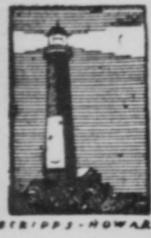


The Indianapolis Times

(A SCRIPPS-HOWARD NEWSPAPER)

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Photo—Riley Sneyd

Member of United Press,
Scripps-Howard Newspaper
Alliance, Newspaper Enter-
prise Association, National
Information Service, and Au-
dit Bureau of Circulations.Owned and published daily
(except Sunday) by The In-
dianapolis Times Publishing
Company, 222 Indiana Avenue,
Indianapolis, Ind.
Price in Marion county, 2
cents a copy; elsewhere, 3
cents a copy; weekly, 12
cents a week. Mail subscription
rates in Indiana, \$3 a
year; outside of Indiana, 65
cents a month.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 30, 1933.

BETTER TO KNOW

THE senate committee on banking and currency takes up again next week its important work of investigating banking practices.

There is reason to believe that the dramatic hearings of the spring and early summer will prove to have been only a modest introduction to the real revelations in store for a country trying to get to the bottom of its economic mystery. Somewhere, before we can take the path to permanent prosperity, must be found the answer to this question: How did it happen that a nation, apparently soaring to undreamed-of heights of prosperity one day, awakened the next to find itself headed downward into an almost bottomless business and industrial depression? The answer, many believe, will be found only through searching examination of our great financial institutions.

A good beginning has been made in this direction, but the senate has a long way yet to go. It is not a job to be completed in a hurry. The committee must be prepared to follow any lead its investigators may have turned up during their summer's work. It must be prepared to close its ears to soft suggestions that further questioning of the bankers is likely to disturb confidence and so retard the business recovery so desperately desired. There will be no real recovery until real confidence has been obtained, confidence resting on knowledge.

Senator Fletcher, chairman of the committee, announced, after a conference with President Roosevelt during the spring, that the inquiry would be extended into the stock market. That will take time. It likewise will take a larger appropriation than the committee thus far has requested. In its partial report to the congress in January, the committee should be prepared to ask for funds with which to make this investigation as thorough as humanly possible.

The committee need have no doubt that the country wants this research completed. In 1928 and '29 the American people may have felt it was fun to be fooled. But they have learned it is better to know.

THE A. F. OF L.

THE American Federation of Labor, meeting Monday in convention, has a right to feel chesty over labor's recent and sudden achievements. Labor has burgeoned into more power in six short months than fifty-three years of bitter struggle have won for the workers.

Today, under the NRA, labor theoretically is an equal with management in the new machinery for industrial self-government. Its right to free collective bargaining is so copper riveted that an employer who wilfully sets out to prevent organization finds himself crosswise with the law. Labor's theory that surplus labor must be absorbed in shorter work hours and that buying power must be built up through higher wages has been accepted by both government and industry.

Under this theory hours have been shortened measurably in thirty coded industries and reduced to thirty hours a week in public works; the labor of some 200,000 children under 16 outlawed; 2,000,000 jobless returned to work; minimum wages established in some of the most depressed industries, and sweatshops virtually abolished. On paper, at least, labor has won a bloodless revolution.

But, as federation leaders well know, their fight for economic freedom and security is just started. And from now on the effort is pretty much up to labor.

The federation is growing like a snowball under its recruiting drive. President Green says that since March 324 new charters and 1,500,000 new members have been added to the rolls, but membership still is well below the 1920 high of 4,000,000.

The federation's program is a militant one, yet the two most progressive groups of organized workers—the railroad brotherhoods and amalgamated clothing workers, remain outside its membership. Inclusion of these groups would not only strengthen the federation numerically, but would vitalize it with new blood.

PRICE OF POLITICS

IN all the noise that is being made about the mayoralty fight in New York City you can hear, if you listen closely, the ominous howling of a very cold wind—the coldest wind, perhaps, that has ever shaken the fabric of American democracy.

Back of the frantic negotiations, campaignings and wire-pullings of the New York situation, where the nation's largest city tries desperately to get Tammany off its back, there stands the simple and unpleasant fact that our system of municipal government has come perilously close to breaking down entirely.

New York is proving—just as Chicago and a host of other cities have already proved—that our familiar type of machine politics is totally inadequate to meet the problems of the modern world.

For a great many years we have gone along, innocently handing over our city, county and state governments to men who quite frankly were not interested especially in good government, but whose chief concern was the building up of their own political fortunes.

The results were scandalous—but while times were good we could afford them, and we thought we could. The local government became the weakest link in the democratic chain, but the chain was slack during prosperity and nobody minded very much. Now the chain is stretched taut. The weak link is being strained right to the breaking point.

Machine politics, in other words, is as anachronistic as one of Columbus' caravels. We

have got to the point where we simply can't put up with it any longer. And what is happening in New York is an object lesson for the remotest county courthouse, town hall and state capitol in America.

Foreign observers long have predicted that if the American democracy broke down the collapse would begin with the municipal governments. Are we beginning to witness that collapse now? Is the cold wind that howls in Manhattan Island going to be a destroying cyclone that finds us with no storm cellar handy?

Or are we going to have sense enough to clean house on all of our political machines; sense enough to stop listening to demagogues, to elect capable public servants instead of corrupt politicians, to demand service instead of fair words—and, thereby, to replace the weak link in the chain with one that will stand any pull?

POWER RATES

WATCHING the various elements of the new deal take shape these days is a little bit like peering into a test tube in which a chemist is attempting an entirely new, elaborately complicated kind of synthesis—with the added factor that at least a few of the chemists on the outskirts are not dead sure that the whole mess won't presently blow up and wreck the laboratory.

Some of us find one part of the experiment most interesting, and some of us find another; but certainly one of the most striking in its potentialities is that being conducted at Muscle Shoals.

A great many reasons were advanced for the Muscle Shoals program while it was being debated, and one of the chief ones was that it would serve as a yardstick by which electricity rates could be measured; and it is pretty evident now that the authorities are going to do everything they can to make the yardstick a good one.

It has been announced already that consumers of power from Muscle Shoals will be charged, on the average, 2 cents per kilowatt hour.

The significance of this figure rests upon two facts:

First, that this—according to power authorities at Washington—is just a little more than half the average power rate for the nation last year.

Second, that the Muscle Shoals authorities are taking the utmost care to make the return they will receive from their sale of power equal to the return a privately owned utility would have to receive in order to meet fixed charges, taxes, interest and depreciation.

"These rates," says David E. Lilenthal, director of power development at the Shoals, "have been computed on a conservative basis to cover all the costs of furnishing the service, including operation, maintenance, depreciation and taxes. In addition, we have made provision for interest and retirement, although such provision is not required by the Tennessee Valley Authority act."

It is easy to see how far-reaching the effects of this experiment might be. If the plant at Muscle Shoals, operating under precisely the same financial conditions as a private utility might operate, proves able to sell electricity for half the rate the private utilities charge, the general public is likely to get a new attitude toward utility rates in general. It isn't hard to see why the "power trust" fought the Muscle Shoals project so bitterly.

THE LIQUOR TARIFF

ONE of the jobs the next congress will have to tackle will be the matter of deciding how much of a tariff to levy on imports of hard liquor; and when the matter comes up for consideration it should be pointed out that importing liquor is on a different basis from importing other commodities.

When prohibition ends, the distilling industry in America will be in the typical "infant industry" class. Congress will be urged to give it ample protection; to put the import duties sky-high so that the money Americans spend for liquor will go to American producers and not to foreigners.

But we might also consider the fact that that will simply create a large liquor industry in this country with a vested interest in any future steps we may want to take on the liquor question. Might it not be wise not to give our distilleries too much protection? Wouldn't it, in other words, be a good thing if the liquor manufacturing trade failed to grow to the size it had before the prohibition era?

JUDGE SEABURY'S VERDICT

NOBODY has better right than Samuel Seabury to denounce the proposed McKee candidacy for mayor of New York. Judge Seabury, back from Europe, tears to pieces the Farley-Flynn plot with a vigor and precision worthy of the man who chiefly made fusion possible and who believes fusion can win.

We agree with Judge Seabury that "with all signs pointing to an overwhelming Tammany defeat it is little less than a crime to attempt to divide the anti-Tammany forces." We agree with him that Mr. Flynn is merely using Mr. McKee to put over a weak Bronx ticket and rivet Flynn control on the local Democracy instead of Cullinan control. We are with him in his staunch belief that:

"Neither Farley, Flynn, McKee nor any one else can, in this critical moment in the life of the city, betray the interests of its people and get away with it."

The only thing we question in Judge Seabury's statement is his apparent acceptance of the "repudiation" (of the McKee candidacy) by President and Mr. Farley.

"Hands off" is not repudiation. Not after the harm already done by Messrs. Farley and Flynn in slyly building up the impression that the McKee candidacy can be sure of the President's approval and support.

Only the President himself now can stop the spread of this impression. If silence does not affirm, neither does it deny. Practitioners are skilled in putting their own interpretation on neutrality—and in persuading voters to accept that interpretation.

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UNCLE SAM, SALESMAN

UNCLE SAM has had to act a good many unfamiliar parts this year. One of the strangest of all, however, seems to be the combined role of salesman and price fixer which he has undertaken in connection with Mr. Roosevelt's negotiations with the railroads and the steel producers.

What apparently is going to happen is that the railroads are going to buy something like 700,000 tons of new steel rails. They are going to get them at a price substantially lower than current market quotations. And it all is going to happen because Uncle Sam decided to make it happen.

Uncle Sam, in brief, acted as salesman, purchasing agent and price arbiter, all in one moment. The result is going to be all to the good for everybody concerned. But the old gentleman has certainly been filling a new role.

COMIC RELIEF

PERSONS with democratic tendencies sometimes wonder just why England continues to support the luxury of a peerage. Now and then some individualistic member of the peerage unwittingly will furnish the answer—or, at any rate, an answer.

There is for instance, the duke of Devonshire, who made a little speech at a horse show in Derbyshire the other day, in the course of which he unleashed a die-hard old Tory's dislike of the age of modern inventions. The auto was the chief object of his attack; he called autos "foul, stinking things" and "horrible brutes making life hideous," and he added:

"When I first knew this horse show we came here as gentlemen, and not as crashing cads."

And there you have it. It must be almost worth while for a nation to support a system which produces old gentlemen who can make speeches like that.

"LOW-BROW" MUSIC

DR. ARTUR RODZINSKI, director of the Cleveland orchestra, says that "high-brow" music has got to take off its soup-and-fish regalia and make its appeal to the man who likes to sit around in his shirt sleeves.

The idea that one has to be done out in handsome clothes to hear a symphony concert is foolishness," he remarks. And he adds that he plans "to take our orchestra to the people who need it most, the workers."

More orchestra conductors had this idea, it is a safe bet that support of the high-class musical organizations in America would not rest so largely on the backs of the wealthy. In too many cases society has made musical functions an excuse to parade in evening dress; and the ordinary man in the street, feeling like a fish out of water in such a crowd, simply stays away.

Genuinely fine music can be as popular in America as anywhere—if the people who sponsor it just take the pains to dethrone the high hat.

Maybe there's something in a name after all. That Michigan policeman who testified against those nudists was named Peek.

We still think our girl movie fan was right when she said she enjoyed seeing bull fight films just so she could watch the darling studeos.

It isn't right for Uncle Sam to furnish food, coal and clothing to the poor. He's crabbing the politicians' best vote-getting act.

Funny, but Uncle Sam still offers farmers pamphlets telling them how to raise more crops—and a bonus to raise less.

Vaudeville actress with five hundred pet cockroaches ordered out of hotel. Now we understand why our lady says she's had stage training.

It isn't right for Uncle Sam to furnish

food, coal and clothing to the poor. He's crabbing the politicians' best vote-getting act.

If Mr. Maddox will read "The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America" or re-read it if he by chance has read it previously, I wonder which he would consider most un-American, himself as the critic, or myself as the Socialist, who believes in and lives up to that famous document, "with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the

right of the people to alter or to abolish it."

Should his suggestion that "teachers and officers in our schools and colleges who have the least taint of Socialism in their makeup should be discharged immediately as being disloyal to American ideals" be complied with, I am wondering just how many of our recognized best educators would be left in the service.

The one redeeming trait in his article is "President Oxnam champions the cause of that great international order." Correct, Mr. Maddox, correct.

By R. J.

If J. E. K. is half as smart as he thinks he is he wouldn't worry about financing a round the world flight for Governor McNutt and his associates, because it isn't too late yet to do this.

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