

# What Irvin S. Cobb Thinks about

Prehistoric Lore.

**DEL RIO, TEXAS.**—According to the scientists, who have a great way of naming earthly phenomena without inquiring into the wishes of the phenomena, we are now living in a terrestrial era known as the Holocene period.

This will be news to a lot of people who rather suspected we were living through a stage which might be called Chaos.

Still, it's no wonder that the word hasn't got around generally yet, because this present era is quite a young era as eras go. It's merely a few million years old, which, to our true geologist, is the same as yesterday. Mention a few million years to him and he'll say "phew!" and just snap his fingers—like that.

I wonder if the authorities would pardon a suggestion from a poor ignoramus whose acquaintance with geology is largely limited to two of its surface phases, namely: Regular paved roads and those darned detours. When we consider most of the humorous illustrations and the bulk of the humorous text printed in the average smart magazine of today, and the even spicier lines heard in smart modern plays, wouldn't it be more fitting to call it, not the Holocene, but the Obscene period?

### The Law's Long Arm.

**THE** long arm of the law—it's a grand phrase, isn't it? So mouth-filling, so satisfying to the honest citizen's soul!

It conjures up visions of unrelenting warfare against crime, inevitable punishment for the guilty. It's (le bunk!

It's the bunk because of crooked lawyers; venal policemen; complacent prosecutors; soft-hearted or corrupted jurors; witnesses, bribed or intimidated; the law's delays; reversals of fair verdicts on foolish technicalities; a false sentimentality which forgets the widow and orphan of the victim and thinks only of the family of the killer; most often of all, abuse of the powers to commute and to pardon and to parole.

These days, when I see a sentenced offender handcuffed to an officer, I find myself saying to myself, "Chances are that fellow, literally or figuratively, is wearing that decoration only temporarily."

### The Passing Years.

**EVERY** newborn year is a rosy prospect just as nearly every dying year is a dun-colored disappointment. But without revived hope what could we look forward to except being measured for a shroud?

It seems only yesterday when 1937 was busting in, a radiant, bouncing baby-child, his arms burdened with promises, bless his little soul! After several false starts, happy days were here again. Nobody was aiming to remodel the Supreme court. Senator Ashurst told us so, and didn't he know? He didn't.

Secretary Wallace, slightly assisted by Divine Providence, would immediately have the crop situation well in hand. Grass would grow only in the street leading to the almshouse. The Wall Street boys were expecting two suckers in every pot. And the song of the Bulbul was heard in the land—ah, the bull-bull!

Within the 12-month the Republican party again would be a going concern. Well, if it's a going concern, the question is, where?

And now, laden with future gifts, comes 1938. How time flies! Why, before you know it, Sistine will be old enough to take a job with the radio and Buzzie will be signing testimonials.

### Gambling Houses.

**A** ONCE famous card-sharp—not reformed, but retired—said to me: "Show me a professional gambling house where the roulette wheel isn't crooked, where any other mechanical device is on the square, where the operatives from the bosses on down won't skin a customer—call him a sucker, if you want to; the terms are interchangeable—and I'll drop dead from shock, because no such outfit ever existed nor ever will, not so long as games can be tricked, as all of them can, and gamblers are out for the coin, as they naturally are, and the hand is quicker than the eye, which it is."

"But how about the mathematical percentage in favor of the bank—isn't that enough?" I asked.

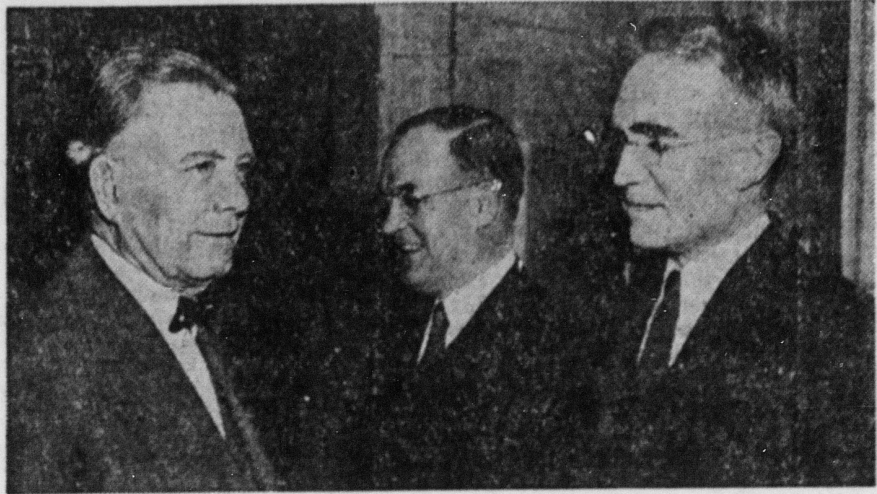
"How about the mathematical percentage of crooked law-enforcement officers who have to be bribed?" he countered. "There's never enough coming in to satisfy those babies."

IRVIN S. COBB  
Copyright—WNU Service.

## News Review of Current Events

# INDUSTRY'S PLATFORM

Manufacturers Ask a New Deal for the New Year . . . Ambassadors Dodd and Bingham Quitting Their Posts



Pictured above from left to right are Senator William Borah of Idaho, Senator Edward R. Burke of Nebraska and Professor Henry W. Edgerton of Cornell university and formerly of the antitrust division of the Department of Justice, as the professor was about to appear before a subcommittee of the senate judiciary committee. The committee examined the professor to determine whether they believed him a fit appointee to the United States Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia. He was suspected of not believing in the right of courts to declare legislative enactments unconstitutional. But he declared he now regarded such judicial review as a legitimate part of our constitutional system.

## Edward W. Pickard SUMMARIZES THE WORLD'S WEEK

### Industry Asks New Deal

**A** MERICAN industry demands a new deal for the new year. In its "platform for 1938" it asks the government to repeal "unfair" labor relations laws and "unduly burdensome" taxes which, it says, threaten to reverse "a century's trend of improved living standards."

The platform was submitted to the National Association of Manufacturers by Charles R. Hook, president of the American Rolling Mill company and chairman of the N. A. M.'s resolutions committee, and was adopted by the more than 2,000 persons at the annual convention in New York.

Asserting that "the onward march of the American people can be resumed and continued only if American industry produces more so that all can have more," the platform declarations were grouped under these headings:

No employer should be penalized for failure to deal with any labor organization organizing, supporting or maintaining a strike for illegal purposes, or by illegal means among his employees;

Employment, promotion and retention of employees on the basis of merit with due regard for length of service;

Legal and social responsibility of both employers and employees for their commitments and their acts.

The platform condemned child labor and urged the enactment of federal legislation to support state child labor laws. Enactment of state legislation against sweatshops also was urged.

To promote free domestic competition based on private initiative and energy, the platform proposed limitation of government regulation "to the prevention of abuses inimical to the public interest, freedom from federal control of prices, wages and hours," fair taxes and "constantly increasing research to produce new and wanted products and new jobs."

Encouragement of private initiative; maintenance and extension of sound industrial practices; equitable employment relations throughout industry; creation of new and broader markets; constructive efforts to alleviate depression effects; sound government policies; co-operation with agriculture; peace.

### Japs Enter Nanking

**J**APAN'S invading armies reached Nanking and smashed their way through several gates of the city's wall. Their complete occupation of the capital was imminent. The Chinese put up a spirited defense in the suburbs and nearby towns but it was unavailing.

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and his wife were reported to have escaped in an airplane, which must have been a great disappointment to the Japanese, who are determined to capture Chiang.

### Diplomatic Changes

**S**EVERAL major changes in the diplomatic service are scheduled for the near future. It was learned that William E. Dodd had resigned as ambassador to Germany and in Washington it was said that Hugh R. Wilson, now assistant secretary of state, would be given the post in Berlin. Dodd has found his duties difficult because of his admitted dislike of the Nazi policies and for some time has been regarded as "persona non grata" by the German government. He was a professor of history in the University of Chicago when appointed, and says he intends to resume work on a history of the Old South.

Robert W. Bingham of Louisville, ambassador to Great Britain, also

has submitted his resignation, because of ill health. His successor, it is believed, will be Joseph P. Kennedy, now chairman of the federal maritime commission and formerly head of the SEC.

Mr. Bingham recently returned to the United States to undergo treatment for malaria at Johns Hopkins hospital in Baltimore. The State department expects he will go back to London after the holidays to pay his official calls of farewell.

### Profits Tax "Impossible"

**R**EPEAL of the undistributed profits tax as a levy "impossible of equitable and effective" application to the complex and varied pattern of American industry, is recommended in a report published by the Brookings institution, based on a study of the actual effects of the tax on 1,560 corporations.

Prepared by Dr. M. Slade Kendrick of Cornell university, in co-operation with the staff of the institution, the study was made from data obtained from the results of some 3,600 questionnaires sent out by Senator Frederick Steiwer, Republican, of Oregon, designed to provide detailed case experience on the controversial tax as far as obtainable in the first year of its operation.

### U. S. Steel Readjustment

**T**HE United States Steel corporation announced formation of a new company—United States Steel Corporation of Delaware—to supervise a number of subsidiaries of the parent corporation.

The new corporation, which will come into existence January 1, will be organized with nominal capital. Benjamin F. Fairless will be president of the company and all the capital stock is owned and held by the United States Steel corporation of New Jersey. Headquarters for the management company will be at Pittsburgh.

Myron C. Taylor, chairman of the board, in announcing formation of the new corporation, said that this was the final move in the vast plan of readjustment of the corporation.

### Green Defies C. I. O.

**V**IRTUALLY admitting that recent peace negotiations between the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O. were a failure, President Green of the federation in a speech in Buffalo defied the Lewis organization and predicted that real violence between the two rival labor bodies may ensue.

"Unless settlement is reached soon," Green declared, "the A. F. of L. will arm its forces and turn them loose against this raiding organization."

"Lots of people think the reason a settlement can't be reached is because some one has designs on dictating the policy of the American labor movement, and I sometimes think this, too."

"He, or she, who launches a movement which divides the house of labor is an enemy of labor."

Sixty members of the United Automobile Workers of America were arrested when they defied an order of Mayor John L. Carey of Dearborn forbidding the distribution of literature in a prohibited area at the gates of the Ford Motor company.

### No Fraud by Mellon

**T**HREE months after his death Andrew W. Mellon, famous industrialist of Pittsburgh, was exonerated of income tax fraud by unanimous decision of the United States board of tax appeals. The board threw out the fraud charges brought by the administration against the former head of the Aluminum Company of America and, by an eight to seven ruling, slashed the government's claim for additional taxes on Mellon's 1931 income from \$3,075,000 to about \$750,000.

### Stormy Days in Capital

**R**ETURNING from his fishing trip in Florida waters with an infected gun, President Roosevelt was confronted with a situation that was decidedly disconcerting. What has been called the Roosevelt depression was becoming still more depressed and congress seemingly couldn't make up its mind what to do about it. The demand for tax revisions that would assist business out of the slump was insistent, and so was the necessity of balancing the budget. Passage of the four administration "must" measures appeared to be impossible during the extraordinary session. All of them were opposed by various blocs of the majority party as well as by the Republican minority.

The senate's farm bill seemed to have the best chance to get through, but it differed so radically from the house measure that it was certain a conference committee would have to try to find a common ground.

Secretary Wallace was reported dissatisfied with both senate and house bills. One official close to him said Wallace might urge President Roosevelt to veto any bill finally enacted which approximated either the senate or house measure.

Democrats were so badly split over the wage-hour bill that hope of passing it before the regular session of congress was about abandoned. Labor, too, was divided concerning this measure, the A. F. of L. opposing it and the C. I. O. advocating its passage. The federation offered its own version, calling for a flat 40 cents an hour minimum wage and a 40 hour maximum work week. The house bill was finally rescued from the rules committee by petition. House Majority Leader Sam Rayburn, Democrat, Texas, went ahead with plans to whip administration support behind the house measure. He said that fewer than 100 votes would be cast against the bill in its present form but warned that amendments which would make its wage-hour provisions more rigid might shunt the measure back to the labor committee and delay a vote indefinitely.

### Infantry Comes First

**I**N WAR operations on land the infantry is still the most important branch of the service, says Gen. Malin Craig, chief of staff of the army, in his annual report. Lessons learned by skilled observers of the civil war in Spain and the Chino-Japanese war have modified the American defense program, but, says the general, it is still the infantry that renders the decision in the final analysis. Airplanes and tanks are valuable auxiliaries to the infantry, but they cannot bring about a decision in land operations.

Inventories of armament, motorization, mechanization and equipment, in the light of the lessons abroad, show several vital needs of the first line forces, General Craig declared. These include better weapons to combat aircraft and tanks, as well as more efficient guns for the planes and tanks.

### Lindberghs Come Back

**A**FTER two years of self-imposed exile in England, Col. and Mrs. Charles A. Lindbergh returned to the United States. Presumably they came over to spend the holidays at the home of Mrs. Lindbergh's mother, Mrs. Dwight Morrow, in Englewood, N. J. Dispatches from London said the colonel also had some business to transact in America. He is associated in an advisory capacity with Pan-American Airways.

The landing of the Lindberghs at New York was accomplished with such secrecy that they almost escaped the notice of reporters and news photographers. One of the officers of the liner on which they came said they planned to return to England immediately after Christmas.

### Edgerton Backs Water

**C**ONFIRMATION of the appointment of Henry W. Edgerton of Cornell university as associate justice of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals was endangered because it was thought from his writings that he did not believe in judicial review. However, he appeared before the senate sub-committee, consisting of Senators Borah, Burke and Van Nuys and repudiated his previous utterances. Of the power of courts to declare legislative enactments unconstitutional he said:

"I regard it as not only thoroughly established as a legitimate part of our constitutional system, but which was intended by the great majority of the men who framed our Constitution. I think it was properly established by John Marshall and I haven't the least criticism of any court for any declaration of the validity of that part of our constitutional system."

### Leviathan to Be Junked

**J**APAN made a bid for the Leviathan, huge liner seized from Germany in the World war, but the United States Lines rejected it and sold the vessel to Metal Industries, Ltd., of London for \$800,000. It will go to England under its own power and will be junked.

The Leviathan cost ten millions to build and the American government spent more than eight millions to recondition it; and also paid Germany \$16,688,000 for its seizure.

# Washington Digest

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



Washington. — Much has been written and much more has been said concerning the complexities of modern civilization and modern business. Many times have we heard how closely agriculture is related to other industry; how general commerce and industry is interwoven with every phase of our life. There can be no doubt of this condition. No proof is required. Nor is it necessary to argue that when one section or segment of business is on its sickbed, there is a resulting bad reaction upon every other phase of commerce and industry to a greater or less extent.

### Railroads Face Crisis

With these fundamentals in mind, it becomes obvious that probably the most important development of a national character in the last few weeks is the appeal of the country's railroads for the right to increase their rates by 15 per cent. The details of their condition, as presented in hearings before the interstate commerce commission, show they are confronted with a crisis. Since they are under the rigid supervision of the federal government, the federal government is the doctor in the case. They will live or die by the command of the interstate commerce commission.

The case they have presented shows, for example, that they have had to cut thousands upon thousands of workers off of the payroll; that they have been unable to buy more than one third of the customary annual purchases from other businesses, and that more than one fourth of all the railroad mileage in the nation is now being operated as bankrupt property—that is, the property is in the hands of court receivers.

So, advertising to the observations of the first paragraph of this discussion: a gigantic industry can not run at a loss without resulting in a bad heart or partial paralysis in other industry. Higher rates are always opposed for the very human reason that none of us enjoys taking any more money out of our pocket than we must. Many lines of business oppose rate increases on the railroads because of the fear that it will reduce their volume of sales. But it occurs to me that in consideration of a question of freight rates and charges which the railroads make, we ought to think of their situation as we do of other lines of business. Our retail grocer is not going to sell at a loss; the druggist can not subsist unless he makes a profit however small it may be, nor is the farmer going to continue to produce unless he gets a reasonable return from his work. The only difference between these and the railroads is that the railroads can not raise their rates unless the interstate commerce commission, a government agency, says they can do so.

Further, there is a tendency on the part of a goodly number of persons throughout the land to question the accuracy of statements made by business. No doubt you have heard, as I have, the remark that "you can't tell whether so-and-so's business is bad off or not. Big corporations can cover up and make black look like white." Indeed, while I was listening to one of the I. C. C. hearings in this case, a man in a neighboring seat made something of the same observation as I have quoted. My answer to him was in substance that none of the railroad officials would dare lie to the commission, even if they were so inclined, because the commission has access to every item of expense and income, even all actions of the management, of the carriers.

It might be added in this connection that officials of the interstate commerce commission understand there is to be a request by the interstate truck operators for an increase in rates if and when the rail lines are allowed higher rates. The trucks are represented as slowly starving to death—but they can't and won't boost rates until their competitors, the railroads, charge more for their services.

I believe there is no better way to set forth the plight of the railroads, as presented to the commission, than to include here some excerpts of the statement made officially in the case by Dr. J. H. Parmelee. He is director of the bureau of economics of the Association of American Railroads and, as such, knows the details.

"Today," Dr. Parmelee said, "the carriers are reducing forces and are curtailing their purchases of equipment, materials and supplies. They are forced to do this because of the financial condition in which they find themselves. This retrenchment has a serious economic effect on employment, on the manufacturers of railway supplies and their employees and on all business activity. Such a policy with its unwholesome economic consequences only partially offsets the rising tide of costs."

### Plight of Carriers

Looking at the thing another way, one might call attention to federal appropriations for relief which have been in excess of three billions a year during the last several years. The figures given above show that the railway purchases—just one industry—have fallen off more than 500 millions, or about one-sixth of the relief appropriations. If the appropriations to aid all unemployed are only six times as large as the drop in railway expenditures, it is easy to see what an influence is wielded and why I have taken the position that it is necessary to consider the railways' petition from the standpoint of the country as a whole. We, as citizens, have a burden to carry whether it is done through the railways or through some other avenue. None of those rail workers wants to be without a job, I am sure.

"The railroads in 1927 to 1930 installed more than twelve times as many locomotives each year, nearly five times as many freight cars, laid nearly three times as many tons of rails and laid nearly twice as many cross ties as they averaged in the depression years from 1931 to 1936. "Capital expenditures for 1929 and 1930 averaged \$83,164,000 a year. During the depression years from 1931 to 1936, the average of capital expenditures was only \$206,813,000. "Similarly, the trend of railway purchases (of things they must use in operation), of fuel, material and supplies declined sharply during the depression years and never has returned to anything like normal. Railway purchases in 1929 and 1930 amounted to \$1,184,017,000 in each of the two years. In the five years from 1931 to 1935, the average per year was about \$559,000,000. In 1936, the expenditures in this direction were up to \$803,421,000. (Figures for 1937 are incomplete but there has been another decline because of necessary curtailment of buying.)"

Dr. Parmelee turned to the question of railroad receipts for their services. He told the commission that the depression years had left the railroads without any reserves. For seven years, he said, the railroads have been barely getting by, and pointed out that at no time between 1931 and 1937 had they earned more than 2.57 per cent on their investment as it is appraised by the commission. In three of those seven years, the records show, the railroads' receipts did not amount to as much as their fixed charges, a term which includes interest on their debts, taxes and required amounts for paying off parts of their debts. In other words, all they earned in those years was just enough to pay the people who work for them and buy the necessary fuel and operating supplies.

The argument to the commission is predicated, therefore, upon rising costs, general expenses, and the dozen or so railway presidents who testified before the commission stressed the fact that these expenses are out of control by the railroad authorities. Dr. Parmelee figured that these higher costs of fuel, supplies, wages and taxes had laid a burden on the railroads that is greater this year by \$64,789,000 than it was in 1933. The companies hope to get \$567,287,000 of this sum from the 15 per cent increase in freight rates, and the railroads of the East are asking that passenger fares be increased from 2 cents to 2½ cents a mile, which they think will bring in an additional \$47,500,000. From this it is seen that the carriers still will fall short of the full amount needed, but their argument, as I understand it, proceeds on the theory that they should not seek more of an increase than is sufficient to keep them from going broke. If the new depression conditions subsided, there will be a larger volume of freight next year. That will enable them to make a profit. That is, a greater volume of business with the new rates will provide a profit unless there are new government taxes and other burdens laid upon them. In this connection, I looked up the effect of the social security and carriers' taxing act. Commission records show the rail lines are paying \$111,000,000 in taxes annually under these two levies alone, a burden the companies did not have two or three years ago.

So it is evident that the rail lines are in a bad fix. They are confronted on the one hand with mounting costs of operation and on the other by declining receipts from the smaller volume of business. At the same time, it seems to me, the country has more than a passing interest in their plight. This is so because during the last two months, for example, close to 60,000 railroad employees have been laid off—out of work, in the rail industry alone. With the decline of purchasing of supplies by the rail lines, other industry has suffered, has laid off men.

Looking at the thing another way, one might call attention to federal appropriations for relief which have been in excess of three billions a year during the last several years. The figures given above show that the railway purchases—just one industry—have fallen off more than 500 millions, or about one-sixth of the relief appropriations. If the appropriations to aid all unemployed are only six times as large as the drop in railway expenditures, it is easy to see what an influence is wielded and why I have taken the position that it is necessary to consider the railways' petition from the standpoint of the country as a whole. We, as citizens, have a burden to carry whether it is done through the railways or through some other avenue. None of those rail workers wants to be without a job, I am sure.

Looking at the thing another way, one might call attention to federal appropriations for relief which have been in excess of three billions a year during the last several years. The figures given above show that the railway purchases—just one industry—have fallen off more than 500 millions, or about one-sixth of the relief appropriations. If the appropriations to aid all unemployed are only six times as large as the drop in railway expenditures, it is easy to see what an influence is wielded and why I have taken the position that it is necessary to consider the railways' petition from the standpoint of the country as a whole. We, as citizens, have a burden to carry whether it is done through the railways or through some other avenue. None of those rail workers wants to be without a job, I am sure.

Looking at the thing another way, one might call attention to federal appropriations for relief which have been in excess of three billions a year during the last several years. The figures given above show that the railway purchases—just one industry—have fallen off more than 500 millions, or about one-sixth of the relief appropriations. If the appropriations to aid all unemployed are only six times as large as the drop in railway expenditures, it is easy to see what an influence is wielded and why I have taken the position that it is necessary to consider the railways' petition from the standpoint of the country as a whole. We, as citizens, have a burden to carry whether it is done through the railways or through some other avenue. None of those rail workers wants to be without a job, I am sure.

Looking at the thing another way, one might call attention to federal appropriations for relief which have been in excess of three billions a year during the last several years. The figures given above show that the railway purchases—just one industry—have fallen off more than 500 millions, or about one-sixth of the relief appropriations. If the appropriations to aid all unemployed are only six times as large as the drop in railway expenditures, it is easy to see what an influence is wielded and why I have taken the position that it is necessary to consider the railways' petition from the standpoint of the country as a whole. We, as citizens, have a burden to carry whether it is done through the railways or through some other avenue. None of those rail workers wants to be without a job, I am sure.

Looking at the thing another way, one might call attention to federal appropriations for relief which have been in excess of three billions a year during the last several years. The figures given above show that the railway purchases—just one industry—have fallen off more than 500 millions, or about one-sixth of the relief appropriations. If the appropriations to aid all unemployed are only six times as large as the drop in railway expenditures, it is easy to see what an influence is wielded and why I have taken the position that it is necessary to consider the railways' petition from the standpoint of the country as a whole. We, as citizens, have a burden to carry whether it is done through the railways or through some other avenue. None of those rail workers wants to be without a job, I am sure.

Looking at the thing another way, one might call attention to federal appropriations for relief which have been in excess of three billions a year during the last several years. The figures given above show that the railway purchases—just one industry—have fallen off more than 500 millions, or about one-sixth of the relief appropriations. If the appropriations to aid all unemployed are only six times as large as the drop in railway expenditures, it is easy to see what an influence is wielded and why I have taken the position that it is necessary to consider the railways' petition from the standpoint of the country as a whole. We, as citizens, have a burden to carry whether it is done through the railways or through some other avenue. None of those rail workers wants to be without a job, I am sure.