

Washington Digest

National Topics Interpreted
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Washington.—The steel industry of the United States has cast for itself a role in the forthcoming campaign—whether it intended to do so or not. The same is true of John L. Lewis and his segment of organized labor—and it is pretty generally suspected that Mr. Lewis intended to get labor questions well mixed up in politics. It is all more important because of President Roosevelt's attack on "economic royalists" in his Philadelphia acceptance speech.

Labor and Politics

Whatever rights the steel industry has or whatever rights Mr. Lewis and his followers have, the fact remains that they are all knee deep in politics and there is every reason to believe that each side will suffer in public esteem as a result. It means simply this: each side is mixing up problems that are basically economic in character with sordid, even unclean, political motives.

This outburst is prompted by two things: the gigantic steel industry has taken the position that it will defend itself against encroachment of professional labor leaders like Mr. Lewis and President William Green of the American Federation of Labor and their satellites "from any source." The steel industry thereby has thrown down the challenge and now that such a die is cast, the steel industry will be compelled to do a number of indefensible things if it adheres to its program.

The same condition is to be observed in the organized labor situation. Whether Mr. Lewis is willing to admit it or not, his declaration that he will foster, even enforce, his scheme for organizing the steel workers is likely to lead to overzealous acts by his followers—and overzealous and foolish acts all too frequently lead to bloodshed.

For a number of years, steel companies have refused steadfastly to recognize union labor as represented by the professional leaders in the American Federation of Labor. They have attempted to defeat the inroads of that organization by forming what is known as company unions, groups of employees on the pay roll of each corporation. They have accorded to these groups the right of collective bargaining and have insisted that they would deal only with the representatives of the company unions for the reason that they believe they then are dealing with the employees concerned with questions of pay and working conditions in that particular plant. If the national unions were recognized, officials of a given company always have had to negotiate with the expert union negotiators who are paid by the national organization. The results have not always been happy. This combination of circumstances, together with a disposition on the part of the steel companies, I am afraid, to be rather selfish in their attitude toward labor has developed a continuing controversy that has raged over the last score of years.

It happened that the rather insolent announcement of the steel companies, their challenge, came almost simultaneously with the delivery of President Roosevelt's speech accepting the Democratic nomination for re-election. It was in this speech, it will be remembered, where Mr. Roosevelt denounced "economic royalists," in which he resorted to expressions bound to create class hatred and in which he used language that is certainly going to help discredit corporations which are large enough to attract national attention. Of course, I know that Mr. Roosevelt did not have the steel industry particularly in mind in his assault on massed capital but the effect is the same as though he had been shooting directly at the steel industry because of the coincidence mentioned above.

The tragedy of the thing is that the professional labor leaders are going to use the steel industry's challenge politically.

From all of the inside discussions that I have heard, it appears that the issue between the steel industry and its workers is no longer simply whether the steel industry shall be unionized. It is a question of how it shall be unionized. In addition to this, Mr. Lewis has been chiseling away for several years in promoting his labor union idea of organizing all workers in one unit instead of the craft union idea that is basic in the American Federation of Labor. That is to say, Mr. Lewis proposes to have a steel union or a shipbuilding union or a textile union instead of organizing the workers in accordance with the particular jobs they do, whether they be engineers, painters, carpenters, moulders or any one of the various other crafts.

The Real Issue

I have no doubt at all that the Treasury's reason for changing the rule while the game was being played will result in a considerable amount of revenue for the government. But there are many who believe, as I do, that the department in all fairness should have issued its regulation to become effective at some fixed date in the future in order that citizens who must comply with it would be prepared by proper notification of what they were expected to do and the penalties for failure to obey.

Since the steel industry has its company unions, there is a conviction in many quarters that Mr. Lewis might well pause to consider whether this is the time to carry forward his program of bringing steel workers under national labor union control. There are those who believe that the company unions eventually will become units in the larger labor structure of the country and, if that be true, it is made to appear that Mr. Lewis has hurt labor's cause.

On the other hand, the steel industry already is under attack by the government. Mr. Roosevelt suddenly "cracked down" on some of the major companies recently, charging them with collusion in bids on government work. He came out with this charge at a time which undoubtedly will stiffen the backbone of the union agitators—and it is not unlikely that by the same token he has stiffened the resistance which the steel companies will use.

Yet, it does seem that the steel companies made a fatal mistake in the pronouncement they have issued. There are too many people who will be inclined to believe that the steel companies have taken advantage of an apparent assurance of collapse of federal supervision. There are few who believe that the federal compulsory collective bargaining statute will last very long but the fact that this statute is due for the discard, it seems to me, hardly warrants the action which the steel companies have taken. They are no more warranted in that than union labor is warranted in taking advantage of the political situation to feather their own nest. A real danger, in addition to this, is that Communist agitators are going to use this situation as one vehicle for spreading their propaganda of dissimulation and discontent and Mr. Roosevelt's attack on massed capital unfortunately lends itself to the nefarious schemes of the Reds.

It long has been said that the method of administering laws frequently has created more dissatisfaction among the citizens than the requirements of laws themselves. Tax laws of whatever kind furnish a splendid example. It has always been true since we have had income tax laws that taxpayers have complained more about bureaucratic regulation, indecision, lack of uniformity in administration and, generally speaking, slow processes of settlement than about the amount they were required to pay. The same is true about our customs laws despite the fact that they affect fewer persons directly.

The other day the Treasury issued a notice to customs inspectors that was "effective immediately." It was a change in policy respecting the quantity of goods an individual may bring in from foreign shores without the payment of the customs tax.

Since 1798 or thereabouts, there has been a law which permitted a returning American to bring in commodities of whatever kind he desired, except narcotics, up to \$100 in value but that law permitted the Treasury to make exceptions. The Treasury notice the other day was an announcement of an exception to this \$100 exemption. It said that no inbound traveler could carry more than one wine gallon of liquor without the payment of the customs tax thereon. A practice had sprung up since the import duty on liquors has been made so high of returning tourists bringing in almost the full exemption in liquor alone. Probably the practice was getting very bad and no one questions the judgment of the Treasury in determining policy. But it is the method employed in making this change that has aroused criticism.

In ordering the new regulation "effective immediately," the Treasury forced upon hundreds of travelers the necessity for paying duty on their personal stocks of liquor in what amounts to a surprise order. They had left foreign shores under one regulation and arrive under another.

I have no doubt at all that the Treasury's reason for changing the rule while the game was being played will result in a considerable amount of revenue for the government. But there are many who believe, as I do, that the department in all fairness should have issued its regulation to become effective at some fixed date in the future in order that citizens who must comply with it would be prepared by proper notification of what they were expected to do and the penalties for failure to obey.

The incident to which I have referred is an outstanding example of inconsideration and such things always cause citizens to have a hurt feeling, a feeling that the government changed the rules without consulting those who must obey the rules.

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OREGON STATE NEWS OF GENERAL INTEREST

Brief Resume of Happenings of the Week Collected for Our Readers

Vernonia—This town last Monday night celebrated the opening of the Oregon-American lumber mill, idle since 1931, with a street dance and entertainment sponsored by the local chamber of commerce. The mill employs between 600 and 700 men, providing the community's chief payroll.

Lostine—Clay Boyd of Lower Valley isn't on the boat bound for Berlin with the rest of the Olympic team, but possibly his time for a race he recently ran can stand comparison with theirs. Boyd, while going for wood, sighted a half-grown coyote pup and took after it. He caught it.

Corvallis—First post-summer session to be scheduled at Oregon State college will open August 3 and continue four weeks. Most of the courses offered will be in education and science, and are arranged to permit graduate students especially to earn at least 15 credits of advanced work in a summer.

Crater Lake—The discovery of crisoballite, a rare mineral, in the Crater Lake area is subject matter for a paper prepared by Carl E. Dutton, ranger naturalist, who found the mineral in the region of Union peak. The unusual specimen, a talus fragment, has a pitted surface covered with small white crystals.

Enterprise—Frank Sizemore spotted a large cougar in a tree and shot it. When he saw how emaciated the cat was, he investigated more thoroughly and learned that at some fairly recent date the animal had picked a porcupine for its lunch—and got nothing more substantial than quills for his efforts.

LaGrande—Work on two federal projects here is rapidly nearing completion. The new \$95,000 undergrade crossing has only the finishing touches lacking and will soon be open for traffic. The new gymnasium-auditorium for the LaGrande high school is being all enclosed and the interior finish virtually done.

The Dalles—A delegation of business men returned from Prairie City last week with the report that possibly a large deposit of Dixie granite near there would be utilized in construction of the new state capitol. The deposit, according to Colonel James B. Small, retired rock expert of the United States reclamation service, will be of proper quality and sufficient quantity for the work.

Albany—Cost of educating Linn county non-high school district students in the several high schools which they attended during the last school year was approximately the same as during the 1934-35 year. J. M. Bennett, county school superintendent, has announced. With Brownsville, Jefferson and Portland claims lacking, the total, \$35,246.65, is little more than \$1200 lower than the figures of the previous year.

Klamath Falls—Giant bullfrogs have been "planted" on the banks of Lost river and the tule marshes of Lower Klamath lake as a starter toward the establishments of a new attraction for outdoorsmen—bullfrog hunting. S. J. Coull and Howard Strode brought the amphibians here from the Sacramento district. Some of the frogs measure 18 inches. They passed inspection by Charles Riley, game commissioner, who believes they will help materially in cleaning the region of flies and insects.

MINIATURE GALLOWES RECEIVED
Klamath Falls—A miniature gallow, believed a replica of the scaffold on which Captain Jack, Modoc chieftain, and his aides were hung after the Modoc war, has been received to be placed in the Modoc lava beds monument museum here. General W. C. Brown, U. S. A., retired, of Denver, gave the gallowes to Ranger Don C. Fisher.

General Brown received the gallowes, made from wood from the original structure, when he was a lieutenant stationed at Fort Klamath in 1873.

HOP CONTRACTS SIGNED
Salem—A three-year hop contract calling for prices of 35, 25 and 20 cents per pound had been written here last week, the first agreement made since a recent rise in prices resulting from extensive damage done by downy mildew. Also reported were sales of 86 bales of 1935 clusters and 68 bales of fuggles at 30 cents. Reports indicate that Willamette valley yards are improving daily, thanks to the warm weather.

Dealers who signed 12-cent contracts before the price jump are considering advancing the figure voluntarily to 15 cents to insure clean picking, it was said here.

Newport—Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Compton of West Salem, who have several acres of tobacco growing on their farm in Alesia valley, are having a large dryer built to accommodate the large crop, now nearly ready to harvest.

Salem—Business-craving agents who camped on the trail of J. W. Ferguson, state forester, now enter his office at their own risk. Tired of coming them out of his hair, Ferguson posted this sign: "We shoot every tenth agent."

What Irvin S. Cobb Thinks about

An Immortal Oration
BEVERLY HILLS, CALIF.—The future has a rotten trick of musing up the judgments of the present. What a pity it is that we can't wear our hind-sights in front.

When I read where some ponderous performing pachyderm of the literary elephant quadrille says, "This story will live forever," I get to thinking about a time-yellowed copy of a metropolitan newspaper I saw once, a paper that was printed on November 20, 1863.

It devoted great gobs of praise and nine solid columns very solid—to the eloquence of the Hon. Edward Everett of Massachusetts, who, on the day before, after months of preparation had, on a battlefield down in Pennsylvania, spoken two hours and turned loose enough oratory to fill about nine gas balloons. But of the subsequent and incidental remarks of another man, an awkward, shy man from Illinois, who had spoken just two minutes, it said, "The President was also heard briefly. The applause was formal and scattering."

Prejudices of Critics.
OFTEN, 'twould seem, the professional reviewer makes up his mind beforehand that he doesn't like you and behaves accordingly.

A friend sent me a clipping from a small city—it dealt with the opening of the picture, "Everybody's Old Man." The writer was quite severe in his analysis. He didn't like the film. Passionately, he didn't care for me.

The joke was that the theater where the picture was to have been shown burned down just about the time the paper went to press, and the picture wasn't ever shown in that town.

The next best illustration of the point I'm making dates back years ago. I was discussing various novelists with that gentle wit, the late Oliver Herford.

"Ollie," I said, "what do you think of So-and-So's books?" "My dear Cobb," he softly murmured, "something I once wrote about him—in a critical way—so prejudiced me against the man I could never bear to read any of his books."

Self-Anointed Dukes.
OUT here we're waiting for that Spanish baron and that French count back in New York to form the mother branch of their Noblemen's club for the protection of holders of genuine titles in America and, presumably, as a guarantee to our own home-grown heiresses that, when they marry foreign princelings or what not, the goods will be as described. There's been a lot of title-legging, you know.

As soon as the organization gets started we're going to open the Hollywood division. Since only the authentic nobility may qualify, it's figured that the active roster will be confined to a very limited group.

The State of the Nation.
FAR be it from me to turn alarmist right on the heels of the hot wave, but I feel it my duty to warn my fellow-Americans that this fragile and crumbling republic is doomed. That is, it's doomed if you can believe what comes out of our sainted political leaders in the way of predictions.

Hark to the quavering chorus which already has started up: A crisis exists. Every professional crisis-breeder in the land openly admits it. I can't remember when a crisis wasn't existing. But they come larger in campaign years. We are facing a dread emergency which has had no parallel since the last occasion when we faced a dread emergency. This very hour the nation totters on the brink of an abyss.

Miracles and Misdemeanors.
ONCE upon an early time there was a man so holy that even the wild creatures would not harm him. He drew a thorn from the paw of a tame lion and the grateful beast followed after him. So he became a saint.

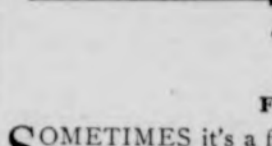
Only the other day in a court in Tanganyika, which is in Africa, a black man—a savage by our definitions—was on trial. It seemed the lions were raiding the stock, so the native authorities set traps for them. The accused found a lion in one of these traps and made a ladder and went down and helped the great brute to escape.

Being arrested, he explained simply that the lion was his friend. So they fined him \$12.50. In the olden times it was a miracle. Nowadays it's a misdemeanor.

IRVIN S. COBB
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Floyd Gibbons Adventurers' Club

Hello Everybody!



"Too Much Courage"
By FLOYD GIBBONS
Famous Headline Hunter.

SOMETIMES it's a fine thing, boys and girls, to have one of those cast-iron, copper-plated nervous systems that don't get all in a jitter the minute something happens.

Steeplejacks have them—and so have structural ironworkers who spend most of their working day twenty stories above the street, balanced on a ten-inch iron beam, playing baseball with red hot rivets. I've always sort of envied birds like that for their courage.

And again, at times, I've been glad I don't have nerves like theirs. After all, our nerves are about the best warning signals we have—and you know what usually happens to the guy who doesn't pay any attention to the signs.

Take the case of Bill Woods, for instance—William H. Woods of Brooklyn, N. Y. Bill isn't an ironworker, but he's got an ironworker's nerve. Put him in a burning building, and my guess is that he wouldn't begin to get excited about it until the fire actually began creeping up his coat-tails. I'm judging him now from the way he acted in that restaurant in Brooklyn on April 30, 1934.

This Adventure Starts With a Cup of Coffee.

It's quite a story, boys and girls—a story that starts out with a walking tour through the streets of Brooklyn. Bill and his friend, Charley Young, had been taking an evening stroll, and eleven o'clock found them at Boro Hall park. Charley suggested that they drop into a cafeteria for a cup of coffee before they hit the hay. Bill agreed, and they crossed the street.

They went into the cafeteria, took their checks from the machine at the door and went over to the long counter. They ordered coffee, and the counterman turned to get it. But no sooner had he turned than he swung back toward the door and said: "What's the matter over there?"

That's the first intimation Bill and Charley had that anything was wrong. They looked in the direction in which the counterman was staring. Several men were scuffling over near the door. Then, suddenly from the center of that milling group came the sound of a shot!

Bedlam Breaks Loose in Cafeteria Following Shots.

"In the moment that immediately followed," says Bill, "no one stirred. Everyone in the place had stopped eating and all eyes were turned toward the door. That moment of indecision didn't last long, however, for suddenly another shot rang out, loud and deafening in that enclosed space. No one knew what had happened, but you couldn't mistake that sound."

At that second shot, bedlam broke loose in the cafeteria. Women screamed. Men jumped up from their seats. Tables were overturned. Everyone thought of just one thing, and that was getting under cover. Everyone was running about in frantic haste to get a door between them and that revolver—everyone, that is, but Bill Woods. In all the hullabaloo he alone kept his head. And it nearly cost him his life.

Bill looked around for Charley. He was gone—evidently into a milling crowd of people who had run toward the back of the cafeteria and were trying to crowd into the washrooms. Those who weren't there were crawling on their hands and knees, trying to get under a table. Bill noticed that and decided to get under cover himself. There was a radiator with a screened grill in front of him and he dropped down behind that. There followed a brief silence punctuated only by the sounds of struggling men, then another shot reverberated through the room. That was when Bill's curiosity and his nerve got the better of his common sense. He stood up to take a look.

Bill Made a Fine Target for the Man With the Gun.

Over by the door, a man, gun in hand, was standing, back up against the cashier's counter, while half a dozen younger men tried to wrestle the gun away from him. "One of the younger men," says Bill, "picked up a heavy sugar container and hit the older man over the head. I saw the glass break and the sugar scatter over the floor, but the man with the gun seemed invincible. They couldn't beat him down. They were too many for him in the end, though, and finally he fell behind the cashier's desk. And then, thinking all danger was past, I walked over to the counter."

Bill walked over until he was within ten feet of the fallen man when, to his amazement, the man started to sit up. The gun, still in his hand, rose until it pointed straight at Bill's midriff. Too late, Bill began to wish he'd been one of those nervous individuals who had taken refuge in the washroom.

He stood petrified—afraid to move. He drew in a deep breath and waited to feel the bullet bite into his flesh. At that distance, the man on the floor couldn't miss.

Timely Arrival of Copper Saves Bill's Life.

Then, the only thing that could save Bill's life happened. Through the restaurant door came a police sergeant with a drawn pistol. He got the situation at a glance, took deliberate aim at the man with the gun, and shot him through the stomach. That was the end. The man fell over backwards and was still. A red circle of blood slowly widened beneath him.

More policemen came. They began asking questions. The cashier of the restaurant had been creased over one ear by a bullet, and one young man, shot through the shoulder, was leaning against the counter, trying to staunch the flow of blood.

They told the story. The man with the gun, they said, had been drunk. He had walked over to a table and accused another man of laughing at him. An argument started and the drunk drew a gun. That was when Old Lady Adventure stepped in and started shaking up thrill cocktails—one for everybody in the house, and a deadly one for the man with the gun.

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Women Wore Men's Shoes

During Ohio's yesteryears the forests were so swamped that women could scarcely walk to church or to other gatherings in their pretty footwear. So instead they wore the rough heavy shoes used by the menfolk. Close to their destination they would deposit the rough shoes in a fence corner or some other near-by place and put on their dainty shoes to wear inside. Thus their Sunday footwear lasted years and years.

Montreal's Historic Crosses

Many of the historic crosses in Montreal were raised by the pioneer inhabitants to commemorate being spared from the St. Lawrence River's ravages before it finally was brought under control. Founded by the man who erected its first and most famous cross, Paul de Chomedey, le Sieur de Maisonneuve, Montreal is frequently called the "City of Crosses." Maisonneuve's cross was erected almost 300 years ago.

The Man Fell Over Backwards and Was Still.