

SEEN and HEARD around the National Capital

By CARTER FIELD

Washington.—Holding back a threatened epidemic of strikes until union labor leaders can get what they want in Washington in the way of legislation is proving a difficult task for William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, and his lieutenants. In Akron the rubber company employees are chafing at the bit. So it is in a hundred other lines.

John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers, had less difficulty with his union. He wants, as Green does, to hold back the strikes, but he set the obvious goal of June 16, which is the date the law creating NRA expires.

Green, Lewis, and all their friends here have the same object. If the administration proves too lukewarm on the things they want, they can lay the pending strike situation on the White House doorstep. President Roosevelt will then be faced with the apparent alternative of giving in, or of precipitating so many strikes that a terrific blow will be dealt returning prosperity.

The importance of this to the President can be realized only by examining the political prospects. Next year the President, all of the house, and a third of the senate come up for reelection. In short, the New Deal goes on trial before the country. Already there is the serious threat of a third party, growing out of the doctrines being preached over the radio by Huey Long, Father Coughlin, etc. The President is perfectly familiar with this, but relies on attracting enough conservatives to his own support to win, and win easily.

But attracting these conservatives is a precarious undertaking. The old line Republicans do not think he can do it. That is why they have been sprucing up lately. The only question to date has been: will the radicals scare the conservatives enough to turn them to Roosevelt for safety?

One answer to this question is: not unless Roosevelt shows the country that he is really leading it back to prosperity. Otherwise the conservatives would not put their trust in him, but would rely on voting for some Republican. Which would mean that the radicals, withdrawing so much of Roosevelt's support, would seriously jeopardize Roosevelt's chances.

Economic Menace

So that the threat of a strike epidemic is more than an economic menace. It is a political bugaboo of darkest shade. And no one better than F. D. R. appreciates it.

Which explains why shrewd observers in Washington are not writing off the Wagner labor relations bill as sure to die—why they are not certain the 30-hour week bill will be compromised (say at 36 or 38 hours), and why there is so much uncertainty about NRA.

Union labor officials would rather have the Wagner bill than a continuance of NRA. Down in their hearts, but most confidentially, they would far rather have the Wagner bill than the 30-hour week—even without compromise.

The answer to both is simple, but you cannot confirm the second in public. As to preferring the Wagner bill to NRA, the Wagner bill would be permanent legislation. As to preferring it to the 30-hour week, the Wagner measure leaves more to be done by union officials, whereas the 30-hour week leaves less appeal to unorganized workers to join labor unions and begin paying dues.

NRA and the 30-hour week together move directly toward an ultimate goal which would sharply curtail the power, influence, need for perquisites of union labor leaders. The government would step in and perform most of their functions. It would gain for the workers what the unions now have to fight with private industry to attain. And union labor leaders are very human. They like their jobs and their power, and want to keep them.

Hits Export Trade

Great Britain's highly successful drive to compel Poland and other European countries to buy more British goods, if Britain is going to continue buying theirs, has played hob with prospects for American export trade. So has Italy's setting up of an "Am-torg"—called the National Institute for Foreign Trade—which is to handle all imports and exports for that country.

This government will beyond doubt denounce its commercial treaties with Italy, Portugal, Denmark and Poland in the near future. Secretary of State Cordell Hull, father of reciprocal trade agreements as a means of lowering economic barriers, has been reluctantly forced to this position. The action would have been taken already had it not been for the delicate situation in Europe caused by all the war talk. There is no real hope that any negotiations short of the strong arm methods of treaty denunciation will lead to results.

One of the effects of discriminations against American goods in Europe has been to boost the stock of George N. Peek, who stands for barrier as the only effective way of hurdling artificial national barriers, as against Secretary Hull's reciprocal plan. For example, the Chrysler automobile people, enthusiastic about the Hull plan until Poland imposed a quota system, have reluctantly come to the conclusion that only the forthright Peek

methods can accomplish anything. As showing the wheels within wheels, this Chrysler situation is most interesting. Chrysler has enjoyed a very profitable market in Poland, selling many American cars there. Now Poland, under pressure from Great Britain, has instituted a quota system, which will cut auto imports from America to the bone.

But this does not hurt General Motors, or Ford, anything like as much. Both have factories in European countries, which are not hurt by the quota.

American Labor Loses

But every General Motors car sold in most European countries, instead of a Chrysler, deprives American workmen of just so much labor. For example, in its factory in Belgium, General Motors, building the Opel car, uses European made motors and European made tires. Whereas the Chrysler plant in Antwerp is really more a warehouse than a factory. All American parts are used.

Moreover, the purchase of European made parts is not all. The reciprocal treaty with Belgium provides for a much greater reduction in the tariff on parts than the tariff on cars.

But the Italian situation is even more serious. Within a few weeks her new restrictions will bar all American wheat and tobacco, and will limit to 25 per cent of 1934 figures imports of American autos. The restriction to one-fourth of last year's imports applies to 200 different products!

On Italy's part this is at once an attempt to adjust her long enduring unfavorable balance of trade, and an attempt to stimulate domestic production. But even 1934 exports from America to Italy were not big. They represented a very lean year for most American exporters. The restriction on cotton is expected to have repercussions all through the South. Meanwhile Italy hopes either to increase the output of her Fiat and other auto factories, or to encourage all American manufacturers of cars to establish branch factories in Italy. Either of which would provide work for Italians.

Wheat is in a different category. Formerly the United States shipped about 80,000,000 bushels of wheat a year to Italy. With the boosting of the tariff on wheat to protect American farmers from hard Canadian wheat, Canada simply took over this market.

Annoys White House

White House irritation against the radio companies, for permitting Huey Long to get so much free time, is growing pretty hot. But it is not easy to make the case. To put it clearly and simply would lay the White House open to a charge of attempted censorship, and give Senator Schall of Minnesota more to talk about. That was irritating enough at the time.

But the fact is that Huey's attacks have been annoying the administration, from the President down, more than any other one thing. It is not really the immediate political prospect of a third party, at all. It is just plain annoyance.

The political situation, from the administration standpoint, is fine. If Huey succeeds in stirring up a radical third party, the President, moving slightly to the right, will simply annex what is left of the old Republican Party's conservative wing. Roosevelt's reelection would be as sure as was Hoover's defeat last time, or more accurately, as Taft's defeat in 1912.

Moreover, the Republicans have played the Huey Long-Father Coughlin game. They have been hoping these malcontents would get somewhere. They have thought that only in a split of the President's following could any Republican have a chance. But a radical Democrat, garnering Democratic votes here and there, would or at least might elect a Republican.

This phase of it was all right with the White House. There were even smiles when General Johnson took Father Coughlin over the jumps, in his broadcast, and threw a little mud over Huey.

But Huey did not respond as the White House had anticipated. He did not follow the course of Coughlin and devote himself to annihilating Johnson, while professing the highest admiration for the President. Huey proceeded to ignore Johnson and to belabor the President, taking up his policies one by one and presenting them in an almost ludicrous light. Too many people are annoyed at the codes, the processing taxes, at cotton mills closing down while Japanese imports flow in, for such tactics not to hurt. And they do hurt.

Too Much Free Time

Now what burns up the administration is that Long has been getting most of his time over the radio for nothing. The radio companies do not like this. They are very uneasy about it. They know that both Long and Father Coughlin are tremendous drawing cards over the radio. But they do not like the idea of giving away time to some one who will produce irritation at the White House. It may spell trouble for them in other ways. They would much prefer to cut them off altogether.

But they had agreed, some time back, to give a certain amount of time to discussions of public questions, on the theory that such use of radio time was educational, in the best interest of the country, and a generous contribution by a prosperous business to general welfare.

They did not originate this attitude. It was virtually forced on them. Partly by the radio commission and partly by senators and members of the house.

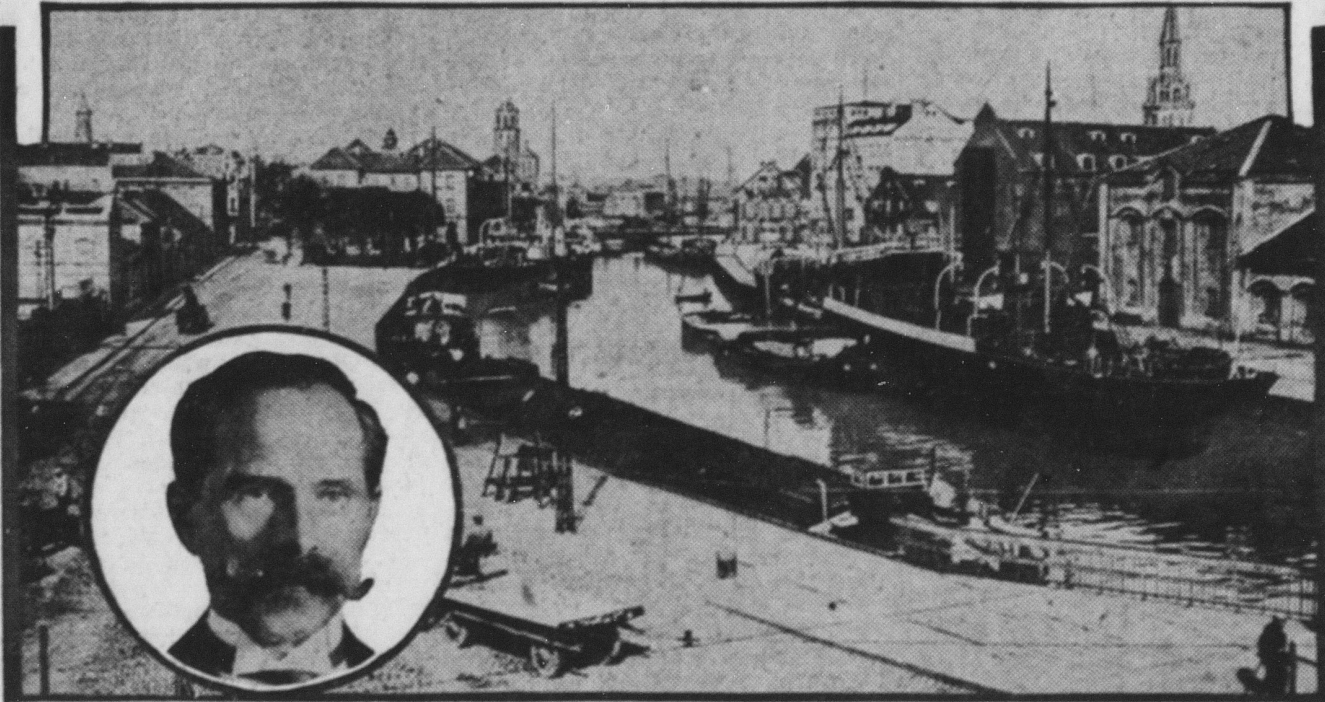
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Scenes and Persons in the Current News



1—U. S. S. Worden, first destroyer to be built at Puget Sound navy yard, entering San Diego harbor on its shake-down cruise to the Atlantic coast. 2—Vice President Garner and Speaker Byrnes signing the \$4,580,000,000 work relief bill. 3—Military parade passing the Capitol during the celebration of Army day in Washington.

Memel Is One of the Powder Kegs of Europe



View in the little Baltic town of Memel, object of controversy between Germany and Lithuania and of much international intrigue, and, inset, a portrait of Anton Smetona, president of Lithuania. Memel formerly belonged to Prussia but it has been a part of Lithuania since 1924. The Reich is eager to regain possession of it.

Pont Du Gard

There is something ironical in the thought that the Pont du Gard which was built across the Rhone in the First century B. C. should have survived nearly 2,000 years of invasions, revolutions, floods, and other forms of violence, and that it should be threatened with destruction by the vibration of the traffic on a neighboring bridge. Nearly 300 yards long and 160 feet high, the Pont du Gard stands as one of the most splendid relics of the Roman occupation of France. The only damage which the aqueduct has undergone occurred in the Fifth century. The structure, as it stands, is almost exactly the same as it was the time when it was built.—Montreal Herald.

English Salt

One million nine hundred and ten thousand tons of salt are made in England every year, and nearly all of it comes out of Cheshire and Worcestershire. Most of it is used in chemical factories, but a good deal as fertilizer. Three bushels per acre of salt increases the yield of wheat by four to twelve bushels per acre. Some plants, however, do not like it. Among these are the apple tree, the cherry, and the vine. In dressing land with salt too much can be used for 16 bushels per acre will destroy all plant life, including weeds. Salt is one of the most widely distributed of all minerals. It is even thrown out by Vesuvius and other active volcanoes.—Montreal Herald.

Stomach Gas Exploded

In an English medical journal, the Lancet, Dr. T. East reports the case of a man who complained of a stomach ache after supper, but took his wife to a movie just the same. In the wait between shows the man took out a cigarette and scratched a match, but when he applied the light to the end of the cigarette there was an explosion which blew the cigarette across several rows of seats, singed the man's mustache and burned his fingers. Doctor East explains this mishap was caused by the gas from the victim's stomach mingling with air taken in by breathing in just the right proportions to make it inflammable. He literally ignited his breath, causing the explosion.—Wall Street Journal.

Early Settlers' Chests Considered Best Friends

The chest was the best friend to the early settlers of America, not only after their arrival, but in England before their departure, for these huge, solidly constructed pieces served the purpose of holding a large share of the worldly goods of these adventurous people, says a writer in the Detroit News.

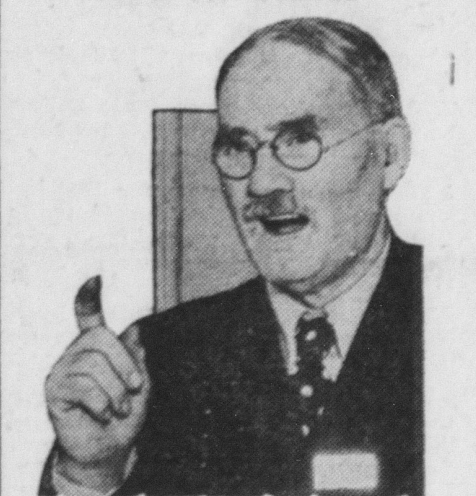
To the master of the house in New England usually fell the task of making the chest and for this reason it was a simple affair, as there was much necessary work to be done that there was little time to spare on making the chests decorative. However, this did not detract from their charm, for in the crudeness of line lay their attractiveness.

The chests made in England were usually of oak and often had paneled lids "hinged" with wires run through holes in the lid and back of the chest.

Oak and pine were often combined in making the chest in New England, the top, back and bottom being made of the latter, and oak for the rest. The reason for this must have been that pine was so much easier to work with, being soft, and it is said that it is the reason so many lids are missing from the old chests, for the frequent lifting soon caused the wearing through of the wire and the lid soon became a separate piece.

The first chests were without legs, but the sides extended lower than the fronts, which allowed it to have the appearance of legs.

HE INVENTED IT



When the National Basketball Coaches' association held its annual convention in Chicago, its most distinguished man present was Dr. James Naismith of the University of Kansas, for it was he who invented the game. He is honorary president of the association.

Can Make Own Photograph

When placed in direct contact with a photographic plate, a butterfly is not only able to produce a faithful picture of itself by a light-like emanation when alive, but also a similar photograph by sulphur gas—arising from slow decomposition of its pigment—as long as 50 years after its death.—Collier's Weekly.

Wet and Wetter Seasons

Most of us are familiar with the fact that tropical countries usually have two seasons, wet and dry. But the Malay peninsula, where we find the Federated Malay states, has so much rain that the seasons are known as the wet season and wetter season.

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