, acting on an anonymous tip, found her body on Jan. 29 in Kevorkian's van, abandoned in the parking

lot of the Oakland County Medical Examiner's office.

Oakland County Chief Medical Examiner L.J. Dragovic pronounced the death a homicide, because it is physically impossible for victims to arrange their own death with Kevorkian's apparatus. The van has been used several times by Kevorkian to inflict "suicide" on his victims, much the way Nazi doctors used specially enclosed buses to kill chronically or mentally ill children by pumping poison gas into them. Kevorkian's "treatment" involves having the victim lie on a cot, and hooking the victim to his murder machine, or to a tank of carbon monoxide gas, which is how his latest victim was killed.

Kevorkian attorney and accomplice Geoffrey Fieger told reporters that the victim had "the support of her family" in "taking her own life." But in past cases, the family "support" usually meant that the family felt they would be better off without the victim. For example, two months after Kevorkian killed his first victim, Janet Adkins, who had Alzheimer's, her husband, who arranged with Kevorkian the details for her "suicide," moved in with his 28-year-old mistress.

Many victims do not get the assistance of disability programs or Medicaid, for needed medical treatment or special equipment that could improve their ability to live with their condition. Many such programs would be dismantled or radically cut by the Conservative Revolution wing of the Republican Party.

Hollinger crowd targets Constitution

The British intelligence operatives of the Hollinger Corp. media empire, who have been trying to destroy the U.S. Presidency, are disappointed that the attack on Hillary Clinton, who was subpoenaed to testify before a federal grand jury on Jan. 26, may have backfired. This crowd is now targeting the U.S. Constitution itself, as the problem with the United States.

Clinton-basher Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, a columnist for the Hollinger Corp.'s

London *Sunday Telegraph*, commented on the First Lady's handling of her grand jury appearance, in the Jan. 29 issue of that newspaper. Entitled "Hillary Gives Masterful Display in Prosecutor's Whitewater Show," he wrote: "Cool as a cucumber, you have to hand her that. Hillary Clinton did not show a flicker of concern as she stopped to chat with reporters on her way into the grand jury. And she was just as self-composed on her way back out, four and a half hours later, after making her mark yet again as a very unusual First Lady. One is almost tempted to join the cynics, in suspecting that her appearance at the U.S. District Court House was a show, a piece of political theater staged by the special prosecutor to salvage his own reputation."

In the same issue, Jonathan Clark, professor of British history at the University of Kansas, wrote that there is nothing special about what Hillary Clinton is accused of, it's just "corruption." The real problem in the United States, he argues, is the system established by the American Constitution. "What if the root of the problem isn't Bill Clinton at all, but George Washington and Thomas Jefferson? Moralizing zeal goes to the heart of Americanness. Even the Declaration of Independence, after a few lofty opening generalizations, soon launches into a long list of personal denunciations of the failings of King George III. Americans felt vindicated, but Britons were puzzled."

There are deep problems in the U.S. system of government, Clark insists, but the system is "unreformable," because "Conservative Americans have an immense regard for their Constitution. . . . Its famous pages are on display to the public in the National Archives at Washington, D.C., a purpose-built shrine: pilgrims file up the nave of this secular church, to do homage to the documents displayed on the high altar."

Cry-baby Gingrich admits, 'GOP failed'

House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) declared the GOP congressional actions in the last 60 days "a failure," and complained that he had been done in by the media, in

a speech to 500 local business leaders in Atlanta, Georgia on Jan. 26. "Yes, we failed. Let me be clear about that. In my judgment, the effort of the last 60 days was a failure," he said.

Gingrich said that congressional leaders will mount a new effort to craft fresh bills on welfare, Medicaid, and Medicare reform, with help from three Republican governors—Michael Leavitt of Utah, John Engler of Michigan, and Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin.

But the defeats have hit the Conservative Revolution fanatics hard. A bit over a year ago, the 73 newly elected Republican representatives emerged from a week-long brainwashing session at the Heritage Foundation and marched in lockstep behind Gingrich to the Longworth House Office Building. This year, on Jan. 25-26, only 30-50 (depending on the source) of the demoralized bunch showed up for their retreat in Baltimore. Gingrich was absent, and his name was not even mentioned inside the meetings.

Education privateers set back in Hartford

The Hartford, Connecticut School Board voted on Jan. 23 to end its management contract with Education Alternatives Inc. (EAI), a for-profit company, to run its public schools, the *Washington Times* reported. It was the firm's largest and only remaining public school contract. The decision came as three members of the board previously supportive of EAI, switched their votes. "We entered into this relationship believing it was the right thing to do, and we end it for the same reason," said School Board President Stephanie Lightfoot, a former EAI supporter.

Hartford originally hired EAI because of poor academic performance, at a time when its per-pupil spending exceeded state and national averages. But EAI's "Tesseract" outcome-based education program failed to improve test scores during its 14-month tenure.

EAI officials said they were stunned by the move. "We thought we were on the verge of an agreement. We never expected this," said EAI's Hartford supervisor Gene Baten.

Baten said there had been no written notification of the cancellation, though a 90-day notification is required in their contract.

"This sends a bad signal," said school privatization pundit John McLaughlin. "It's frightening to see just how difficult it can be for an outside company to work with public school systems that have severe problems."

In Washington, D.C., the school board agreed last fall to allow for-profit and non-profit groups to sign contracts with individual schools. EAI is still bidding to manage individual District schools, having twice been rejected by the school board. But school board member Karen Shook (at large), a privatization advocate, told the Jan. 25 *Washington Post*: "It certainly gives one pause. . . . We have to be extremely careful with whomever we sign a contract with [sic]."

Temporary funding hits government, firms

The fact that the government is being forced by the Conservative Revolutionaries to operate off a series of continuing resolutions, is creating severe economic problems, for both government agencies and private-sector contractors.

Government agencies are being forced to dismiss thousands of workers, the Jan. 28 *Washington Post* reported. The Environmental Protection Agency, for example, can either send home all 18,000 workers for over two weeks without pay, or eliminate 3,750 jobs. In the Commerce Department, the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration, with 100 employees, will have to be shut down by March 15. Officials are now studying how to shift its functions to other offices. Similarly, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration can either place its workforce of 2,000 on unpaid furlough for 35 to 40 days, or eliminate 650 jobs.

In the Washington, D.C. area, of the \$4.3 billion a year in goods and services contracts to area vendors, a sizable number are not being filled because of budget uncertainty and severe cuts in the continuing resolutions.

Briefly

THE AFL-CIO plans to spend \$35 million in the 1996 U.S. elections, more than seven times past spending levels, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said Jan. 24, at an executive board meeting. The labor federation will aim at the defeat of 75 Republican congressmen, enough to give control of the House of Representatives to the Democrats.

SUICIDE was termed "a moral choice" for the terminally ill or those living in persistent or progressive pain, in a resolution passed by a majority of the 200 delegates of the 40,000-member Episcopal Diocese of Newark's Annual Convention on Jan. 27, the *Washington Times* reported. The assisting of suicide was also said to be morally acceptable. It will be taken up at the church's national convention in 18 months.

THE GLOBAL WARMING theory was ridiculed, in the Jan. 26 *Washington Post*. A group at the University of East Anglia in Britain, recently announced that 1995 was the warmest year on record, basing "its conclusion on the first 11 months of data plus an educated guess about December." Global temperatures in December had the largest recorded drop in 10 years, 1.3°F.

NATURE will clean up leaking underground fuel tanks better than the Environmental Protection Agency, saving billions of dollars and returning thousands of acres of land to use sooner, a study by Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory has found. Naturally occurring microbes in soil and water can clean up fuel contamination as effectively as human "pump-and-treat" efforts.

ALAN GREENSPAN has some unsavory backers, urging his reappointment to a third term as chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. Senate Banking Committee Chairman Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.), on Jan. 26, called on President Clinton to renominate Greenspan. On Jan. 29, the London *Financial Times* also demanded that Greenspan be reappointed.