# BUSINESS MEN IN BENTON, ARK., HEARTILY DISLIKE 'RED TAPE'

## Party Affiliation Matters Little With Opposition to Regulation; Labor Still Backs Government.

By BARROW LYONS

*(EDITOR'S NOTE—This is one of a series of articles written for this paper by Barrow Lyons, staff correspondent of Western Newspaper Union. He has just completed an extended trip through the nation and in these reports gives his first-hand impressions of what rural America is thinking as we enter the third year of war and the first weeks of a presidential election year. Any opinions expressed are the writer's and not necessarily those of this newspaper.)*

BENTON, ARK.—Ava, Missouri, is traditionally Republican. Benton, Arkansas, is traditionally Democratic.

Yet in both towns they are saying virtually the same hard things about the New Deal. Administration of the OPA and AAA comes in for the most severe criticism. What appears to be unnecessary red tape, regimentation, multiplication of federal jobs and arbitrary exercise of authority have irritated the folk of these two small towns, especially the business men, to high inflammability.

Perhaps the Republican farmers around Ava are less inclined to be violently inimical to the New Deal than the Democratic farmers around Benton.

Oppositon to the New Deal springs far less from party affiliation than it does from resentment against multiple restrictions and regulations.

Opposition also rises from a deep-seated idea that the Democratic leaders in Washington are more interested in building power for themselves than in rendering practical service to the people—at least to the hardest working and most intelligent elements of the people.

These attitudes may be right or wrong—but they are the way more and more people in rural districts feel about it. In fact, in Arkansas feeling has risen so high among those who have voted the Democratic ticket all their lives that the situation has aspects of an incipient rebellion. Farmers have openly written defiant letters to federal authorities challenging them to come and enforce the law.

Lawrence B. Burrow, a Little Rock attorney to whom Benton merchants go for legal advice, summed up the situation thus:

"Many small business men are getting their affairs in shape so they can quit after the war. They are the backbone of this part of the country, but Washington hasn't learned it yet. Between high taxes and all kinds of restrictions, Washington has built up a psychology of resentment that in every way is comparable to the attitude of the American colonies toward King George III. You can go back and read the speeches of Patrick Henry, and you'll discover that he felt exactly as most of the merchants and farmers of Arkansas feel today."

Arkansas farmers and business men have gotten to the point where they pay very little attention to many federal regulations. Bootlegging of grain and other farm commodities above ceiling prices is said to be the usual practice, rather than the exception in some regions. Minor federal officials are frequently insulted, and when they resent it, they are charged with being arbitrary and oppressive—and it may be that they are in some instances. Names and cases are related freely.

Deep strip mining for bauxite near Benton, Ark.

### Complaints Are Economic As Well as Emotional

The complaint of the Arkansas farmer has a strong economic as well as emotional basis. A. R. Sawyer, who farms about 150 acres near Benton, told this story:

This year because of drouth he obtained only about 400 bushels of corn from 35 acres. The OPA ceiling price at Benton is $1.15 a bushel, but corn is selling in the bootleg market at $1.65—and little is obtainable at that price.

Mr. Sawyer's fields yielded a hay crop of about 1,000 bales, as against a usual 3,000 bales. He didn't even bother to cut his soy beans, they were so dried up.

"In this case," he declared, "there is no reason in the world why prices should be restricted. We have so little to sell that the money we receive could hardly cause inflation. On one farm I have a renter who worked the farm from February to the third week in October. He grossed about $1,000 by the end of October. When his crop was in, he took a job in a near-by war plant and earned $66 a week. Which of these occupations do you think is more likely to cause inflation?"

Mr. Sawyer talked at length. His unhappy experiences were many and distressing.

**Mrs. George D. Downing, secretary and treasurer of the C. W. Lewis Lumber company, had much to say about the government handling of lumber. When wages were frozen, the pay of lumber workers was fixed at a level so far below that of local war plants that the company has lost a very large proportion of its employees—and is unable to replace them. In 1941 it produced about 9½ million feet of lumber; in 1942 about 5½ million feet, and this year it will produce less than 3½ million feet—despite the fact that lumber is a critical material.**

### Labor Regulations Trouble Merchant

H. J. Gingles, general retail and wholesale merchant at Benton, feels particularly resentful over the Wage and Hour law and unemployment compensation. One employee who was discharged for drunkenness received unemployment compensation. Two women who remained away from work for several months to have babies drew unemployment compensation, quite illegally; but the fact that they could do so with impunity disturbs him.

But all of Benton is not against the New Deal. The town is close to the bauxite mining region dominated by the operation of the Aluminum Company of America. In this area are several thousand people who work in the aluminum mines and the great government alumina plant near the town of Bauxite.

To this region the Aluminum Workers of America, a CIO union, sent a young man by the name of R. W. Goddard about two years ago. Under his leadership as business agent, Locals 23, 28, 32 and 33 have been organized. He says they include most of the aluminum workers of the area.

"I can't speak officially about the politics of our members," said Mr. Goddard. "But I think I can say unofficially that for the most part they are satisfied with the New Deal. A big percentage are native to Arkansas. I came from Tennessee. They were born Democrats and remain so. I think they feel that the New Deal has truly tried to protect the workers' interest."

### As Benton, Arkansas, Views It . . .

Union Leader R. W. Goddard says that even before a labor voters league became active, workers were being urged to pay the $1 poll tax and qualify themselves to vote in Benton. He thinks the result will be a vote three times as big as ever before, dominated largely by the aluminum workers.

In recent weeks 500 of the 1,200 workers in Benton engaged by one aluminum company have been laid off. They were told, according to Mr. Goddard, that lower wages in Brazil made it possible to bring bauxite from South America more cheaply than it could be mined here. The workers fear the Arkansas mines will be closed down. They realize their new strength at the Benton polls will be impaired, if they return to their farm homes.

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# Washington Digest

## Status of Commonwealth Worry to Mother Country

### England Wants Closer Cohesion of Domain; Lord Halifax's Statement Opens Controversial Subject in Canada.

By BAUKHAGE
*News Analyst and Commentator.*

WNU Service, Union Trust Building, Washington, D. C.

One of the most beautiful buildings in Washington is the Pan-American Union with palm-and-parakeeted patio, its great lily pond with an ancient Inca idol idly dreaming beside its waters.

But there is one valuable object d'art in the cellar, swathed in protecting burlap and excelsior which is not displayed. It is a chair which matches a suite of 21 others which stand around a great table in the hall of the Americas, each of which bears the seal of a Latin-American republic.

The chair in the cellar has the genial beaver, Canada's national pet, carved upon it.

The news is that that chair is threatening to burst out of its cerements and walk on its four legs up the cellar steps to its place at the table.

Two men, more than any others, are responsible for the restlessness of this piece of furniture. One is tall, gray, dynamic Leighton McCarthy, Canadian ambassador to the United States. The other is Prime Minister Mackenzie King.

There probably never has been a time in history when the United States and Great Britain have been closer in thought and action, despite their multifold points of difference in peace time, than they are today. But, paradoxically, it is some of the points of difference that have brought Canada nearer to the United States than Our Lady of the Snows has ever been before. The United States very nearly occupies the position of an interpreter between the mother country and the domain on some points, but the great bond between the Yanks and the Canucks is probably the simple, common sense fact that we look upon Canada as Rudyard Kipling (who once almost became an American citizen) wrote, (making Canada the speaker):

"Daughter am I in my mother's house, but mistress in my own."

### *The 'Tentative'*

That is why so many people in Canada or the States were NOT surprised when the government in Ottawa and the Canadian press rejected politely but firmly what the diplomats call a "tentative" put forth by Lord Halifax, British ambassador to the United States a week or so ago.

That is why so many people in the United States and Canada who ponder such matters WERE surprised that Lord Halifax, undoubtedly with the advice and consent of that frequent visitor at the White House, Winston Churchill, broached the suggestion at all. (The fact that Mr. Churchill said emphatically that Lord Halifax was speaking for himself, not the British government, merely proves—well, you know how diplomacy works.)

Lord Halifax had said:

"But what is, I believe, both desirable and necessary is that in all the field of interests, common to every part of the Commonwealth—in foreign policy, in defense, in economic affairs, in colonial questions and in communications—we should leave nothing undone to bring our people into closer unity of thought and action. It may be that we shall find it desirable to maintain and extend our present wartime procedure of planning and consultation, which itself adapted and extended the methods we practiced in time of peace. The question admits of no easy answer."

Now let me say at this point, if there are any Fenians or their descendants in my audience, who think I am stirring up anti-British feeling or echoing the anglophobia of the Colonel McCosmics, let them take no comfort from me. I am reporting the attitude of a lot of good and loyal subjects of his Brittanic Majesty whose sons are dying for king and country.

As the years passed, Mother England voluntarily loosed the apron strings that bound her far-flung family to her. Willingly she bowed to Kipling's verdict and accepted the statute of Westminster, giving the dominions their autonomy. Now she wonders about that union which is necessary for her strength. She wants a closer cohesion of the Commonwealth. Lord Halifax made the suggestion, not officially, and with great restraint.

Earlier, Field Marshal Jan Smuts of the Union of South Africa had made a speech urging closer cooperation of the smaller European countries with the United Kingdom.

On the Monday following Lord Halifax's speech, Prime Minister Mackenzie King was questioned concerning its meaning in the Canadian house of commons.

King stated that he was sure the speech had been misinterpreted, that he had been assured that it was not the official attitude of the British government, but he also said it was "unfortunate." He said further:

"With what is implied in the argument employed by both these eminent public men (Halifax and Smuts), I am unable to agree."

Then he made this statement:

"In meeting world issues of security, employment and social standards, we must join not only with commonwealth countries but with all like-minded states, if our purposes and ideals are to prevail. Our commitments on these great issues must be part of a general scheme, whether they be on a world basis or regional in nature.

"We look forward, therefore, to close collaboration in the interests of peace not only inside the British commonwealth, but also with all friendly nations, small as well as great."

The Canadian press of all parties, I am told by Canadian officials here, showed a unanimity in supporting the prime minister seldom witnessed in Canada.

**This means that since Canadian interests lie in this hemisphere to a great extent, where hemispheric solidarity is essential to the welfare of all of the nations concerned, it is sheer folly to keep a perfectly good piece of furniture in the basement of the Pan-American Union that belongs at its natural place at the table. "Won't you sit down, Mr. McCarthy?"**

* * *

### *Basis for Industrial Cooperation*

Quite aside from any diplomatic considerations, plain business men and others interested in hemispheric solidarity are considering a basis for Canadian-American industrial cooperation.

The Institute of Pacific Relations says that Alaska, the Yukon, MacKenzie Valley, northern British Columbia and Alberta constitute a vast area of potential economic development:

"Air routes to Alaska and the nearest sources of supply for military supplies, such as oil, lie through or in the Canadian Northwest. As an air route, the future of the Northwest is assured. Over it lie the great circle or near great circle routes, and the economic routes between the densely populated regions of Asia and North America.

"There are mutual strategic and economic benefits in Canadian-American partnership for postwar development of the Pacific Northwest."

Exploitation of the natural resources in this zone can be developed, and is urged, through a close working partnership by the United States and Canada. This would require the pooling of information, technical facilities and the investment of private capital (not public funds). This is the type of industrial cooperation that has characterized the economic history of the two countries in the past. The comment continues:

"Already two great undertakings in joint defense and joint development are being carried out. Americans built the Alaskan highway; Canadians built the bases for the air route it parallels and serves. The highway was an assurance of the security of Alaska; the defense of Alaska was an assurance of the safety of Canada. The North Pacific Planning project is a striking example of international cooperation and of ordinary common sense. American and Canadian interests in the Pacific Northwest are joint and inseparable, they can be made to yield joint private profit."

### BRIEFS . . . *by Baukhage*

The death rate for the first six months of 1943 was 11.0 per 1,000 population in the United States, about 3.8 per cent higher than for the corresponding period in 1942.

* * *

With 450 million people to support, China has 210 million acres of cultivated land. The United States with 132 million people has 345 million acres of cultivated land.

The number of women hired by United States railroads increased 138.6 per cent for the year ending June 30, 1943.

* * *

The latest poll of opinion by the Swedish Gallup institute said that 84 per cent of the people questioned wish Sweden to remain a monarchy, 6 per cent prefer a republic and 10 per cent are undecided.

A good farm team, properly harnessed with well-fitting collars and harness, given sensible ,regular feed and care is an efficient and economical unit of farm field power in normal times. Their maximum use during wartime is imperative. So, give the farm horse or mule some thought before the rush of spring work and he will respond, as he always has both in peace and in war.

—V—

The aggregate yield of total digestible nutrients from feed corps grown in Maryland from a given acreag has varied from 13 percent abov average to 31 percent below average during the 44-year period 1900 t 1943, inclusive.

—V—

Past experience in Maryland with pastures which warrant treatment indicates that the grazing capacity can be doubled within one or two years after treatment is started.

Do more of the light chore work about the farm and feed lots with the horses from now until spring. This will gradually get the horses conditioned for heavier duty later.

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