

May 28, 1940

Dear Cameron,

Of all the officially-inspired "Fifth-Column" stories, and there are many, I have been able to discover only one that involves an industry or an industrialist. This is it.

In order to take on and leave off passengers, mail and freight in Colombia, South America, Pan American Airlines was forced to purchase a Colombian airline. Its name is (approximately) Scoto. The personnel of this airline, a large one, is almost exclusively German, which it was when it was bought some time ago. The State Department has said absolutely nothing about it, but they are quite worried. They want Juan Trippe, Pan American president, to fire the Germans but he evidently feels otherwise about it. The State Department is doubly concerned because of Trippe's personal popularity on the Hill. However, if they can do nothing about it in the near future, there will probably be an effort to get a Congressional investigation. In this day of hysteria, if they play their hand properly, they will probably be able to get it. The airline was purchased, I have been informed, during last summer.

The quietest operation on the Hill is only a week old and seems to be the only unused story on the so-called national defense bill. The only dispute about this legislation is how it is to be financed. The New Deal has advanced no plan and the Republicans are calling for taxation to "pay as we go". However, since last week Barney and Kelley, president of the American Bankers' Association, have had ^{two} men on the Hill polling

those Members they believe will say nothing about it. They are interested in presenting Baruch's solution to this problem, a 3½ % National sales tax to pay for our armaments. I have learned that these men report that the project can be put over before the end of the session if action is commenced immediately. They are now selecting the Congressman and Senator who will introduce their bill. I am hopeful that before I mail this I'll have their names as well as those of the two men, who I don't know.

Baruch is pretty close to the President and there is a fair chance that if he does introduce such legislation—that is, have it introduced—it will be with the knowledge of the President. It may even get the approval of the Administration.

Sunday
~~XXXXXXXX~~ night I went to one of the local double bill movies and was surprised to hear Mrs. Roosevelt in an RKO newsreel endorsing the Red Cross drive say, "If we turn away from the need of others we align ourselves with those forces which are bringing about this suffering and which we must eventually try to defeat". I am told that she said identically the same thing on the radio program devoted to the same thing.

Inclosed is a copy of the Congressional Record with an insertion by Isolationist Republican Senator Gerald Nye of North Dakota of an article by Henry L. Menken in the Baltimore Sun.

Also inclosed is a typed page entitled "National Defense Contract Clause"

which I was told by the person from whom it was obtained, a legislative agent for one of the CIO unions, is now included in all Navy contracts. I have not checked at the Navy Department and won't unless you so desire.

For the past week rumors of preparation for American conscription have been rife, but I have no proof of any of them. Today, for instance, a friend told me of having been informed by a friend in the GPO that 7,000,000 draft cards had just been printed or ordered, probably ordered. This, I take it is what Helen was interested in last week. Saturday night I was told by an employee of the Department of Labor that he had been given a card to fill out reflecting his military training and other capabilities that might be of value to the government in case of war. I have also been informed of the circulation of a questionnaire asking for substantially the same information in the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. I don't doubt that there is some truth in these rumors, but I am inclined to pay little attention to them because ~~many~~ newspapermen in this town have pipelines to all the agencies, and it would be impossible to hush up such a story. It would have seen the light of day by this time if true as represented to me by many informants.

Government employees and their unions are concerned and a little annoyed at the plans of the Navy Department not to hire new employees through the Civil Service Commission. This administration, after once staffing its many new agencies by patronage, has leaned toward the civil service lists for its newer employees. Almost everything here is under Civil

Service, particularly the Navy Department. As the program gets under way some jobs will be created, the Workers Alliance claims a maximum of 500,000 or 600,000, and although it will probably be claimed that in the interests of the national defense it will be necessary to select employees more carefully than Civil Service does, the real reason will undoubtedly be patronage. J. Edgar Hoover has had a running battle with the Civil Service Commission for years on this point, he claiming that the persons they recommend are no good—they even certified one Communist in the past, he has stated. So far he has won, too. The Civil Service Commission has made no complaint about the pork-barrel ~~provisions~~ provisions yet, and probably, being part of the administration, wont.

With reference to the Navy contract clause several pages earlier, this practically requires manufacturers to maintain large staffs of labor spies, and also really demands that their vendors do likewise. In this connection, the Navy, Army and Maritime Commission have staunchly opposed the Oppressive Labor Practices Act, although this bill, actually, is none of their business. They claim that a prohibition on labor espionage, etc., is not in the interest of national defense. I hope to attach a separate memo on the debate on this bill.

If time permits I will also include a memo on the current wave of anti-alien legislation and the campaign against Harry Bridges.

John Lewis left unexpectedly for New York yesterday morning, and I think, if you check into it among the CIO people in New York, you will find that he made himself clear on the subject of left-wing politics.

I have just gotten what is probably the most authoritative information that can be obtained about the questionnaires I mentioned a page above. For your information, it comes from the solicitor of the Department of Labor, one of the agencies in which the alleged questionnaires were a legedly circulated. The War Department requested the personnel chief of the Department of Labor to obtain from the various heads of the bureaus in that Department a list of all employees who have had military training and are in the reserves. This is probably what has happened elsewhere in the Government. In order to prepare this information the bureau heads need not question any of their employees because the original employment blanks contain this information.

In this connection two bill have been introduced militarizing the Civilian Conservation Corps, notwithstanding the name and purposes of this project. Both are enclosed. The first, H.R. 9884, was introduced by Jennings Randolph of West Virginia, and provides that all enrollees must receive 8 hours of instructions in drill and tactics. Jed Johnson of Oklahoma is the author of the second, numbered H.R. 9885, which provides that enrollees receive instruction in tactics and drill not more than 6 hours each week and further provides that materiel needed be supplied by the Secretary of War. Both bills have been referred to the Committee on Labor and it may be that the administration is thus sidetracking them. There has been nondebate or discussion on these measures.

Manny Celler has introduced a joint resolution a copy of which I inclose,

inviting J. Edgar Hoover to spend the extra millions he had appropriated to him in labor espionage. This resolution is numbered H.J.Res. 553, which indicates its origin in the House and requires Senate approval. This resolution, as you can see, grants broad, almost unlimited authority, the way things are today. In addition, it specifically provides that on all such investigations the ban on wire-tapping in the law shall not apply.

Although Celler announced last week that he was going to offer an amendment to the relief appropriation prohibiting Communists from getting on, he didn't do so and actually spoke against the amendment when it was offered. It passed, none theless, even though such a law has been held unconstitutional by the court, and it was pointed out during the very limited debate. This amendment was passed under what is known as a "two minute rule", limiting all debate to two minutes and giving the proponent control of that limited time.

The Rules committee was supposed to hold hearings today, executive and public, on several proposals, including the private bill for the deportation of Harry Bridges. For some unannounced reason they postponed these hearings until tomorrow. When the Rules committee met last week it heard Congressman Thomas C. Hennings, Jr., a Democrat from the 11th Congressional District of Missouri, including part of St. Louis. This was not public session, but I have learned what happened. Hennings is the author of a resolution calling for ~~the~~ an investigation of Mexico. He has also sponsored several pieces of unpassed legislation aimed at Mexico. When he appeared before the Rules committee in executive session

he told that that Secretary of State Hull approved his resolution. This was the truth. Hull saw Hennings and told him that he approved the investigation. However, Hull did not and doesn't want the investigation to be approved and to function. He merely wanted to use this method to intimidate and frighten the Mexican Government. Hull is exceedingly emotional about the Mexican business and will be very sorry if this investigation becomes a fact. Inclosed are copies of the two resolutions Hennings has introduced and which are pending. The appropriation resolution makes available, if passed unammended, an unusually large sum of money for a House investigation. There is a story behind Hennings and these resolutions which might be subtitled, "Why I Raised My Son to be a Congressman." Hennings father, Thomas C. Hennings, Sr., is:

Vice president and a director of the Mercantile Commerce Bank and Trust Co., of St. Louis, and his fellow director is Alex. Fraser, who is president of the Shell Pipeline Co., the Shell Petroleum Corp., and the Wolverine Petroleum Corp. and a director of the Shell Union Oil Co., which, of course, have more than an academic interest in Mexico. Hennings, in speaking of his resolution, said he presented it at the request of a constituent. Both his father and Fraser look like constituents. The following four members of the Rules committee are opposed to the resolution not because of any friendship for the Mexican people but because they are afraid of the precedent they would set if they gave it a rule: Clark of North Carolina, Delaney of New York, Lewis of Colorado, and Sabath (chairman) of Illinois. Sabath is liberal the others are not.

The Republicans seem to have pretty much put an end to the talk of a coalition cabinet. This was one of the most political manoeuvres in a long time. Roosevelt was pressuring them under the "national defense" hysteria and they were playing along for a while. They never had any intention of letting any Republicans into the cabinet, according to Minority Leader Joe Martin of Massachusetts, but for a while they couldn't let on. They got out of it pretty easy when Landon called upon the President to declare himself on the third term, and they are going to keep talking about his answer, with frequent references to Calvin Coolidge. Calvin's ghost stalked the Capital again yesterday. During his administration there was a move afoot to repair the roof of the Capital because it seemed that there was danger of it falling in. He saved money by not doing it. An engineering survey has been made and it seems that our legislators may suddenly be killed by one fall, except those who play hockey. A copy of Report 2310, made yesterday, is inclosed. The Capital Architect has been for these improvements for more than a year but he hasn't scared the economy-minded legislators enough.

I will not have time to prepare a separate memo on the once-called Oppressive Labor Practices Act which the Senate passed yesterday and sent to the House. The bill now, rather than outlawing really constitutes an oppressive labor practice. La Follette should have never voted for it as amended. The debate on the bill is chiefly about other things, particularly a line and the mysterious fifth column. The War

and Navy Departments and Maritime Commission opposed it to the end, and their opposition meant something. It limits the employment of non-citizens and provides for penalties for the employment of Communists and bundists. Jesus how clear this will be to the NAM boys, and how thin and completely illegal it is. Peculiarly enough, the ineffectual Majority Leader, Barkley, made a half-hearted effort to ease the blow. La Follette accepted every amendment with one exception and himself took a couple of ounces of heart out. Debate on this, if it can be called that, took up about as much time as any other measure this session and more than most get in the House. The bill is so bad that only 20, the very worst, voted against it. Until the bill was so slapped out of shape it was hardly talked about, except in unfavorable editorials. However, with its passage, all the reactionary commentators pounced upon it and now designate it the "Civil Liberties Bill". It is a sad end to the Civil Liberties Committee. Chase Hoffman put the needed flourish on when he, independently, in the House, called for the committee's dissolution as a part of the fifth column, together, of course, with the labor board and the CIO.

During the ~~business~~ Debate on Reorganization Plan No.5, which the House passed yesterday, there was as little attention paid to the issues. In fact, it is unusual today when anybody in either house talks directly on a bill. On the change of the Immigration and Naturalization Division from the Department of Labor to the tender mercies of J. Edgar Hoover and the attorney general the die-hards called for the dismissal of Fanny Perkins and said they were for the bill only because it took the power to protect such ~~Comm~~unists as Harry Bridges from her.

Noah Mason of the Dies Committee remembered that the committee had affidavits proving that someone in the National Youth Administration had been promoted as soon as it was discovered that he was a Communist, following an investigation. Jerry Voorhis arose to point out that this person, from California, was promoted after the investigation by a priest and others proved that he was not a Communist, but way before he got around to saying that Voorhis said, addressing himself to the question of the fifth column (emphasis mine): "May I also say a word about some other things that have been said previously today. We have heard today the "fifth column" completely-identified identified completely with a certain labor organization. That is a distortion of the truth. " and so forth. And Voorhis is supposed to be one of the liberals and friends of labor.

Probably this does not really show how completely hysterical and mad our legislators are. Here are two of the several observations made on the floor of the House yesterday during the "debate" on the reorganization plan. Carolina O'Day, Mrs. FDR's friend: " I am afraid that my good friend (reference to Noah Mason, who is not her good friend, or any kind of a friend, or good) is overcome by the hysteria which now seems to be sweeping over the country". Sammy Dickstein, chairman of the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, who knew nothing about FDR's intentions until they appeared in the press: In view of the sentiment now prevailing in this House I feel that nothing I can say will change the stand the House has taken on this Reorganization Plan". (This was before the vote).

Twice again today Marcantonio was the only dissenting vote on administration "national defense" bills. Was the vote on the airplane bill, there were 403 who were recorded, one of the largest, if not the largest, votes of the year. There only are 435 Members, and some are usually out of town, sick, or at the ball game. It shows how they are all anxious to be recorded for the day when they stand for reelection, as they all do. The other bill passed, with a few less votes, allows, the President's pretty speech of two days ago notwithstanding, for a 48-hour week in shipyards. Thus are the "social gains" of the past 7 years preserved.

Norris has let it be known among his friends that when the reorganization plank shifting the immigration service to the Department of Justice comes up in the Senate for approval he will speak and vote against it. In spite of this I feel he will not, or at least not much. He has failed to vote against any of the "national defense" bills and was ~~was~~ completely silent during the debate yesterday on the La Follette bill.

The executive council of the CIO will meet here next week. I don't have their agenda, but it seems likely that the little act John Lewis pulled last year at the convention about resigning might be repeated, likewise his anti-red diatribe.

When things get any worse here we will be in the war.

Harold