

# FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

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## Muddying the Water.

UNLESS Congress acts promptly to prevent it, that portion of social security taxes levied for old-age assistance and survivors' insurance will automatically double on January 1. This will mean that the tax rate on New Year's Day will increase, in accordance with a law passed in 1939, from 1 to 2 per cent on 48,000,000 employes and 2,000,000 employers. Senator Vandenberg of Michigan, as he has on three previous occasions, is leading the fight to prevent the increase from becoming effective by freezing the tax at the current rate. The administration opposes the freeze, not because the additional tax revenue is needed for social security purposes, but because it is a "painless" way to get an extra \$1,300,000,000 in revenue for general government purposes.

There has been a great deal of discussion lately regarding a general expansion of the social security program, but that issue has not yet formally reached Congress. The only social security legislation now before Congress which has any chance of passage, or even consideration, at the present session, is the matter of the old-age insurance tax rate.

Despite this fact, Chairman A. J. Altmeyer of the Social Security Board appeared before the House Ways and Means Committee this week not only to oppose the freeze, but to talk in glowing terms of the vastly expanded social security program which the board is to suggest to Congress sometime next year. The expansion program may or may not be a good thing. That is a bridge to be crossed when it is reached. It is most regrettable, however, that Chairman Altmeyer has further muddied the waters of the issue now at hand

tional money with which to prosecute the war and pay other expenses, but there is no sound reason for placing this additional load on the backs of the 48,000,000 workers and 2,000,000 employers now covered by social security. If more money is needed for general purposes, it should be obtained by a general tax increase that would fall equally, or rather proportionately, on all citizens, according to their ability to pay.

For Victory: Buy Bonds

## Judge Landis.

ONE of the most picturesque figures of this generation passed from the American scene with the death of Kenesaw Mountain Landis, commissioner of organized baseball and former federal judge. His career was in the best American tradition, starting with humble birth in a small Ohio village and reaching the heights of success through sheer ability. He was appointed to the federal bench by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1905. His name blazoned in the newspaper headlines two years later when he fined the Standard Oil Company of Indiana \$29,240,000, the largest fine ever assessed a defendant, in a freight rebate case. The Supreme Court reversed the case and the fine never was paid, but the trial made Judge Landis' name a household word throughout the United States, and it remained that to the day of his death.

Though known and oftentimes feared as a man of strong prejudices, Judge Landis was quick to secure redress for those whom he believed had been wronged. For many years he devoted his special attention and much of his time to the abuses of private bankers and loan sharks in Chicago. He brought to light hundreds of failures of these so-called bankers in which millions of dollars were lost to small depositors. He also exposed the methods of money lenders who were exacting exorbitant rates of interest from wage-earners on petty loans secured by advance assignments of wages. As a result of his exposure of these abuses, the Illinois Legislature passed laws abolishing private banks and penalizing excessive interest charges. His sincere interest in the little fellow, his hatred of all wrong and particularly sham and his genuine humanity made him many loyal friends and won him a host of admirers throughout the country.

Judge Landis became high commissioner of baseball in 1920, while the major leagues were staggering under the impact of the scandal of the 1919 world series. He ruled the game fairly and justly, but with an iron hand. If it may be said that he had a fetish, it was for the highest standards of sportsmanship.

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