

Washington Digest

National Topics Interpreted
By WILLIAM BRUCKART
NATIONAL PRESS BLDG. WASHINGTON, D. C.



Washington.—Many times in these columns I have had occasion to write in praise of **Great Leader Senator Joe Robinson of Arkansas, the Democratic leader in the senate.** His magnificent qualities, his capacity as a statesman and the regard with which he was held by Republicans and Democrats alike were such that further praise from this pen would be of little value. Suffice it to say that in Joe Robinson's death the nation is the loser because "he fought the good fight."

But Senator Robinson's sudden death a few days ago has precipitated a political condition of gravest importance. Although none of us who knew him nor those with whom he was associated in an official capacity could have foreseen his sudden death, I think it is proper to say that the passing of Joe Robinson may have more far-reaching influence upon his country's history than all of his long and distinguished career in public life. That is to say, fate possibly has turned in this instance to the role it sometimes plays—the role of master strategist.

The question may be asked: Why does the death of one man become so important?

The answer is simple. Joe Robinson was the field marshal for the Roosevelt administration. Particularly, he was the field marshal in the greatest legislative battle to reach the floors of congress since the days of slavery, and this coincided with the daring adventure of an epochal administration.

President Roosevelt leaned upon Senator Robinson to put through the senate a bill that would permit the Chief Executive to appoint additional justices of his own choosing to membership in the Supreme court of the United States. He leaned upon the Arkansas senator for many other things as well, but it seems to be the consensus of opinion that Mr. Roosevelt's administration may well stand or fall by the success or failure of his program to reorganize the judiciary of the United States. It seems further that if the President fails to obtain congressional approval for this plan which would give the President domination over the court system of the country, he will have lost control of the legislative branch of the government for the remainder of his term. Few Presidents have been able to carry on successfully without the co-operation of the legislative branch.

It is too early, of course, to say whether the death of Senator Robinson means defeat for the court packing program. Nevertheless, most of the astute political observers in Washington—indeed, many of the President's own party in the senate—believe that the passing of the Democratic leader was a fatal blow to the President's power in congress. This results from the fact that Joe Robinson was able to mold together many groups and cliques and hold them by the sheer power of his lovable personality in a cohesive, workable unit.

The country never will know how well and faithfully Joe Robinson fought for the President and his policies. I have said in these columns heretofore and I repeat that I do not believe Senator Robinson favored all of the New Deal policies, in his heart. He was progressive but he had sound ideas; he stood by the President and the New Deal with courage and capacity, but on many occasions, I have reason to believe, he fought for those principles because he believed he should either fight as a member of his party or retire. Further, he knew that if he would retire he would not have the opportunity nor the influence to persuade the radical wing of the New Dealers to propose reasonable policies. In other words, the late Democratic leader was attempting to be a leader in fact as well as in name and many are the indications where he was able to pull the theorists and the radical New Dealers back from the brink of political destruction.

In view of the facts I have reported and the observations I have made above, it becomes perfectly plain that the President is in a position where he can lose the present court battle with ease. In fact, there are many observers who believe the court legislation will have to be abandoned and that congress will be quickly overwhelmed by that annual desire of representatives and senators to conclude their work and adjourn.

Let us review the situation as regards the court legislation. The President got off to a very bad start when the original bill to add six new justices to the Supreme court was presented. The original reasons he gave for demanding the new power he sought were shattered within a few days after the draft of the bill reached the Capitol. He was forced to abandon

them. Mr. Roosevelt then came forward with a second set of reasons, namely, that the Supreme court as at present constituted could not and would not hold some of his social legislation constitutional. That set of reasons was knocked into a cocked hat when the Supreme court upheld the Washington state minimum wage law, the Wagner labor relations act and the social security taxes. Then came the resignation of Justice Van Devanter. Justice Van Devanter was one of the men whom Mr. Roosevelt had in mind as unwilling and unlikely to see social legislation through the same glasses as Mr. Roosevelt saw the situation in the country.

The Van Devanter resignation gave the President an opportunity to appoint a new member to the court. It also gave the senate an opportunity to burst forth with expressions of its own ideas concerning the type of man who should succeed Justice Van Devanter and the senators were not backward in promoting the name of the Democratic leader, Senator Robinson. But Mr. Roosevelt thus far has failed to fill the vacancy, and this failure has been interpreted by the opposition among the President's own party as an unwillingness to select anyone but a radical for the highest court. In any event, those opposed to the court bill contend that the President's delay constitutes only another reason why he should accept "the inevitable defeat" of the court revision program.

When it became apparent that the original bill for six new justices could not be passed because the Democratic-dominated senate judiciary committee reported the bill with a scathing denunciation, the late Senator Robinson astutely offered a substitute bill in the nature of a compromise. This substitute bore the authorship of Senators Logan of Kentucky and Hatch of New Mexico. Even the substitute which provided for one additional judge a year until the Supreme court numbered eleven members has received the same bitter criticism that characterized the first measure. Many members of the senate say they will fight it as long as they would have fought the original because it will give the Chief Executive control of the Supreme court just as the earlier one would have done.

President Roosevelt vetoed a little known and little discussed bill the other day. It was known as "H. R. 4408, An Act to Provide for the Renewal of Star-Route Contracts at Four Year Intervals." The title, of course, will mean little to most of those who read these lines. But, this was a bill intended to do justice to those underprivileged classes about which Mr. Roosevelt has often spoken in his fireside chats over the radio. The men who would have benefited by this piece of legislation were the star route carriers of the mails—the service that dates back to the stagecoach days of America and the service from which originated the Postal department's famous phrase, "the mail must go through." The star route is the only means by which a good many thousand persons are able to receive mails on anything like a modern basis because this service reaches the out-of-the-way inland towns where railroads are not yet and possibly never will be in operation.

I watched this legislation go through the house without dissenting vote; I saw Senator McKellar, Democrat, of Tennessee, attack the bill in vicious language and then I saw the senate pass it by a vote of nearly two to one.

In addition, I know that the representatives of these little known carriers (little known except to those whom they directly serve) had tried for a number of years to obtain a basis of pay that will let them live. They finally were able to convince Postmaster General Farley that unless they were paid more money the number that would go broke in carrying out their contracts would be amazingly large. I have not the slightest doubt that this group ought to be paid more money for the work they do because their present basis of compensation is shamefully low—so low that if they were members of a labor union, they would all go on strike.

No change has been made in the basis of compensation or in the method of contracting for this service since it was organized in 1845, except in minor ways. Three quarters of a century or more is a long, long time. The President's action in vetoing this legislation, therefore, is very difficult to understand. His action is made the more inconsistent, many persons believe, because the additional cost to the government would be insufficient to maintain the smallest unit of the hundred New Deal agencies which the President has created.

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What Irvin S. Cobb Thinks about

Semi-Nude Fashions.

SANTA MONICA, CALIF.— Clothes may not make the man, but leaving them off certainly makes him foolish. And that goes double for the women.

Whence arises the present-day delusion that going about dressed at half-nude enhances the attractiveness of the average adult? Our forbears of the Victorian era wore too much for health or happiness or cleanliness. But isn't it worse to offend the eye all through the lingering summer by not wearing enough to cover up the blotches, the blemishes, the bulges and the bloats that come with maturity? Sun baths should be taken on a doctor's prescription, not at the corner of First and Main.



Irvin S. Cobb

Women old enough to know better are the worst offenders, seems like. If only they'd stop to consider that the snail, which is naked, would lose in any beauty contest against the butterfly, which wears all the regalia the traffic will stand!

But even though it's for their own good, you can't tell 'em. If somebody started the fad of going at the game while practically nude, inside of two weeks mumblebeep would be the national pastime—until somebody else thought up a game to be played by folks without a stitch on. Or anyhow, just a stitch here and there.

Doctoring Movie Scripts.

USUALLY they lay these yarns on Mr. Sam Goldwyn, who thrives upon them and goes right on turning out successes, his motto being, "What's grammar as between friends so long as the box office shows results?" But, for a change, this one is ascribed to another producer, who proudly describes himself as a self-made man, which, according to his critics, is relieving the Creator of a considerable responsibility and putting the blame where the blame belongs. They also say no self-made man should stop with the job only partly finished. But then Hollywood is full of parties trying to push Humpty Dumpty off the wall.

As the tale runs, this gentleman entered the conference chamber at his studio and as, with a kingly gesture, he laid down a fat sheaf of typewritten pages, said to the assembled intellects of his staff:

"Jumpin', in all my experience in the picture business this is what you might call unique. Here is absolutely, possibly the only perfect script I have ever read in my entire life. I tell you that before we start altering it."

Strikes Versus Wars.

DID you ever notice how like a war is a strike?

The operator and his operatives are the shock troops that suffer the heaviest casualties. The owner risks his profits and perhaps his market and sometimes his plant. The worker gives up his wages, frequently his job, occasionally his life.

Stockholders see dividends vanishing and investments shrinking. Citizens see their communities disrupted. Women and children go on short rations, many a time go actually hungry. For, as in a war, the innocent non-combatants bear most grievous burdens.

Those who really garner in the spoils—professional agitators; financial buzzards eager to seize on bankrupted industries; lawyers with their writs and their injunctions; imported thugs masquerading, for one side or the other as honest mechanics—these might be likened to stay-at-home diplomats and profiteers and hired mercenaries who induce friendly nations to turn enemies so they may gain their own selfish ends.

After it's over, we realize that almost any strike might have been averted had common sense and common justice ruled, rather than greed and entrenched stubbornness and fomented hate. And the same is true of almost any war. For every real benefit to humanity came out of peace and arbitration, not out of battle and destruction.

And here's the final parallel: Ultimately, the supposed victor finds himself the actual loser. Tell me which army won any great strike—or any great war—and I'll tell you who won the San Francisco fire and the Galveston flood.

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Crater Lake in Oregon

Crater Lake in Oregon has the most romantic geologic history of any lake in the United States. Its rim was once the base of a volcanic mountain which collapsed and sank into the earth. Later it cooled, springs came out of the sides, snow collected and it filled with water. It is 6 miles in diameter and contains the bluest water known to exist naturally today. There is no outlet and no streams running into it and yet the water is always fresh.

Way Back When

By JEANNE

WALT DISNEY WAS A MAIL CARRIER

WHAT are the secret ambitions of those who serve us, particularly those whose occupations are mechanical or lonesome enough to allow their minds to drift often into the realms of fantasy?

Walt Disney is an example. Born in Chicago in 1901, his first job was as a mail carrier there, at the age of sixteen. As a little boy he liked to draw, and he liked to draw animals; but the famous creator of Mickey Mouse had to make a living delivering mail. He had no chance to express his creative genius until after the World war, when he obtained a job as a commercial artist in Kansas City. In his garage, he experimented with animated newsreels called "Local Happenings," which he sold to Kansas City



moving picture theaters. He followed these with a series of fairy tales for local clubs and church gatherings.

This modest success prompted him to try Hollywood, where he started in an unpretentious little building far from the big studios. There he created "Oswald, the Rabbit," but after making 26 subjects, he and his backer separated. The backer owned the rights to "Oswald, the Rabbit" which is still being shown in the theaters, and Disney was left without his most promising character. Out of this adversity was born "Mickey Mouse" and the "Silly Symphonies."

Today, Walt Disney employs a staff of artists to draw his characters but he is, himself, the voice of Mickey Mouse.

PICTURE MAGNATE WAS A PEDDLER

IT'S fun for the young man who was born to be president of his rich father's company: a month in the shop, a month clerking, and then general manager. But consider the discouragement and heartaches of the boy too poor for an adequate education, too poor for nourishing food or decent clothing, too poor to meet people with influence. That such boys, possessing only courage, ambition and brains, can still rise in America is this country's strongest defense against fascism and communism.

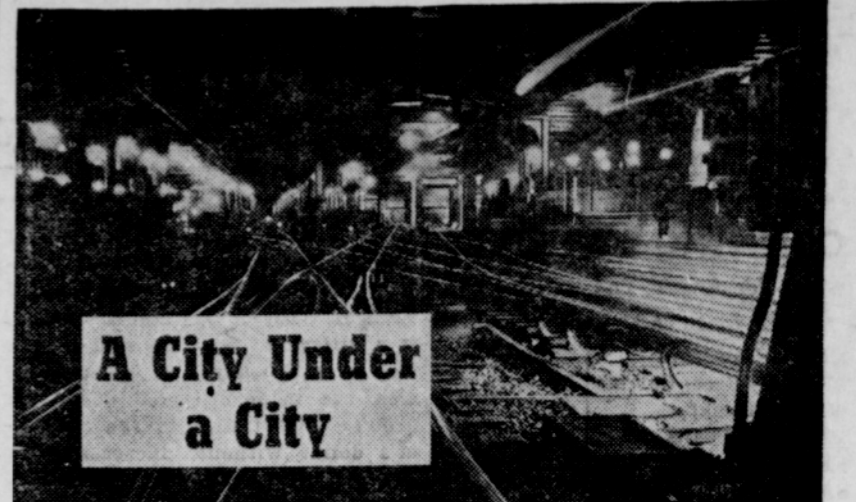
William Fox was born 1879 in Tulchva, Hungary, son of a small shopkeeper who extracted teeth as a side-line. The family moved to America when William was nine months old, and settled in an East Side tenement district of New York city. His first job was at the age of nine, when his father, who was out of work, made stove blacking in their small tenement and William peddled it from door to door in the



neighborhood. Later he sold candy lozenges at the Third Street dock and at Central park on Sundays. At the age of fourteen, he was forced by poverty to quit school. He obtained a job in a clothing firm and rose to be foreman in charge of lining cutting, at the magnificent salary of \$8 per week. To augment his earnings, he bought umbrellas and peddled them in front of theaters on rainy nights. With \$1,600 savings accumulated through many privations, he started a cloth examining and shrinking business, when he was twenty-one, and at the end of the second year invested his profits in a nickelodeon or five-cent motion picture house. Twenty-five years later he headed the great \$200,000,000 corporation which bore his name, including a picture producing company, distributing agencies, and thousands of theaters throughout the United States.

Who knows for what high position that peddler who calls at your door may be preparing. William Fox rose from the same start.

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A City Under a City

Railroads Burrow Under New York City.

Travelers Rarely Realize Whirlwind of Activity in Pennsylvania Station

Prepared by National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.—WNU Service.

ALTHOUGH it celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1935, the Pennsylvania station in New York still is the largest in the world.

Walk around it and you have tramped half a mile, with no more sight of train or track than you would encounter about the Vatican or the Louvre.

The station really is an eight-acre platform, with a mammoth superstructure, bridging the Manhattan mouths of two tunnels. Some trains run through these tunnels for seven miles, from New Jersey to Long Island, under the Hudson and East rivers, pausing beneath the station, but never emerging into the daylight or night glow of New York city.

Northbound trains pass the most complex traffic corner in the world, for above the train tunnel, at Herald square, in the order named, are the Sixth avenue subway, the Hudson-Manhattan tubes, the street-level bus lines and the Sixth avenue elevated. Imagine an airplane overhead, and it would be perfectly feasible for six vehicles to pass that intersection at one time.

Half Million Tickets a Month.

It takes a staff of 76 men to sell tickets at Pennsylvania station. In a normal month they sold 553,204 tickets for \$1,595,280.60. The months of Easter, Christmas and Labor day raise that volume by a third or more.

Printed tickets ready for sale, 150,000,000 of them, are stored in a room where they are guarded like notes in the United States treasury. Some of these tinted, water-marked slips are worth a hundred dollars and more when stamped.

Beside each seller's grilled window is a rack from which he flicks out tickets with familiar nonchalance. These racks are mounted on wheels and have folding fronts and locks.

Each seller has his own rack and key. When he goes off duty, he rolls his rack back of the line, locks it, and deposits the key in the cashier's safe. The tickets are charged out to him and he must return the unsold quota and the money for those he sold.

Selling Tickets Is Final Step.

The station cashier's office is like a bank. You may have noticed that when you pay for meals on a dining car you always receive crisp, new bills in change. The cashier must have on hand these "fresh" bills for stewards. Some \$3,000 in "ones" are enough five days of the week, but on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays he must have a stock of \$7,000 or \$8,000 in ones alone.

Selling tickets, however, is only the final step in a series of events. "When does the next train leave for Topeka, Kan.?" "What connections do I make for Chicago?" "What is the fare?"

Only a small fraction of such questions are asked in person at the conspicuous information booths. Normally 20 clerks are on duty at a time answering some 700 telephone calls an hour.

The peak of this year's inquiries exceeded 1,100 in one hour before Labor day. Forty-four clerks work in shifts to dispense information.

If you watch the smooth operation of the soundproof telephone room not once will you see a clerk consult a timetable. They are too cumbersome and tell too little.

Foolish Questions Come Often.

Instead, the information chief works with card-index experts to compile all information about schedules of all railroad, airplane, and bus lines and all fares on visible card files.

One file gives name of all important golf clubs on Long Island and the nearest railroad station to each club.

It takes poise, tact, resourcefulness, to answer some questions. As examples:

"Do I have a berth all to myself or do I have to share it?"

"What hotels in Washington have swimming pools?"

"My husband left last night on the B. and O. Where is he going?"

"Have you any hay fever fares to New Hampshire?"

These 'Phones ARE Busy.

"What time do I get a train to go to Mr. Abram Walker's funeral at Toms Ferry?"

"Should I dress and undress in my berth or in the men's room?"

When you reserve a ticket by telephone you call one of the busi-

est telephone numbers in New York city. In addition to outside lines, 130 branch ticket offices in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Newark are connected with the central reservation bureau by private wires.

In a spacious gallery from 15 to 20 clerks sit before a series of apertures like old-time village post-office boxes, except that these cases are mounted to move along a track from clerk to clerk.

In the boxes are piled the reservation cards, the kind the Pullman conductor always is fingering just before the train leaves; in each pigeonhole are marked-up cards for 60 days ahead.

Lights Govern Conversation.

Before each clerk is a series of ten red lights and ten green lights. The green lights denote a ticket office call; the red lights an outside call direct from a passenger.

A Green light flashes.

"Lower ten, K7, 3 p. m. Chicago. Today. Ticket 7,492. Right."

In very different tone and tempo is the next response to a red light, an individual who must have explanation of price, type of accommodation, daylight time in summer, and a "thank you."

No switchboard operator intervenes in the 10,000 or sometimes many more calls that come in daily. An automatic selector, worked out with the New York Telephone company engineers, routes these calls from ten lines out of the selector room to ten "positions" at the "card tables" in the reservation bureau.

If one operator is busy, the "selector" shunts the call to another, lighting the red or green signal to denote its origin. In an average 24 hours 63 clerks are employed in shifts to make some 8,000 reservations for berths, chairs, compartments or drawing rooms.

What They Leave on Trains.

Perhaps the high light of "human interest" in the station is the lost and found storeroom. There are stored and ticketed some several hundred different items, enough stock for an East Side second-hand store.

The articles recently included a basket of spectacles, skis, two cats, a bootblack's outfit, books in six languages, a pair of crutches, three sets of false teeth, a restive terrier, dozens of umbrellas, tennis racquets, more than two score women's coats, piles of gloves, a fresh sirlon steak (sad harbinger of domestic recreation) and \$20,000 worth of bonds about to be returned by special messenger.

In subterranean corridors, far below the station tracks, may be piled hundreds of pigeon crates. As many as 3,200 crates of homers have been shipped in a month, as far as a thousand miles, to be released by baggagemasters for races back to home lofts.

Other strange shipments come through the station for baggage or express cars—baby alligators, pedigreed chicks, honeybees, game, thousands of crates of "mail order eggs" and bullion cargoes accompanied by 25 or 30 armed men.

Saturday nights from 75 to 80 trucks race with their loads of Sunday papers to catch the baggage cars attached to the "paper trains." One newspaper's early Sunday edition goes to press at 9:10 p. m. and is loaded on a train leaving at 9:50. If the driver gets held up by a single traffic light the stationmaster must hold the train.

Handling the Mail.

Some 150 carloads of mail are handled in and out of this station every day. If the sacks were piled and hauled along platforms passengers would not have space to board trains. They are dropped through trap doors beside mail cars where conveyor belts carry them to huge separating tables.

There men assort the bags as they pour in and pitch them into chutes for other belts that run beneath the street to the city post office adjoining, or to belts that connect with outgoing trains.

Around special tracks, to which passengers are not admitted, where mail cars await loading, are spy galleries from which postal inspectors, unseen by the workers, may watch the operation.

Nearly 150,000 sacks of mail a day, about 1,500 trunks and other checked baggage, 2,200 pieces of hand baggage checked in parcel rooms and a thousand more pieces in parcel lockers, from 20,000 to 30,000 pieces of parcel post—these are some of the operations that must not intrude upon passenger comfort.