MEN AND AFFAIRS AT WASHINGTON

★ 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 our 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.

• • •

Grave Possibilities

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 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 his 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.

• • •

"Sit Down" Strikes

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.

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.

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.

© Western Newspaper Union.

Youngest Congressman Marries

Congressman Lyle Boren and his bride, the former Miss Christine McKown, who were married recently at Stillwater, Okla. Mr. Boren, who is twenty-seven years old, is the youngest member of congress.

Let Children Dress Up—

Costuming Gives Them Invaluable Opportunity for Self-Expression

DRESSING up is a cure for a great many of the behavior problems of children of all ages, says Gertrude Oram in The Parents' Magazine. Whether it is the youngest member of the family, effectually hidden under his father's derby, or the teen-age son or daughter "dressing for dinner on Dad's birthday," a bit of costuming releases the natural dramatic urge of children, lifts, for a moment, the tight restraint of everyday living, and gives them the invaluable opportunity for self-expression.

Bridges Reality and Dreams

"Many of the behavior problems of children, from simple fretfulness to serious juvenile delinquency, are a result of a cramping of the ego, of the sudden harsh restrictions for which the child is unprepared," explains Miss Oram. "Dramatic activity supplies a bridge between reality and dreams which is a real need of childhood and adolescence."

A four-year-old's deep hurt at being overlooked in favor of her curly-headed baby brother was erased when her mother dressed her charmingly in a crepe paper apron and cuffs and a cap that hid the straight locks which caused her grief. A boy who showed very little initiative in his lessons was amazingly dynamic at rehearsals of a play he and his friends were working out by themselves for the entertainment of other members of his group.

Incentive to Learn

Other lifelong benefits spring from dressing up in Indian suits or cowboy suits. "The helpful parent," continues Miss Oram, "will give his child an opportunity to learn as much as possible from each new interest, providing the tools or the suggestions which lead to the acquiring of new skills. Indians walk erectly. Sailors can find their way by the stars. Many a mother has been delighted to learn that the boy who could never be induced to take any interest in neatness in the abstract becomes insistent on absolute trimness in his Scout uniform."

It is important to remember that while children's natural dramatic impulses should not be repressed at this stage, neither should they be forced if the boy or girl is painfully shy. Gradual development, via the back row in choruses or minstrel shows, "has helped many an awkward adolescent into a new self-confidence and poise."

ONLY 1¢ A NIGHT for Eye-saving LIGHT with Coleman AIR-PRESSURE Mantle LAMPS

KEROSENE OR GASOLINE MODELS

Protect your sight with this eye-saving Coleman light! Kerosene and Gasoline Pressure Mantle Lamps provide a high candlepower of live light . . . nearest like natural daylight . . . kind to your eyes.

You can enjoy the finest light for only 1¢ a night. No home can afford to be without a Coleman. Buy it from your local Coleman dealer. *FREE Folders*—Send Postcard Now!

THE COLEMAN LAMP AND STOVE CO. Dept. WDT3, Wichita, Kans.; Chicago, Ills. Philadelphia, Pa.; Los Angeles, Calif.

If used when retiring, relieves smarting scalding sticky eyes by morning.

ROMAN EYE BALSAM

50c a jar at druggists or Wrights Pill Co., 100 Gold St., N.Y. City.

CLASSIFIED DEPARTMENT

MISCELLANEOUS

A TRIP THROUGH HELL with the immortal Dante—25 magnificent gruesome post card pictures for a Quarter. Last Edition. J. MALIN, Chesapeake City, Md.

Calotabs Help Nature To Throw Off a Cold

Millions have found in Calotabs a most valuable aid in the treatment of colds. They take one or two tablets the first night and repeat the third or fourth night if needed.

How do Calotabs help Nature throw off a cold? First, Calotabs are one of the most thorough and dependable of all intestinal eliminants, thus cleansing the intestinal tract of the germ-laden mucus and toxines. Second, Calotabs are diuretic to the kidneys, promoting the elimination of cold poisons from the blood. Thus Calotabs serve the double purpose of a purgative and diuretic, both of which are needed in the treatment of colds.

Calotabs are quite economical; only twenty-five cents for the family package, ten cents for the trial package. (Adv.)

TRADE YES, DOCTOR MARK

The only cough drops containing VITAMIN A are the famous Smith Brothers Cough Drops . . . Recent scientific evidence shows that Vitamin A raises the resistance of the mucous membranes of the nose and throat to cold and cough infections. Two kinds of Smith Bros. Cough Drops: Black or Menthol—5¢.

MERCHANDISE must be good to be consistently advertised

BUY ADVERTISED GOODS