

Sunday, April 28, 1940

Dear Cameron,

If I can't get paid on time I guess we'll have to call it quits. I know that you fellows have many problems and worries. But I just can't bring myself to stand having to complain weekly that I haven't been paid. Now, in spite of several complaints, you are at least two weeks behind in what I get regularly and you owe me for several special assignments.

I think you are doing a swell job. I think the magazine has improved weekly. I like it and I am doing all I can to boost it. But God! how haphazard everything I've had any contact with is. Besides the money that I don't get do you realize how many times I have asked to have the things I promised to return sent back to me? And not one has come back. Last time I was in to see Norris it was bad enough to have to face the anger Gilmore left behind, but it was worse not to have the little pictures I had promised to return. Last night I was asked for the memo on the Fa Follette record which I sent in with the pictures on the Wage-Hour story. I was also asked whether the pictures were satisfactory, when they would be returned and if they were satisfactory. These things are, I admit, unimportant, but they are likewise unnecessary.

To add to this there is the unpleasantness of not having stuff used and not knowing why. I don't want your money for nothing; I want to earn it, little as it is. But when week after week I send in stuff that I never hear about and never see in print I am annoyed. At least I want to know what, if anything, is wrong about it. At the beginning of our relations I told you that there were many little things I might be able to do that I'd be glad to-and ~~as~~ I didn't say that I wanted cash in advance. As a recent example-your poll-tax

statistics were two years older than I could have given you overnight, had I known. I could have given you additional information for your Ford story. Maybe you don't want this, but then don't you think you ought to let me know ~~exactly~~ exactly what you do want of me?

Another complaint id with reference to the Data story I have been trying to persuade you to use. You have never given me an answer. I have been successful thus far in having the best stuff kept for you. You told me three weeks ago that you were going to have a staff conference and then let me know. Yet last night I heard you were sending some one down for this story. If you do you'll get about what the others who have written of this got- a little piece ~~of~~ what you want.

I'm serious about this, Cameron. I repeat I'm all for you. I don't mean any of my criticisms personally, for I can imagine the burden you are under. But I want you to understand me. Unless I can expect to get paid regularly and on time, and unless we can cooperate better, I'm going to look elsewhere. Please send me all the dough you owe me right away. The grand jury reopens tomorrow and I'm going to need it. I have received pretty good information that they are going after me instead of the Dies agent.

Last week I told you I was going to look further into the rumor that the Workers Alliance was going into the CIO. I have been able to find nothing to corroborate this and some to indicate that it is unlikely. The same rumor was heard before the last CIO convention, and at the convention those in the CIO who Lewis held down desired this, but he and his people frowned upon it. Lasser seems to be unpopular on the Hill, and it seems that the CIO is afraid of having him up there. They also seem afraid of the red label, even though Hebr. Benjamin resigned. Yet I believe that Lewis is really eyeing the Workers

Alliance seriously. He is looking toward a third party, I believe, and wants them in his gang. The Youth Congress is with him, and now the National Negro Congress is also. His speech and his extemporaneous remarks after he was given the award at the NNC, I believe, were pointedly political and definitely third-partyish. The NNC is with him, completely. You should have heard the ovation they gave him, and the applause that followed every mention of his name afterwards.

As I told you it would be, this NNC was quite an affair. It was the best run and the most successful of the many such congresses and conventions that have been held here. The only discordant note was the ~~man's~~ vicious red-baiting of A. Philips Randolph, and that had the opposite effect from what he expected. Randolph is heavily indebted to Dubinsky, who hocked the union when it was in financial difficulties a year ago. Following Lewis, he got a cold reception. More than half of the audience quietly walked out on him, and he was visibly disturbed. The answers to his speech, particularly John P. Davis's, were received with extended applause. Randolph solidified the thinking of the assorted workers and intellectuals, and, unless there are a lot of behind the scenes maneuvers, the NNW will soon be a larger, stronger and more potent organization, with a good chance for real influence in the coming election. The emphasis was on the poll-tax repeal ( you should have had some copies of that issue here ), peonage ( that, too ), increased relief and WPA, and peace. Peace was what was biggest in the speeches and discussions. Every speaker who suggested that we were not going to war had his next few sentences drowned out. The amazing enthusiasm with which collaboration with the CIO was received, I believe, is a good indication that, at election time, many of the 4,000,000 Negroes will be willing to follow Lewis' lead. If even a fair number of them do, and are joined by a fair number of the 4,000,000 in the Youth Congress and a big hunk of the 4,000,000 in the CIO, Lewis will

have a large third party or will be the deciding factor between the major parties.

This past week the appointment of a secretary to the special subcommittee investigating wire-tapping was announced. The significant thing is that the papers carried the story that Max Lowenthal, who has been directing the Railroad investigating committee of the Senate, was not appointed. Lowenthal, well-known and respected here, was believed to have originated some of the stories about the FBI and Hoover. Lowenthal had been recommended by Bert Wheeler, chairman of the committee of which the wire-tapping committee is a subcommittee. It is unusual that his nominee did not get the job. The answer is that Attorney General Jackson ( who has not yet released the Detroit report by Schweinhaut) opposed Lowenthal. Also significant is the fact that three investigators were loaned to the committee by the Department of Justice. As Murphey told Dies when he turned down Dies request, this is never done. So, of the investigators on the committee, three out of five came from the agency assumed to be the one in need of investigation.

One of the more serious problems here and in the pacific northwest is one of which I have seen no mention in the papers. There are not enough ships to move cargoes there, and lumbermills and factories are closing down, resulting in wide-spread unemployments there. Most affected are, of course, the largest CIO unions out there, for all, of whom this is a crucial time. The ~~like~~ Long-shoremen, the lumberworkers, etc. There used to be enough ships so that the northwest could ship south on the Pacific Coast and to the East coast. However, when the administration allowed the transferring of registry to the shipowners, Panamanian and similar flags, ~~in order to get in on the gravy,~~ in order to get in on the gravy,

put their ships in the foreign trade.

Much of this trouble could be remedied by the Maritime Commission, which has not only done nothing but seems to have resisted efforts to get ships for the domestic trade. There are lots of ships that could be refitted in a short time and at not too great expense. These, however, the Maritime Commission will not get in to the domestic trade.

One of the other consequences of this difficulty is that some of the domestic market that is thus lost is lost to the Japanese. If you are interested in this Harold Prichett is perhaps more acquainted with the problem than anyone else.

I was up home when Admiral Tausig predicted war with Japan while trying to get a larger Navy appropriation. ~~xxxxxx~~ Upon my return I was surprised by the universal skepticism of the correspondents and various others to whom I spoke on the Hill. While the Navy said it did not approve his statements no one said they didn't approve his plea for the increases in the navy for which the increased appropriation was intended. There is a likelihood that he would have been disciplined for his conduct had it not been approved in advance. Whether or not his remarks had the sanction of the administration he was certainly speaking their mind. There is a great apathy here about saving Europe's "democracy". The most likely way of getting us in the war is in the East, through protecting the Dutch possessions from the Japanese. When, following the Japanese announcement that their interests in the products of the Dutch possessions was such that, in the event of Dutch involvement in Europe, they would guarantee receiving their supplies, Hull announced that we would not tolerate possession or occupation, he made a statement so strong that it is, in diplomatic terms, a declaration that we would feel bound to take measures

not necessarily short of war. It was a much stronger statement than was required by the situation.

The La Follette hearings, which will be held beginning early next month, are going to be a real sellout from what I have been able to learn. They are going to take testimony from "expert" witnesses on how to settle the problem of the migratory workers. The solution the committee is going to propose ( confidentially, unless you do a story on the whole thing) is that the government rent land from the planters and re-rent it to the landlord's tenants. They will separate the tenants ~~in~~, that is, keep them out of settlements. On the tenants land ( to be restricted to 5 acres ) he will be allowed to grow anything he wants in the times when he is not working. The catch is this: when he is not working there will be nothing he can do because at the times he should work his own land he will be working for others, and at the times he is not working for others there is nothing he will be able to do on his own land. Also, on such a small tract, he will be able to do little more than grow some truck produce for himself. In Missouri the Farm Security Administration had and started a program of 50-acre-farm settlements, where the farmers would have enough land to be real farmers and where they would live in decent homes. The planters put the heat on and now the plots are 3-5 acres. Thus the problem is still unsolved, and thus, after the La Follette committee finishes its hearings that are about to begin, the solution, if any, will not have been advanced. Plans do not call for calling union experts in these hearings. However, there is a great likelihood that the record will be usable for the large farm corporations.

Meanwhile, the record of the California hearings is not being circulated, although to my knowledge at least 3 volumes have been returned by the Government Printing Office. Many organizations are looking for this record for material in their current legislative work, but cannot get it.

One of the problems seems to be whether or not the committee will find that "reds" or agitators are responsible for all or part of the California problem.

Bob Lamb has returned from California and has taken a job with the Farm Security Administration.

There is a good chance that Dies went too far on his recent Mexican burst. Not only has there been considerable resentment at the meddling in the internal affairs of another and friendly country, but even the right-wingers are sore. There is a fascist revolution in preparation. Dies knows about it. He suppressed information about it and whitewashed some of the participants. Much of the preparation has been in his territory. Also, he has, I have been reliably informed, oil company connections. James Ford, Communist vice-presidential candidate, promised the National Negro Congress last night that within several weeks he would expose Dies participation in the Mexican fascist revolution that seems to be just over the horizon. Ford has just returned from Mexico. Dies has scheduled his "hearings" on Mexico for two weeks before the Mexican election. He will hold them on the border. He cannot subpoena witnesses from Mexico, so he will listen only to those who want to fill the record with their opinions-which means anti-administration people.

Enclosed is an excerpt from the Congressional Record which I thought you might want to add to your files on the FBI.

Let me hear from you soon.

Harold Weisberg