

Washington Digest

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

Washington.—An inquiry comes from my old home town in Missouri, asking, in effect, what are the Republicans doing? The letter, quite obviously from a follower of that old Democratic stalwart, former Sen. Jim Reed, explains that the writer would like to see Democratic party machinery back in the hands of Democrats, but it is complained that the Republicans have provided little opposition to the New Deal left-wingers. The further complaint is registered that many of the Democrats in congress have failed to set forth "cold facts" about New Deal spending.

I have paid very little attention to Republican party affairs for quite awhile for the simple reason that Republican partisans, either as a party or individually, have been doing nothing. They have a chance now to do something. Whether they will become really active, remains to be seen. They have been quarreling among themselves, snarling, fighting, letting petty jealousies keep their ranks split wide open.

But let's take a look at their picture now to see whether there is any real hope. It will be recalled that during the fight against the Roosevelt plan to pack the Supreme court with six new justices, the Republicans kept very quiet. That is, they were quiet as far as surface indications go. Beneath the surface, they were busy helping the Democrats fight off that nation-wrecking scheme put forward by the New Dealers. I believe everyone regarded that as good political strategy. By refusing to make the Supreme court packing plan a partisan issue, the Republicans kept a lot of ammunition out of New Deal hands. That fight was led by regular Democrats like Senators Wheeler of Montana, Burke of Nebraska, Rep. Hatton Sumners of Texas and others like them.

But the Supreme court battle was followed by a cleavage in the ranks of the dominant party in congress, and the Republicans failed to follow up their jobs as the opposition party. They failed to take advantage of many opportunities. In fact, nothing was done at all until the government reorganization bill was pushed onto the stage and President Roosevelt made that legislation an issue. It may be said that the Republicans did nothing of consequence in that fight, but they voted with the real Democrats at the finish. That was the vote that killed the reorganization bill. Theirs was the vote which, had it been taken under the British or French parliamentary system, would have forced resignation of "the government" because it showed lack of confidence in the executive.

And, now to the present. In the last few weeks, there have been signs that ought to be heartening to the rank and file of the Republican lists. They are, however, just signs, as far as any honest appraisal goes. The Republican national committee has selected Franklyn Waltman, a Washington newspaper correspondent, to take charge of and reorganize the party's publicity set-up. Mr. Waltman is a fine writer, one of Washington's best. He has spent some fifteen years as a political observer. He has courage and imagination; perhaps not as much imagination as Charles Michelson of the Democratic national committee, but he is young and vigorous.

This "sign" is significant because there has been no trained publicity man at Republican headquarters for the last three months, and the man who occupied the post before either was unable to do anything or was not allowed by his superiors or the factional strife within the party to accomplish anything. So, I say it is important to realize that the "voice" of the party is apparently going to be employed again.

Rep. Joe Martin of Massachusetts, who is chairman of the Republican congressional committee, and is assistant Republican leader of the house, has come forward with two or three blasts lately. Also, he has been able apparently to awaken some of the ninety-odd Republicans in the house of representatives to the fact that they constitute the opposition party. So they have been making some speeches in the attack on the New Deal spending program. Chairman John Hamilton of the national committee has been on the air a time or two and former Gov. Alf Landon of Kansas has attempted in a couple of speeches to recall that he was the party's 1936 presidential nominee. Former President Herbert Hoover came back from Europe and jumped onto much of the New Deal's vital theory in one of the best speeches he ever has made. A score or more "organization" meetings have been held in various parts of the country in the last month, and I understand that a flock more of them is scheduled.

But to go back to a previous statement: these are just signs. They can be made alive and real and effective, or they can be allowed to die of dry rot. It will be a couple of months more before anybody can tell, even though Representative Martin now is on record as saying the Republicans will win 76 additional seats in the house this fall.

The answer to the Republican problem lies, I believe, in the answer to one question: can the Republican factions get together? That is to say, will it be possible for the so-called "New York crowd" and the so-called "Middle West crowd" to arrange a common ground upon which all can stand? And if they succeed in that, will they then be able to persuade numerous lone wolves and bellowing calves to come into the corral for united action?

In this latter category, one will find oodles of individuals who claim leadership of followings, great or small. One will see Senator Vandenberg of Michigan trying to dodge affiliations of any kind that may hinder his hurdle race—because Mr. Vandenberg is building for the Republican nomination whether he is willing to admit it now or not. Then, there are such others as Rep. Hamilton Fish of New York who was a great university football player. I suppose Mr. Fish knows his congressional district and knows how to play politics there, but it seems to me that he ought to be of great aid and comfort to the New Dealers.

It is obvious, therefore, that while the dominant party is split widely between New Dealers and regular Democrats, the Republicans have some harmonizing ahead of them, too. They will get somewhere or not, just as they decide to subordinate petty jealousies and efforts to "keep control" to the party necessities in the coming congressional elections. Some observers in Washington lately have insisted to me that Republicans will gain in the house and senate this year despite, and not because of, party organization. Their conclusion is that Mr. Roosevelt's personal popularity has declined tremendously, and if that has happened obviously, the strength of the New Deal has slipped off onto very thin political ice.

The national capital has been treated lately to a life-sized uproar over the abuse of the franking privilege. The franking privilege is accorded all members of congress and officials so that they are not required to pay postage out of one pocket and collect it back for the other. I have no doubt, nor does anyone else who is familiar with the practice, that the franking privilege has been frequently abused. It remained for Horace Russell, general counsel for the Home Owners' Loan corporation, to get caught at it, however, and Mr. Russell, therefore, is the goat about which the storm has centered. He has resigned his job, but it appears that he may be stuck with a postage bill of about \$280.

Mr. Russell was accused on the floor of the house by Representative Church of Illinois of having sent out "millions" of letters advising attorneys for the Home Owners' Loan corporation in the various cities that Judge O. B. Taylor was resigning as associate general counsel and was opening private offices in Washington for the practice of law. The letters, which were shown later to number about ten thousand, highly praised Judge Taylor and solicited business for him. Disclosure of the act in the house brought about Mr. Russell's prompt retirement and apologies, but the Post Office department and the Department of Justice had to look into the matter. Hence, the likelihood that there will be a demand for payment of the postage and that there will be no further prosecution.

The incident created a stir and more will be heard from it probably, because there can be no doubt but that the free mail privilege has been abused viciously.

But it may be of interest to know that there have been few if any convictions for violation of the free mail privilege. Post Office department officials were unable to recall any prosecutions, although there had been some indictments, since the present arrangement went into effect in 1887.

The incident involving Messrs. Taylor and Russell calls attention to the tremendous amount of mail that is carried free of postage. Last year, according to postal records, 1,107,252,468 pieces of mail were carried under free provisions. Of these 669,352,068 came from members of the house and senate. If postage had been paid on all of the mail, the amount would have been \$33,713,305. Postage on the congressional mail was estimated at something in excess of \$20,000,000—which indicates how much less campaigning costs after a politician is once elected to house or senate.

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Floyd Gibbons' ADVENTURERS' CLUB

HEADLINES FROM THE LIVES OF PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELF!



"Tale of a Modern Mariner"

By FLOYD GIBBONS
Famous Headline Hunter

HELLO EVERYBODY:

Remember that old phrase "Son of a Sea-Cook?" Well, right here in this club we've got one of those old sea-cooks who are supposed to have such ornery offspring. And by golly, I'd be proud to be the son of this sea-cook.

Yes, sir, this sea cook is H. K. Nixon of Elizabeth, N. J., and he tells one of those yarns that Joseph Conrad and the rest of those sea story writers would have given their right eye to get hold of.

Why, this yarn of a modern mariner makes that old rime of the ancient mariner seem like a bedtime story. Here are the words and music:

By jiminy, this adventure of sea cook, Nixon—the crew all called him Nix for short—starts out with a whale of a good word—barkentine—just like a first-rate pirate story. It was the barkentine St. James, of San Francisco, and that proud old rakish barque was converted into a coal hulk. Just to get even, the St. James started building up a history that made her known all up and down the Pacific coast as the "Haunted Hulk." When the war came on they converted her back into a barkentine, but her pride had been wounded and she kept right on being a haunted ship.

All Kinds of Bad Luck Signs.

Well, Captain Martin Anderson sailed her into Seattle, loaded her with mine timbers and cleared for Delagoa bay, South Africa.

Shiver my timbers, if that wasn't a haunted voyage. It almost gave sea cook Nix the shivers before the St. James got out of the harbor. Before she cast off, the ship's cat jumped ashore three times and that was a pretty strange beginning of a voyage. But that cat was thrown back aboard and maybe she was the mascot that brought that crew through.

And then a few miles out two wild geese swooped down out of the sky and came aboard the St. James. Cook Nixon did to those birds just what the ancient mariner did to that albatross. The crew said there



She Broke Her Back on the Coral Reefs.

would be trouble and, by the beard of Neptune, there was trouble. But unlike the ancient mariner, Cook Nixon wasn't the goat for what happened.

Wrecked on Island of Oneno.

Coming out of the straits of San Juan de Fuca, the St. James ran into a howling southeaster. The gale raged for nine days and drove the barkentine far out of her course. The old St. James battled through that mad Pacific. She battled bravely, but finally with a splintering smash of timbers, she broke her back on the coral reefs of the island of Oneno.

The crew took to their boats, but there was little chance for rescue out there in that vast South Pacific. They rode four days and nights before low headlands and a fringe of palms lay before them. Then the lifeboats scraped on the beach of the historic island of Pitcairn at the break of day, December 17, 1918.

Well, those sailors from the St. James dragged their boats up into Bounty bay—named after that old mutiny ship—and waited. It was a swell spot to be shipwrecked in, but it wasn't the world for Cook Nixon, nor for Skipper Anderson, nor for the first mate—the second mate and the Bos'n, who were all named Hansen. For 32 days they kept a lookout up on that hill beside the ship's bell and cannon of the old Bounty, hoping to see a friendly sail.

Islander Had Broken His Neck.

Well, sir, shipwrecked as that crew was, they weren't in half as bad a spot as one of the islanders named Lindsay. Three months before Nix and his shipmates arrived, Lindsay was hunting wild goats, and pitched over a precipice. He broke a leg and doggone near broke his neck. There he was, slowly dying out there on the Pacific and not a doctor or a nurse on the island. Cook Nixon looked Lindsay over and decided he'd do some life-saving while waiting to be saved himself.

That's just where the sea cook became a hero and earned himself a reputation for being one of the fastest thinkers in an emergency that I ever heard of. He went to work on Lindsay. Drugs?—well, Nix figured out a liniment. He used the acid juice of lime as an irritant, and coconut oil as a lubricant, and went to work on that dislocated neck that made Lindsay almost helpless. Sure enough, in three days time that terribly swollen neck of Lindsay's was reduced. But his head was still contorted and he suffered agonizing pains at the nape of his neck.

Nixon kept thinking this over. One night he jumped out of his bunk with an idea. Nix shot out of camp yelling, "Lord, man, I've got it!" and he dashed into Lindsay's house at 2:30 a. m. and got him out of bed. Nix sat Lindsay down on a chair and told him to hold tight with both hands. Nix grabbed him by the head, put his thumbs under his jaw and lifted as though he were heaving the old St. James' anchor.

How Nix Fixed It Up.

Suddenly there was a snap. A vertebra which had been twisted and held fast by one of those tendons Nix had been massaging, snapped back into place and Lindsay shot out of that chair like he'd been sitting on a hot stove.

Well, sir, that islander tried turning his neck in all directions. By jiminy, it worked as well as ever. He almost wagged his head off trying out his new neck. Nix tells me that Lindsay started to laugh and then cry and wound up by doing a series of hand springs and flip flops. And then Lindsay hustled out of that hut, ran up the hill to the old Bounty bell and began hammering like a bass drummer, trying to get all the islanders together so he could tell them the good news.

And that ended the curse that hung over the crew of the haunted barkentine St. James. When daylight broke, there was a smudge of smoke on the horizon. It was the old Dominion liner, Port Augusta. Captain Allen of the Port Augusta laid her by until that shipwrecked crew of the badluck barkentine—yes, sir, and the ship's cat also—pulled out through the surf breaking over the coral reefs and climbed on board. The Port Augusta dropped Nixon and his shipmates in Sydney, Australia.

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Columbia Has Old Church Tiles

Two tiles, taken from the oldest church in the Western hemisphere and presented to Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia university, as a commemoration of his visit last year to Santo Domingo, now hang in the Spanish house at Columbia. Both ceramics are accompanied by papers certifying that they come from the Iglesia de San Nicolas, which was built in the old city of Santo Domingo 14 years after Columbus arrived in America.

Founding of West Point

The United States Military academy at West Point was opened, or founded, by virtue of a resolution passed by the Continental congress on October 1, 1776, calling for the preparation of a plan for "a military academy for the army." On June 20, 1777, orders were given for the organization of a corps, which, however, did not move to West Point until 1781. The academy was not formally opened as a school until July, 1802.

GREAT BOOKS

Rash Remark Cost Soldier His Country

By ELIZABETH C. JAMES

LIEUT. PHILLIP NOLAN, main character of Edward Everett Hale's "A Man Without a Country," was stationed in Louisiana about the time that Aaron Burr made his first trip down there. Nolan was young and lonely and was flattered by the attentions of Burr. Soon Nolan's name was linked with that of Burr, and the result was, that without any purpose of disloyalty to his country, Lieutenant Nolan was standing ready for trial by court martial.

In the progress of the trial, the judge asked Nolan if he had anything to say about his loyalty to the United States. Exasperated at the combination of events, Nolan cried out, "Damn the United States! I hope that I never hear the name again."

The judge and the court turned white. Withdrawing for discussion, they returned in 15 minutes. The judge read the verdict. "Mr. Nolan, you shall have your wish. The verdict of this court is that you will never again hear the name of your country."

The prisoner was taken aboard an American ship that sailed at once. When that ship had completed its voyage and was again nearing American waters, Mr. Nolan was transferred to another American ship, outward bound.

The prisoner was treated kindly at all times and was given the best that each ship had to offer. At each meal he was invited to dine with an officer who was responsible that no one mention the United States or anything pertaining to it.

Known as "Plain Buttons."

When the imprisonment first began, Nolan treated it with levity, but when it settled down into a routine of ships and voyages that showed no end he became sober, then remorse, then timid as a child. He lived for 50 years on the ships of the American navy, knowing personally more officers and men than any other, individual man.

From time to time during all the years of this strange punishment, there occurred several crises in the life of Nolan. He possessed a beautiful speaking voice and was often invited to read to the assembled officers. One day Nolan was asked to read from the new book by Sir Wal-

HALE'S VARIED CAREER

Edward Everett Hale, whose life was from 1822 to 1909, was one of the most voluminous writers of America; his works would fill ten large volumes. Although he used every type of writing except poetry, his permanent reputation rests on the two short stories, "My Double and How He Undid Me," and "The Man Without a Country."

Hale followed many kinds of work; he was a preacher, a writer, a lecturer, and an active participant in public affairs. Toward the end of his life, he was chaplain to the United States senate.

Acts as Interpreter.

During the long years of inactivity, Nolan mapped out a daily routine for himself. He followed a program of regular study and became proficient in many subjects, including foreign languages. One day the American ship came across a slave ship that had mutinied and was drifting. The slaves were freed of their chains, but they could not talk with the Americans to communicate their desires. Nolan was asked to interpret. The slaves spoke a dialect of Portuguese and they went wild with joy when they heard intelligible words. When the American officer stated that he would take them to a specific point of land and leave them, they set up a wail. No. No. Take us home! And they began to cry out the names of the members of their families that they wanted to see. Nolan was interpreting each side to the other. His voice became huskier and huskier. In desperation to end the painful scene, the American officer cried out, "All right, tell them that I will take them home!"

Nolan was more than 70 years old when he died. One night he sent for one of his friends to come to his stateroom. When the friend entered the stateroom and looked around, he saw what appeared to be a shrine to America. The American eagle had been drawn on the ceiling. On the wall was a picture of Washington, draped in an American flag. On the foot of the bed was a map of America. All of which Nolan had drawn from memory.

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Light-Hearted Fashions For a Gay Vacation!

THE approach of summer makes us all long to get into bright, easy, carefree clothes, even if we're planning to vacation at home, with occasional week-ends at the lake or seaside. These two patterns bring you styles that are a joy to wear and a joy to make. The patterns are easy to follow and each includes a detailed sew chart.

Slacks With Bolero and Topper.
The slacks fit so nicely around the hips, and have the proper width in the trousers. They and the bolero both tailor quickly and easily in



denim, gingham, seersucker or jersey. Use a brilliant handkerchief print for the topper—any sturdy cotton. Here's a holiday outfit you'll thoroughly enjoy.

The Adorable Dirndl.

Nothing is more popular, because nothing is more becoming to slim young figures. It's such a gay, easy-to-wear fashion, and the square neckline is flattering. For a dirndl, choose something in a lively print—linen, chintz and percale are best. Be sure the colors are as complimentary to your skin as that fitted, shirred waistline is to your figure!

The Patterns.

1332 is designed for sizes 12, 14, 16, 18 and 20. Size 14 requires 3 3/4 yards of 39-inch material for the bolero and slacks; 3/4 yard for the topper.

1480 is designed for sizes 12, 14, 16, 18 and 20. Size 14 requires 3 3/4 yards of 35-inch material, plus 3/4 yards of braid for trimming and 1 1/2 yards ribbon for belt.

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