

# The National Scene

THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS  
J. E. Jones

Washington, D. C., March—Washington reporters have been predicting that President Truman will take his legislative program to the country if it fails in Congress. He says the "special interests are using every trick they can think of to defeat our labor policy." Evidently the Congress doesn't agree with the President that the present labor law is "an insult to the working men and women of this country," who he insists, "will not rest until it is destroyed." The President has political ideas about labor laws that are not accepted in either branch of Congress. He has no more desire to work for the interest of the people than Senators and Representatives — they are servants, first, of the People—and independent of so-called "special interests."

President Truman has suggested that the Government jump head-first into what he calls safeguarding "critically short supplies" such as steel; and if necessary to authorize Government loans for the expansion of production facilities "if action by private construction fails to meet our needs." Right on top of this the President recommends "that the Congress enact new additional tax legislation for \$4 billion of Government revenue, principally "from additional corporate taxes."

From this position he branches off into all phases of American life including "surplus requests" for legislation relating to housing, education, health and social security.

Everyone, even the Republicans, has wanted President Truman to succeed with his Administration. It is too bad but it is nevertheless true that Democratic Congressmen don't see things in the same light as the President.

What's going to happen? Nobody seems to have the correct answer to this question but you may be sure that there is going to be "a hot time in old Washington" during the next few months.

One thing that everybody seems to agree about is that the Marshall Plan is making good—and for that reason Congress will continue the support of it with more billions of dollars.

The President proclaims that: "The business cycle is man-made; and men of good will working together can smooth it out." Rah!

But the Congress had better go very slow on proposals made by the White House, for the Government to control bank credit, regulate speculation on the commodity exchanges, extend and strengthen rent controls; impose price ceilings for scarce commodities, etc.

**Little Haiti Busy Helping Itself**  
Taxpayers as well as the brass on Capitol Hill are following with keen interest the plans for the Little World's Fair being held by one of our neighbors to the South—the Republic of Haiti. The occasion is the two-hundredth anniversary next winter of the founding of Port-au-Prince, its Capitol City. The point of interest to Americans, however, is the fact that Haiti, one of the under-privileged in the family of nations, is making a momentous effort to pull itself up by its own boot-straps in staging this Bi-Centennial Exposition. "Might not other nations do likewise and lessen their demands for American help?" they ask.

To tax-weary folks in the forty-eight States it comes as welcome news that there is one little country too busy helping itself to find time to put the bite on Uncle Sam!

**Kettering Is Always Right**  
"There are more opportunities for more people than ever before in the history of the world," according to an article in that fine family paper, the Palm Beach Daily News, Palm Beach, Florida. That is a prize paper that has long cooperated with the newspaper syndicate Letter that you are now reading.  
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## THREE ACRES

And Six Dependents  
By Phyllis Smith

### The Hopeless Chest

I think it was in Shavertown that I first became furniture conscious and ever since, Norm has been kept more or less unconscious paying the bills as I have run the gamut from eighteenth century mahogany to my present love, country pine, maple and cherry. I found a very congenial friend for this time consuming hobby and we helped keep Stohrer and Fister in Scranton going financially for a couple of years. Our weekly jaunts to Scranton annoyed our husbands no end not to mention Mr. Quinn—the long suffering clerk who had learned not to depend on us for his weekly bonus. Norm soon learned that when I came downstairs with my hat on, a trip to Scranton was the inevitable. He didn't pay too much attention until a rather big bill arrived and did I laugh when he made the check out to "Thorn and Thistle" instead of "Stohrer and Fister". Norm always has been that conveniently half deaf type who hear everything you don't want heard and nothing you want heard; so I never let on that there was anything wrong with the name "Thorn and Thistle." Mr. Quinn, the salesman the store had assigned to us for our weekly forays, was completely lacking in humor and wasted no time in calling my attention to the error. In fact he produced the check and waved it in front of our noses in a very injured manner. Margie looked it over and said, "Mr. Quinn, any dope can tell that that means Stohrer and Fister," and Mr. Quinn's feelings for us took a quick lurch into reverse.

One day we arrived in Scranton later than usual and as fate would have it, Mr. Quinn was out to lunch. When we two crashed through the swinging doors in our usual quiet and unobtrusive manner the whole place changed tempo and we swore later that they must have seen us coming. Women clerks started dusting in a fury, gentlemen clerks studied the intricate turnings on the legs of sofas and no one let on that two customers had arrived. Undaunted we took the elevator up to our favorite haunt, the Whitney maple house, and made ourselves at home. The moment Mr. Quinn came in from lunch he was shoved bodily into the closet elevator with instructions to locate us, no matter what. He overtook us in the living room of the maple house where we were relaxing on wing chairs by the fake fireplace. We had been sitting there so long that Margie had become very fond of her chair and almost had decided to buy it; not only for a conversation piece, but to establish herself as a potential customer of Stohrer and Fister. Margie caught sight of Mr. Quinn as he emerged from the elevator and started toward the maple house at a brisk trot. He slowed down as he approached us and Margie said to me in an undertone, "Watch this reaction." She spoke out like a woman who had bought many chairs, on many occasions in many different places, "Mr. Quinn, I'll take this chair." With that Mr. Quinn sank onto the sofa and we all looked at each other in an unbelieving manner. Margie was showing great courage, as her husband couldn't see the necessity of two people having more than two chairs and this would make chair number three. All I could do was to mutter, "wait until Sparks hears about this." I was interested in a chair, too, but we decided to wait until the following week to buy it, as we didn't want to spoil Mr. Quinn. We took the elevator down and sailed by the clerks who were no longer dusting and waved a fond goodbye to Mr. Quinn and promised in loud tones to return the following week.

Meanwhile Norm had caught some of our enthusiasm and hid himself down to a furniture store and bought me the most hideous hope chest I ever hope to see. The day it arrived I couldn't believe my eyes and I tried to convince the truck driver that he had made a mistake as I didn't think Norm capable of such horrible taste. It was a monstrosity complete with cedar lining, many different little compartments, an electric clock, and Lord knows what else. The kids were bug-eyed when they came home from school and I heard Wade tell Norma that it really was a fancy coffin with lots of carving.

As I prepared dinner that night I was pondering on how I could tell Norm in a kind way that I couldn't live in the same house with that relic from a screwball's renaissance. He came home all smiles and asked me how I liked it. I said, "Fine, but they forgot the glasses and ice bucket." He looked very hurt and said, "It's a hope chest, not a

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## THE DALLAS POST

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## YOU KNOW ME

Al, Himself

Good evening, have you finished dunking doughnuts at pyramid clubs yet?

Just as we were congratulating ourselves that all of our friends thought us smart enough to keep out of pyramid clubs, Pete Delaney called and broke the chain by inviting us to join.

We said, "no thanks," but Pete was so insistent that we took time over the phone to explain that if he won the maximum amount of \$2048 it would mean that 2047 persons would have to contribute a dollar apiece and his own dollar would complete the fund. Now, those 2047 persons have each given a dollar and haven't received anything yet, so they will continue the pyramid in order that they should each receive \$2048. So if you multiply 2047 by \$2048 the result will be that 4,192,256 persons must throw in a buck. Yet those millions of persons each want to receive the full prize so you will have to multiply that figure by 2048 and you get—well, you do it, we have run out of doughnuts.

The guy that started these pyramid clubs must have been related to the man who stepped out of a dark doorway one morning about 3 a.m. when we were going home after finishing a night shift on the New York Tribune and held a razor near our throat and asked us if we would like to buy a good sharp \$5.00 steel blade for a dollar. We never before or since parted with a buck so quickly. Instead of telling our family the truth and having the incident reported to the police we lied, explaining what a wonderful bargain we had picked up. Our father took one look at the razor and threw it in the ash can. The ribbing we got from our brothers lasted for years.

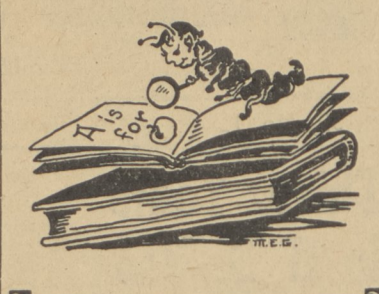
Then there was the time we bought 1000 shares of mining stock at three cents a share and spent almost \$30 more in buying Wall Street Journals to see what the stock was quoted at. We have reached the point now where we would rather give \$5 away than spend a penny trying to get something for nothing.

We remember one time when the grandfather of the one who thought up pyramid clubs rode up to a group of us kids shooting marbles on a street corner. He said he needed money badly to get home quickly to a sick mother and therefore was going to raffle off his motor cycle for ten cents a chance. Most of us ran home to get the dime and a lot succeeded. We didn't so we were chosen to pull the

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## The Book Worm

The Bookworm is conducted for and in the interest of Back Mountain Memorial Library.



Raintree County  
Dale Warmouth

Just about one year ago Ross Lockridge Jr., a youthful professor at Indiana University, had reached a point that must have been near the top of his dreams-come-true. His novel, Raintree County had won the MGM novel award of \$150,000. The fruit of six years hard laboring, Raintree County was without doubt one of the year's finest books. As an epic of America, it was a mighty work of art and history beautifully woven together. Lockridge had been compared with Thomas Wolfe as a powerful novelist and a recorder of the American Dream. Yet on March 7, 1948, Ross Lockridge, Jr., leaving behind him a wife and four small children, committed suicide.

To read Raintree County would indicate that he was destined to become one of this country's top authors. This huge volume (1060 pages) is the story of young John Shawnessy who seeks throughout his life to find some answer to his being, to unravel the secret of Raintree County and of America. Written within an ingenious framework the novel has a greater feeling of depth than the author could have given it by writing it straight through in continuous narrative. The entire novel takes place on July 4, 1892, when John Shawnessy is already a man well into middle age, a solid citizen who is happily married and a father. As the day progresses flashbacks carry the narrative into Shawnessy's childhood, youth and early adulthood. Young John, as a Civil War soldier, is on hand for many important, historical events, including Sherman's march to the sea, and later, the assassination of Lincoln at Ford's Theater. Since he is a humble person of the soil instead of an incredible superhero, all these events seem plausible, and the reader has the feeling that Johnny Shawnessy really had been there.

Raintree County is one of several novels confiscated last year in Philadelphia as "obscene and blasphemous". It is hard to understand how any reader, other than a Puritan, can find anything in it to bear out these charges. While it is true that sex appears without the usual vulgar camouflages of today's literature, and that discussions of God and morality which occupy much space do not conform to the starchiest concepts of some straightlaced bluesoes, it is equally true that taken as a whole it is a most beautiful and reverent novel.

The whole secret of determining whether a book is or is not obscene or pornographic is to read it in its entirety rather than pick out the "juicy" portions. The latter method seems to be the favorite of the censors who have sought to ban practically every book which gets outside the pattern set by, say, Elsie Dinsmore.

Not to be overlooked is the love story of Raintree County which is one of the tenderest to be found anywhere in modern literature. The illfated love of Johnny for Nell Gaither moves the reader strangely, without in the least descending into sentimentality or mawkishness. So, too, is the reader moved by John Shawnessy's marriage to mad Susanna Drake who is a symbol, it seems, of her own tainted pre-Civil War South. The tragedy of his first marriage is balanced splendidly against the heartwarming success of his later marriage to Esther Root.

At times Raintree County (which by the way, is the name of mythical Indiana home of the hero) is difficult to read with its long windy passages of rhetoric and the reader is inclined to skip along until narrative resumes, as in novels by Thomas Wolfe. In style and outline it is one of the most advanced books of our generation. It goes beyond the present day machine-produced novel by long strides. This is a refreshing change, and yet it may prove irritating to the conservative reader. Raintree County opens a whole new area of fiction, and it is the initial trumpet call of tomorrow's literature. The world will feel keenly the loss of the man who wrote Raintree County, and perhaps the enigma he left us with his suicide will never be answered. No one will ever know what sort of novelist Ross Lockridge Jr., would have been had he continued his

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## Barnyard Notes



By the time this column appears in print, I hope all of its readers will have had an opportunity to read John Gunther's "Death Be Not Proud" or at least the condensation of it that appeared in The Ladies' Home Journal or The Reader's Digest.

"Death Be Not Proud" made a deep impression upon me, as it must have upon all who read it; for I have known three persons who have gone through the awful ordeal, the suspense and the terror, of being condemned with brain tumors. Two are dead. One is living.

I had half-heartedly accepted the chairmanship of the American Cancer Society campaign for Funds before I read "Death Be Not Proud". But the news that clinched my determination to make the drive a crusade, even if we have to skip an issue of The Post, came Tuesday morning in a letter from Jimmy Law of Bloomsburg.

It read:  
"Dear Howard:

On the card announcing the Dallas Outpost meeting of Caldwell Consistory at Irem Temple Country Club is a note from Harry Ohlman suggesting that I bring your old Seminary roommate Ray Schell along . . . . ."

The telephone rang and I dropped the letter on the desk to pick up the receiver. Before the conversation was completed some one interrupted to ask about a proof; and there were a dozen other details that prevented my finishing Jimmy's letter.

But the thought kept flitting through my mind. So Ray's coming to the Consistory dinner at the Country Club Tuesday night. Why the old bum!

I recalled the fuss both Jimmy and Ray had created among the Dallas delegation a year ago when I was a day late going through the degrees at Bloomsburg. Both of these men whom I hadn't seen for twenty years buttonholed the men from Dallas, "Where's that Risley? When's he coming? By the time Risley reached Bloomsburg he had been sufficiently paged to make him feel like a visiting celebrity.

The minute we walked in the door Ray pounced on me and urged me to come upstairs to the costume room where he was aiding in the makeup of those who were to present the degrees.

Sitting there on a costume trunk among the wardrobe cupboards, we recalled the old days at Wyoming Seminary. The nights we had lain awake in our beds in a corner room on the fourth floor and talked with boyish enthusiasm of our plans for the future.

The blond, stocky Ray, was a stalwart of the line on the football team and president of the Christian Association. A veteran of World War I before he entered Seminary, he was mature and had a steady influence on his younger roommates.

As we sat there on the trunk reminiscing, no one would have suspected we had been twenty years apart. He brought me up to date on the years between.

After leaving Seminary he had matriculated at Colgate and at Ursinus, graduating from the latter school where he was captain of football during his senior year. He received his Master's Degree from Bucknell and for seventeen years had been coach and instructor in mathematics at Bloomsburg High School. Then he was stricken during the latter part of 1945 with a brain tumor.

He spoke of the symptoms, of the steady failure of his mental faculties, of the loss of memory; and then of the marvelous operation at Pennsylvania Hospital that cleared his mind.

He spoke of his first feeble efforts after the operation to coordinate the movements of those once powerful leg and arm muscles . . . and then of the glorious day when he worked out mathematics problems and at last knew that he was on the road to recovery.

"A man returned from the dead", he said, "through the marvel of modern surgery."

He showed me the pictures of his wife and his lovely girl and boy which he carried in his wallet . . . and we promised each other when we parted that we would get together soon again.

That was more than a year ago; and now from Jimmy's letter, we were sure he would make good his part of the promise. Tuesday night at the Club we would have another reunion.

I returned to Jimmy's letter lying on the desk, rereading the open paragraph . . . . .  
"On the card is a note . . . suggesting that I bring your old Seminary roommate, Ray Schell along . . . . ."  
Then the words blurred before my eyes.

"I'm sorry to learn that you did not know about Ray's untimely death a week ago. I am enclosing the newspaper article. He had an operation for a brain tumor three years ago and never fully recovered, although he had got back to teaching for a while. It is a shame that a good fellow like Ray should be taken so young."

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