

June 17, 1940

Dear Danston,

Somewhat reminiscent of the operations of England's Cliveden set is the party Mrs. Edward Bruce McLean (née Mrs. E.B. McLean) threw at her home "Friendship" yesterday. Here are some of the guests:

The British Ambassador;

Sir Willett and Lady Lewis;

Secretary of War and Mrs. Harry R. Woodward;

Mr. Justice Frank Murphy;

Senate Majority Leader and Mrs. Alben Barkley;

Senator Henry F. Ashurst;

Senator Arthur Capper;

Senator and Mrs. Hiram Johnson;

Representative and Mrs. Martin Dies;

Representative Sol Bloom (Chairman House Foreign Relations Committee);

Admiral and Mrs. Henry Land (Maritime Commission);

Mr. and Mrs. Fulton Lewis, Jr. (Mutual network news commentator who fired Kibben's initial radio address);

Dr. and Winifred Overholser;

Joseph Hergshelmer;

Mr. and Mrs. John L. Lewis.

This is not the first time John has attended these strictly swank affairs and I have heard of another occasion on which he was entertained by Mrs. McLean. She is no great liberal. You will notice

That none of these can today be considered a prolabor person. Most have public records of antilabor activity.

Secretary of Interior Ickes today announced the formation of a national resources bureau within that Department to study, for the national defense, what the state of our national resources is. Running this show is E. K. Barlow, assistant secretary, who has a strange background for an assistant cabinet member. He got his first big break while in the employ of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency, of Roanoke, Va., and Bluefield, West Virginia. Baldwin-Felts had a permanent place in the history of American labor. They loaded some of their most competent employees on a flatcar behind a Gatling gun back in 1892-1893 during a miners' strike in the West Virginia coal fields and drove them through the tent colonies of the starving and freezing miners' families. These thugs went up and down the tracks shooting the gun. They decimated the populations and Paint and Cabin Creeks. When Rockefeller wanted a miners' strike at his Cripple Creek, Colo., operations broken a year or so later he imported Baldwin-Felts thugs who, even for Baldwin-Felts men, did a bloody job.

Also of interest to labor is the fact that quietly and behind the scenes it hasn't come out yet-Senator William H. King has succeeded in having two bills amended in the Senate committee to which they had been referred after House passage so that, if passed as amended, the provisions of the Wages and Hours Act would not apply to Puerto Rico. The more recent of these, which I have been informed was tacked onto a

relief bill, is so drafted that, on a day when there are few liberals on the floor, a two-word/^{amendment}would repeal the entire act. It would be necessary only to replace the words " Puerto Rico" with the words "United States". The other amendment is attached to a bill providing that Virgin Islanders, who are Americans, can be admitted to one of Washington's government hospitals.

King is standing for re-election this year, with the endorsement of William Green. His opponent (there are two, but the one who really has a chance) is Congressman Abe Murdock, of the Smith committee. Murdock is one of the more liberal Members. He has, from the beginning, opposed the Dies committee even to the extent of voting against it. He led the floor fight against the Smith amendments. He voted against the deportation of Harry Bridges, etc. There is no question of his popularity with Utah voters, but he has no dough and reports that his key people are being approached by King's crowd, who have dough. Murdock was giving a resounding ovation at the recent Utah Democratic Convention. Green's endorsement followed Murdock's submission, with ~~King~~ Arthur Healey (Dem., Mass.) of a minority report severely critical of the majority report of the Smith committee.

If you have looked at the bills and reports I send you from time to time you have noticed that Jerry Voorhis has redrafted his registration bill four times. The second draft (the third is only a week old, and the fourth a few days) has the approval of the House Judiciary Committee and may, if Congress hands around long enough, come up. If it does, it will pass.

Adjournment still is not settled, but the chances get slimmer with each Nazi success. Frankly, I can't see any reason for the administration's obvious effort to get Congress home, unless they plan something too raw for even this Congress, and the way things look now even a declaration of war wouldn't fit into that category. Since his speech of a month ago FDR has had Congress his way. Whenever he hasn't gotten what he asked for he has gotten more. The boys who aren't following him are way ahead, as the bills and resolutions also show. There is nothing he could want that he couldn't get passed, and nothing the Members have wanted seems to have met with disapproval from him. His statement when asked at his press conference a week ago about adjournment reflects his feeling about Congress. He said, "They can stay around as long as they like."

Most of the talk today was about the French Navy. It seems that it and the Italian Navy combined are ~~more~~ enough to handle the present British fleet, with the help of what little the Nazi's still have. The fear seems to be that that makes it tough for us. If you remember the Senate Naval Affairs Committee report that I sent you a month ago you will remember that they took the line that the US need have no fear because no one without a Navy as powerful as ours can bother us. This is also the line that those few who have spoken against, in their own ineffectual way, the defense bills have taken. If the Nazi's get the French ships it will be a strong blow against the few down here who speak of the possibility of our getting into this war by minding business other than our own.

Competent Latin American observers and experts here are about concerned against the interventionist position the administration has taken with regard to South America. They fear that the administration must mean business, otherwise all the false inspired stories, the sending of large naval detachments, etc., they say, would be pointless. There has been considerable talk about our building naval bases in the ~~Saribax~~ Caribbean and on continental South America, but in the week just ended the emphasis on "Hemisphere defense" has increased so much that some of these observers are predicting an administration slogan of "One Hemisphere, One Nation", and action along this line.

A political exile from one of these countries, a liberal who would be assassinated by those in power if he were to return to his native country, gives a different explanation of Dictator Vargas' much discussed speech than any observers have made to date. He says that although a fascist Vargas does not desire Nazi intervention or invasion in Brazil. Brazil, the strongest South American nation, is more concerned about American activity in South America. His interpretation of Vargas' speech is that Vargas was warning the United States that he ~~it~~ doesn't want any of our naval bases in or near ~~ixxxxx~~ Brazil and that, if we don't take his advice, we will find the civilians there hostile.

For the past year, under Admiral Leahy, we have been strengthening Puerto Rico to use as "an American Gibraltar." Yet there are practically no Puerto Ricans employed on this work, even in the most menial tasks.

I should have pointed out on page 3 that exemptions from the Wages and Hours Act for Puerto Rico is not only an open invitation for wholesale importations of American sweatshops. Last year when the Associated Farmers opened their big drive against the Act it was with a Puerto Rico amendment. Once such an amendment becomes law they have hopes, as do others, of extending it by judicial interpretation, to cover the agricultural packing, etc, industries in which they are personally quite interested.

You have probably noticed within the past few days a series of stories on the activity of Italian consular agents in the United States. Handling of these stories makes it look like something just discovered. Nothing could be farther from the truth. It is very closely connected with the pro-Ally sentiment and is a direct outgrowth of Italy's entrance into the war.

From time to time in the past some of the things Italian diplomatic agents have done have gotten into print. Several years ago terrorization of the Italian working population of Bethlehem, Pa. & Johnstown, Pa., one of the two, and particularly of workers in Bethlehem Steel, by these agents, created a slight stir. Last year, right before Ken folder, Jack Spivack had an unsigned series on West Coast Italian consular threats and espionage on American workers in that publication. Some of his documents were startling. Right before his death Paul Y. Anderson had a piece in the Nation along the same lines. However, beginning with the invasion of Poland, although

various Government agencies have known of the intervention of Italian diplomatic representatives in domestic affairs they have deliberately done nothing about it. Perhaps the best reason given for this is the reason Jerry Voorhis gave Girolamo Valenti, anti-fascist Italian language newspaper editor from New York. "We don't want to do anything to make Mr. Mussolini angry. It is not the policy of the government", he said. This is an approximate quote. I can get the exact one if you want it. Valenti, after great difficulty, has gotten to testify before the Dies committee, which shut him up as soon as he started to do a real job. They took his files and steadfastly refused to put them in the record or return them. Even after the brief testimony he gave, Valenti told us that night we had the famous little dinner party at Pat Jackson's, at least three Italian OVRA agent fled this country. Valenti's paper, La Parola, follows the Dubinsky line, I believe. He made the statement above not only at the dinner party but also at a press conference Pat arranged for at the National Press Club two days later. The New York Police Department, which touched off the recent stories, must have known about it for a long time. Among the other similar things the Dies committee has suppressed is the fact that the Counsellor of the Italian Embassy here, Giuseppe ~~XXX~~ Cosmelli, extended his counsel to native American fascist leaders. They learned this last May, make a few gestures as though they were going to do something about it, then forgot the incident. It strikes me as a bit humorous that Valenti is now scheduled to reappear before the Dies committee, particularly because the second time I testified before

that committee Dies observed, when I mentioned Valenti's name, "Oh, I know that bird. He's a Communist".

Several weeks ago I told you of the private dispute between the State Department and Pan American Airways. It has been settled ~~quietly~~ quietly. Trippe has dismissed all the German employees of his line in Colombia.

There is not much that I might say about the debate on the Bridges deportation bill. I enclose the pages of the Congressional Record that deal with it. It was a new low, sickening to most of the correspondents in the gallery at the time, even those who are conservative. Some left because they actually couldn't stand it.

Under separate cover more State Department releases and bills and resolutions.

Have you noticed that the projected legislation, some of it by this time law, that I have sent you during the past month constitute a clear pattern for American fascism?

Some students from Michigan State College have communicated to you something of their antiwar activities. Several of them have been here for several days and got as far as the White House, where they got a cool reception. Tomorrow I am getting details, and if there is ~~anything~~ anything in it I'll send it up there.

I am hoping to get up to New York early this week. I am also hoping to get paid for the Pittman material.

Yours.