

News Review of Current Events the World Over

Disastrous Flood Moves Down the Mississippi—Mass Evacuation Prepared—Secretary Perkins Moves to Compel General Motors Strike Parley.

By EDWARD W. PICKARD
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GRADUALLY the terrible flood in the Ohio valley subsided, but the yellow torrents were pouring down the lower Mississippi and the nation was mobilized to save the people there. By direction of the President and Gen. Malin Craig, chief of staff, the army made all preparations for the evacuation of all inhabitants along the river between Cairo, Ill., and New Orleans. The details for this mass movement were worked out to the last point by commanding officers in the region and thousands of motor trucks and railroad flat cars were collected. Headquarters for the evacuation were set up at Jackson, Miss.



General Malin Craig

Lieut. Col. Eugene Reybold, district engineer at Memphis, ordered the prompt delivery of 5,000,000 burlap sacks for the erection of sandbag bulwarks, 15 cars of lumber, 210 outboard motorboats, 300 small boats, 300 life jackets, and 1,500 lanterns.

The secretary of war authorized the use of not only regular army troops but also members of the Civilian Conservation corps, the National Guard, and the Red Cross. General Craig said that if the billion dollar levee system, erected after the great 1927 flood, failed to hold, about the same area affected then would be inundated. Many thousands of people already had been removed from homes along the Mississippi, but cities like Memphis and Vicksburg, being on high ground, were believed to be safe. At New Orleans river experts refused to admit danger of a super-flood along the lower reaches of the river. But Secretary of War Woodring in Washington had reports from engineers which said the levee system on the lower Mississippi probably would not be able to withstand the present flood when it reaches its crest.

At this writing the effects of the flood may be thus summarized: Homeless, nearly a million. Dead, probably more than 500, including 200 in Louisville. Damage, conservatively estimated at more than \$400,000,000.

Congress hurried through a deficiency appropriation of \$790,000,000 which the President promised would be made available for flood relief; and the American Red Cross, working at high speed, was raising a fund of \$10,000,000 to which the people of the entire country contributed liberally. Supplies of food, drinking water, clothing and medicines were poured into the stricken areas.

Cincinnati, Louisville, Portsmouth, Frankfort and Evansville were the worst sufferers; but every city, town and village along the Ohio and its tributaries shared in the disaster. Fires broke out in the Mill Creek district of Cincinnati and destroyed property valued at \$1,500,000 before the flames could be controlled. Throughout the entire region transportation was crippled, pure water and fuel supplies were shut off or greatly reduced, and outbreaks of typhoid and pneumonia were threatened. In Louisville the light and power plant was forced to shut down.

In Frankfort, Ky., the state reformatory was flooded and the prisoners were removed to other quarters with the aid of troops. The convicts took advantage of the emergency to start a riot and about a dozen were killed. All of southern Indiana was placed under martial law by Governor Townsend.

Forty thousand employees of General Motors returned to part time work in reopened plants in Michigan and Indiana, and were unmolested by the strikers. But the deadlock was not broken, and the sit-down strikers continued to occupy the plants they had "kidnaped." President Alfred P. Sloan Jr., of General Motors, had refused the invitation of Secretary of Labor Perkins to meet John L. Lewis, chief of the striking unions, while the strikers were still in forcible possession of plants, and President Roosevelt ominously termed this refusal "a very unfortunate decision on his part," intimating, also, that there was a prospect of labor legislation unfavorable to the corporation and to employers generally.

Sloan persisting in his attitude, Secretary Perkins started a move for legislation that would compel him to meet Lewis. In identical letters to Speaker Bankhead and Senator Joe Robinson, majority

leader of the senate, she asked the prompt passage of a bill empowering her department to subpoena persons and papers in connection with investigations of strikes. To the press Miss Perkins said that once she had this power she would summon Sloan to a meeting with Lewis in Washington; but she was not sure she could compel him to negotiate a strike settlement.

Sloan had posted in all General Motors plants a denial that the corporation was responsible for the breakdown of negotiations and was "shirking our moral responsibilities." He reiterated his refusal to treat with the union so long as the sit-down strikers held the plants, and continued with a promise to employees:

"We shall demand that your rights and our rights be protected" against "a small minority who have seized certain plants and are holding them as ransom to enforce their demands."

"I say to you once more, have no fear. Do not be misled. General Motors will never let you down. You will not have to pay tribute for the privilege of working in a General Motors plant."

Sloan contends that more than 100,000 G. M. employees have expressed a desire to return to work. Lewis scoffs at this claim but will not countenance the holding of an election to determine whether his unions command the majority necessary to constitute them the sole collective bargaining agency. The federal labor relations board could order such an election but it has not intervened, and probably will not.

Governor Murphy of Michigan had not modified his refusal to permit the National Guardsmen stationed in Flint to be utilized in carrying out a judicial order that the plants be vacated by the sit-down strikers.

The six-week strike of 7,100 employees of the Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass company ended with approval by the union committee and company officials of a wage agreement giving a flat eight-cent-an-hour increase in all plants of the company. A one-year-contract was signed.

The agreement provides for appointment of a committee of five to investigate wage rates of the Pittsburgh Plate Glass company with a view to establishing uniformity of rates throughout the flat glass industry.

MAYBE it was just a promotion stunt for the book, but Senator Joseph F. Guffey of Pennsylvania, Democrat, introduced in the senate a resolution calling for an investigation of the truth or falsity of scurrilous charges made against the Supreme Court in "Nine Old Men," a volume authored by two conductors of a Washington gossip column. In offering the resolution Guffey made a bitter attack on the Supreme Court, saying:

"The President of the United States, with his characteristic frankness and courage, has opened for debate the most troublesome problem which we must solve if we are to continue a democracy."

"That problem is—whether the Supreme court will permit congress, the legislative branch of our government, which was equally trusted with the Supreme court by the framers of the Constitution, to perform its duties in making democracy workable and effective."

The senate heard Guffey's speech in silence and referred his resolution to the judiciary committee.

ARTIFICIAL scarcity of farm products is abandoned as a policy for the time being by Secretary of Agriculture Wallace. He said in Washington that the two drought years of 1934 and 1936 have brought more thought on farm production by consumers and farmers than ever before. While a year or two of normal weather would tumble wheat prices, if full acreage is planted, the time has come for a lifting of the restrictions, he said.

"In the year immediately ahead, I feel that farmers should think primarily of their duty to consumers," Wallace said. "I think that in the coming year it is wise for us to produce as much as we can. We should, of course, divert a certain amount of corn and cotton acreage to soil conserving crops, because that will make for greater long time productivity of our farm land."

"But for the most part, let's fill up the storage bins this year. It is good policy to vary the plans for storage of crops in the soil according to the state of supplies in the granary above the ground."

OBTAINING of a sweeping federal injunction against the Tennessee Valley authority by nineteen utility companies has put an end to efforts to form a public-private power transmission pool. President Roosevelt declared in a letter written to federal power experts and private company officials that the utility action in securing the injunction, "precludes a joint transmission facility arrangement, and makes it advisable to discontinue" any conferences planned to gain that end.

The injunction which drew Mr. Roosevelt's fire halted the TVA from new construction or from soliciting additional customers for its power.

KARL RADEK, noted soviet Russian journalist, and 16 other men more or less prominent in the affairs of Russia, went to trial as conspirators against the Stalin regime and the soviet state, and all freely confessed their guilt. They readily told the details of the amazing plot and asserted that the exiled Leon Trotsky was its chief mover. Radek described the scheme by which the plotters hoped to overthrow Stalin and bring back a modified capitalism to Russia. It involved the wrecking of the nation's railway system and the bringing about of war on Russia by Japan and Germany. Japan was to be given the maritime provinces in Asia and Germany was to be permitted to grab the Ukraine. But Radek added that the conspirators hoped the war would result in a new revolution in Russia and that thereafter those territories could be regained. "I am guilty of all the charges," said the once powerful editor.

Gregori Sokolnikoff, former soviet ambassador to England, declared he knew as early as 1932 of a plot to assassinate Stalin, and admitted he was guilty of plotting to betray the Soviet union to Germany and Japan. Vladimir Romm, former Washington correspondent of Izvestia of Moscow, though not yet on trial, was put on the stand and testified that he knew of the anti-Stalinist plot, that he carried letters from Radek to the exiled Leon Trotsky and that he agreed to become Trotsky's undercover informant.

Scores of persons implicated by the confessions of the defendants have been arrested. Among them is M. A. G. Beloborodoff, the veteran Bolshevik who ordered the execution of Czar Nicholas and his family. The prosecutor asked death for all the defendants. Leon Trotsky, from his haven in Mexico City, sent out a specific denial of the charges that he was head of the conspiracy.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT sent to the senate the name of James A. Farley as postmaster general for another term, and the senate promptly confirmed the nomination. It is believed Mr. Farley will not long remain a member of the cabinet, for he wants to return to private work. He told reporters in New York that he was looking for more than a job as a salesman.

"If I should return to private life," the postmaster general said, "I would like an opportunity to build up an equity in a business, so I would have something more than just a salary for security for my family. I have had several offers already, but they haven't been just what I would want."

IF REICHSFUEHRER HITLER will co-operate with other nations in the interest of peace, France will help Germany to overcome her present economic difficulties. Such was the offer made by Premier Blum in an address at Lyons. Blum, however, warned the Nazis that France cannot and will not co-operate with Germany economically or politically "while the possibility continues to exist that this help may be some day turned against the country which gave it."

He expressed opposition to Hitler's policy of making bilateral pacts, and added: "I believe I am practicing realism when I declare we do not wish to separate French security from European peace."

German officials were pleased by Blum's speech and said his good intentions could not be doubted.

HAMBURG, Germany, for centuries a "free city," has lost its freedom. Reichsfuehrer Hitler and his cabinet have decreed that it shall be known henceforth as Hansa City Hamburg and placed under control of Col. Gen. Hermann Wilhelm Goering in his capacity as commissar for the new four year plan for self-sufficiency, together with Rudolf Hess, deputy leader of the Nazi party; Wilhelm Frick, minister of interior, and Count Ludwig Schwerin von Krosigk, minister of finance.

The cabinet also took away the freedom of Luebeck and incorporated the city with Prussia, and the same fate was decreed for Eutin, Cuxhaven and Birkenfeld. Wilhelmshaven is absorbed by Oldenburg province.

Washington Digest

National Topics Interpreted
by William Bruckart

Washington.—The arrival of the first robin is only a sign of the coming of spring. It does not bring spring weather. Nevertheless, we Americans watch for signs all the lives and lately there have been several of them in national affairs that are worthy of notice.

Danger Signs
There never has been a time in our country's history, as far as I have been able to discover, when the tension surrounding labor conditions has been as dangerous as it is right now. I do not believe anyone can forecast what the results are going to be; what all of these strikes and factional fights in organized labor mean and I am convinced that they represent something much deeper than just dissatisfaction with wages or growing pains of expanding business. In other words, there are many students of national affairs who are attempting to analyze current labor conditions as signs of new times.

Most observers with whom I have discussed the present labor problems, are hopeful that these troubles mean only continued increases in the demand for labor. That is, they want to accept these signs as indicative of a returning and sound prosperity in commerce and industry. Yet, none of them is quite sure. There are too many "ifs" and too many uncertainties for anyone to attempt a complete diagnosis of the circumstances.

Some weeks ago I ventured the opinion in these columns that the rift in organized labor between William Green as head of the American Federation of Labor and John L. Lewis as sponsor of the industrial union idea, likely would result in serious trouble for the labor unions themselves. I was unable to report then that which I can write at this time, namely, that the schism in organized labor appears certain to set back the cause of organized labor many years. Indeed, it seems that the split, tangled as it is with partisan politics, may prove to be the uncharted rock in union labor's course and its ship may founder on it.

But the situation is fraught with graver possibilities, I am sure. There are elements and influences at work in the labor situation today that easily could lead to riots and bloodshed. From riots and bloodshed it is only a step to revolution of a political sort. None here knows exactly what the administration's labor policies are beyond the exaggerated promises made during the last Presidential campaign. Of course, President Roosevelt and the bulk of his New Deal spokesmen are exceedingly friendly, overfriendly some believe, to organized labor. The New Dealers had organized labor with them in the last campaign. Now, however, it is made to appear that the support of labor in the campaign is proving more or less embarrassing to the administration which has just started on its second four-year term.

Some of the critics of the administration are outspoken in their statements that Mr. Roosevelt is trying to dodge, trying to avoid, getting mixed up too deeply in labor's problems. Some of his subordinates have been active but the President has stayed out of the picture just as far as he could and as long as he could.

I am inclined to believe that these assertions that Mr. Roosevelt is afraid to take leadership too frequently in labor's problems are unfair to the President. They amount to a statement that he lacks courage—which is not true. On the contrary, there are many who believe with me that Mr. Roosevelt senses developments yet to arise in the labor situation and he is, therefore, being cautious as to its steps thus early in what threatens to be a national labor crisis.

On the other hand, it is difficult to explain why the national labor relations board has been so nearly quiescent through such strikes as the plate glass and portions of the automobile workers.

If there ever was a situation made to order for use of the agency set up under the so-called Wagner law, that situation was to be found in the two strikes just mentioned. The board did so little in those circumstances that its existence can be said to have been forgotten. It amounted to a dead letter insofar as the law itself is concerned. In some quarters one can hear discussion to the effect that sponsors of the national labor relations act and board were unwilling to have that agency and the law receive a real test at this time. I have been unable to confirm this thought at all but frankly the circumstances that one sees indicate there is some truth in the rumor that too much of a burden should not be unloaded on the board for its first real test.

Business interests never have believed the law to be constitutional. The New Dealers, however, have

contended vociferously that it is valid and yet we have the picture of a New Deal agency failing to perform the very functions for which it was created.

I mentioned earlier some of the signs and portents that are visible in the labor situation. One of the most important of these is the significance of the "sit down" type of strike. I find many informed authorities who refer to the "sit down" strike as a key point in present labor problems.

"Sit Down" Strikes
It is something new in this country. It is a program of striking in which labor is, entirely passive but by which it usurps the rights of ownership. The workers simply stay in the plants, offering no trouble and for the most part avoiding destructive tactics. But it is the fact that they remain in the plants, the property of their employers, that is causing considerable worry in government circles.

The reason why this phase of strike tactics is creating concern lies in the fact that it amounts to the seizure of private property by individuals who have no right or warrant in law. It would be the same thing as far as legal rights are concerned if a group of strikers went to your home or mine and announced they expected to stay there. There is no difference in the two situations. While the effect on you or me would be less important to the country as a whole, it remains as a fact that our rights would be violated in exactly the same manner as rights of corporations were violated, say, in the General Motors strike. After all, you and I are merely units of the great mass of people that make up the United States of America. Now, it takes no great stretch of the imagination to recognize that if union labor establishes its ability to occupy the property of others and fixes that as a precedent, then where are the rights of any person who owns property. It matters not whether it is a small cottage, a farm home or a great industrial plant—the right to own property, guaranteed to us by the Constitution of the United States, is virtually nullified.

One of the rights of American citizenship is a right to own property. It is a principle that has grown to be sacred with us since the Boston tea party. Yet, it is being challenged and thus far the federal government has made no move to break it up. As long as employers organize and tread on labor with a steel boot, just so long the workers are entitled to organize to combat mistreatment from business. But it does not seem to me to be a right of labor to actually take private property. To that extent I cannot feel very kindly toward those strikers at present asserting such a right through use of the "sit down" strike.

Now, there are reasons why the federal government has not acted. If troops were sent into private factories to drive out the "sit down" strikers, one can readily see what a riot would result. But if the federal government fails to enforce this inherent right, it is not doing its sworn duty to the rest of the people. And it was only a few weeks ago that Mr. Roosevelt again took the oath of office as President, swearing to enforce as well as defend the Constitution.

Then, another phase of the situation is being discussed. The Wagner law says employers must negotiate collectively "with the majority" organization of employees and it decrees further that the labor relations board shall determine which is the majority organization; that it can decide this question on evidence or order an election among employees. None can tell usually whether union or company organization employees are in the majority in some of these strikes, so the labor relations board has kept out of them.

Taking this labor situation as a whole, I believe I am justified in saying, as I said earlier, that it portends a crisis. Preaching of class hatred has been the main occupation of certain elements in the last three or four years and now those elements are reaping what they sowed. The tragedy of it all is that the rest of us have to reap the same reward.

Wisdom Teeth
Such appellations as "wisdom teeth" to indicate the third molars or "eye teeth" to describe the canine teeth are the carryover from the Middle Ages to our own time of the relationship generally accepted between tooth and wisdom, tooth and eye, says Hygeia, the Health Magazine.

Sleep Talk May Be Legal
Words spoken in sleep are not evidence of a fact or a condition of the mind, yet, says Collier's Weekly, some courts of the United States have ruled that such testimony is admissible.

Uncle Phil Says:

Ill-Temper Is Extravagance
Ill-temper costs business more money and friends than any other trait of character.

Don't map out a big program of doing good; just do good each minute as you go along. It counts up amazingly.

Solitude may induce loneliness, but it was La Bruyere who said, "All our misfortunes come from our inability to be alone."

Who finds a friend has found a gem; who is a friend is a diadem. You are doing pretty well if you are just. You are doing more than pretty well.

Self-Reliance and Self-Conceit
There is as much difference between self-reliance and self-conceit as there is between the north and south poles—all the difference in the world!

A long day of hard physical labor brings greater peace of mind than any philosophy.

We travel to jar our thoughts out of the rut which we can't get out of.

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So use present pleasures that thou spoil'st not future ones.—Seneca.

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