

Allen-Scott Report

# GOP to Steal LBJ Thunder

CPYRGHT By ROBERT S. ALLEN and PAUL SCOTT



Mr. Allen

... first began demanding one in November 1963. While still on the department's payroll, Otepka has been given no work. Friends of Otepka have raised a legal defense fund of \$13,000 to fight his case to the end . . . Edward McCormack, unsuccessful Democratic candidate for Massachusetts governor, can have a high-ranking job in either the Justice Department or the Defense Department. President Johnson made the offer to Speaker John McCormack, D-Mass., during a telephone talk. McCormack is a nephew of the Speaker . . . A large number of Russians are being allowed to emigrate to join relatives in Canada.

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WASHINGTON House Republican leaders are planning to propose some extensive Social Security changes of their own in the incoming Congress.

Sponsoring the move as a major anti-poverty measure, GOP members on the House Ways & Means Committee will vigorously seek to hike the minimum Social Security payment to \$70 a month.

As now drafted, this proposal would add \$26 to the present \$44 monthly minimum. Minimum benefits for families would be raised from \$66 to \$106 a month.

Scaled increases will also be advocated for all levels above these minimums up to maximum benefits, which would be kept at \$168 for individuals and \$268 for families.

These increases, to be offered before President Johnson makes his own proposals in the State of the Union message in January, are the principal recommendations in the Social Security package being prepared by the Republicans.

The new rates, the most liberal ever sponsored by GOP Ways & Means committeeman, have the backing of House Republican leaders.

Still angry over President Johnson's blocking action in the recent Congress after he had announced his intentions of raising Social Security payments, GOP leaders plan to demand hearings on their plan immediately after the new Congress organizes.

To put their program before the public, a "white paper" on Social Security will be issued before Congress convenes—probably around January 1. Also, speeches are being prepared for GOP legislators when Congress meets.

As outlined in a Republican House Policy Committee memorandum, other Social security recommendations favored by the Ways & Means committeemen are:

"Blanket in at age 65 all persons not now eligible for Social Security at a minimum rate, and authorize a means test for such recipients where their incomes are above the so-called

"Increase widow's benefit rate to 100 per cent of the husband's primary rate."

"Reduce from age 72 to 70 time after which earnings will not be considered as limitation of benefits."

"Raise the annual earnings limitation from \$2,400 from the present \$1,500."

No price tag is put on these revisions in the police committee memorandum. Instead, it states that the "financing" will be discussed in another presentation.

President Johnson is again looking for a press secretary.

White House assistant Bill Moyers, now doubling as press secretary and general assistant, has told the President he would like another job, preferably a diplomatic assignment.

Although usually tight-lipped, Moyers disclosed this to colleagues on the White House staff who were with him during the President's Asian trip.

In these talks Moyers said he had explained to the President that he wanted to stay in government, but to get away from the crushing pressures of White House service.

Moyers stressed he had assured the President he would not leave until his replacement had been found. Moyers indicated an important diplomatic post will be available early next year, but gave no hint about it.

Administration insiders say Moyers has not been himself since the recent death of his brother, whom he persuaded to become a member of the White House staff. Moyers will be the third to leave the job of press secretary under President Johnson.

The first was Pierre Salinger, who was press secretary for President Kennedy and stayed on when Johnson came in. Salinger left to run for the Senate.

The second was George Reedy, long-time Johnson assistant, who took over after Salinger and left because of need for surgery on his feet.

Otto Otepka, who marked the third anniversary this month of his ouster as a State Department security officer, is no closer

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