

Wednesday 5/15/40

Dear Cameron,

The only good news this week is chiefly personal. The papers paid no attention to the indictment of Maynes, announced by the grand jury yesterday afternoon. Two counts of forgery and one of false pretense. A perjury count still hangs, having been voted. The defense will undoubtedly stall and I don't know when the case will go to trial. He will be arraigned Friday and will be allowed 5 days in which to demur, which he probably will, in the hope that action on the sennurrer will take so long that the session of the court, which ends here in June, will be so far gone that the case will not come up until the fall term.

There has as yet been any Congressional comment, largely because the District Attenrey released the indictments along with a long string of other. There was a great deal of confusion, and many did not know whether or not they had actually been released. Dies had no comment either. He did, however, postpone a speech he was going tom make today on the dangers of the native fifth column, which he says is the best organized of all.

Dies almost precipitated a fist fight in the cloak room of the House yesterday, which he got Congressmen Faddis and Schaefer (reformed Progressive, now pro-fascist, of Wisconsin) to kid each other about the European situation. Tempers got so hot that Schaefer reached into his pocket, drew out a fat roll of bills, slammed it on a table and told Faddis that if he was so damned anxious for us to help England, there was his fare to Liverpool. Faddis, Dies, and many of the other members are, of course, very pro-Ally. Schaefer, who comes from a largely

German district, is not.

Another thing that electrified the clock-rooms yesterday was the sudden rumor that the SEC was going to close the stock exchange. No one knows where or how the rumor started and whether or not it was based upon substantial information. This came shortly after duPont started to fall. There was also some talk along the same lines today, but there really seems not much chance that such drastic action will be taken.

Also unknown is whether or not there will actually be Congressional action in this session on the various amendments to the National Labor Relations Act. Some competent Hill observers and Members of the House will tell you that there is not much chance of action before adjournment. Others, equally sapient, say action will begin next week.

Tomorrow the House is scheduled to begin consideration of the WPA appropriation. At this moment none of the members of the House liberal bloc, so called, seems willing to say that he expects to liberalize the bill in any way, except, perhaps, through amendment eliminating the 18-months provision. This seems possible. In some quarters there is a hope that the waiting period will be reduced to two weeks. It is now 30 days. This is not as likely.

Since the President's speech of last Friday night the temper here seems to have changed. All groups seem to take it as a declaration that sooner or later we are getting in. The isolationists and liberals have been critical of it, and the pro-war gang is pleased. Likewise with Hull's

several speeches, which followed.

Tomorrow I will mail you, slow mail, a complete set of the State Department press releases beginning with the first of February. This will include the whole Sumner Welles trip, what preceded it, what has followed, and all speeches made by or under the sanction of the State Department or its officials or by other government officials when the speeches were on foreign affairs.

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By the way, I ~~gathered~~ worked today on your Pittman query and collected a little information. This is a pretty tough assignment, and because I have not yet received Dick's letter I'd certainly suggest that he send it right away. I have some other State Department information and opinions which I will send in with the Pittman memo.

The president's special national defense budget is expected tomorrow. No one really knows what it will provide, but most of those to whom I spoke today during the short while I was on the Hill believe it will be about a billion, and with heavy emphasis on the naval end. I didn't get over on the Senate side today, but I heard that Elmer ("Silver") Thomas, of Oklahoma, chairman of a subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Affairs made a speech in which he said that this country could, within 24 hours put 1,000,000 fully-equipped men on the field. If this is true I will send you his speech tomorrow. It is, if true, extremely significant, for Thomas is an administration man, and it will indicate that there is a sentiment against the special defense appropriation within the Democratic ranks. The Senate vote on the Civil

Aeronautics Authority reorganization bill shows that not only was real pressure exerted from the top, but also that the administration was able to whip into line most of the stragglers. The takes on added importance if you know how intensively the CAA reorganization was fought here. No one gave it a chance of success in the Senate, but it won on a party-line vote, with only a handful of ~~Senators~~ Democrats joining the solid Republican side. This bill, in itself, did not justify the pressure that was brought to bear by the palace guards. I believe, because ~~it~~ it was an FDR issue they did, not wanting him to loose face at this time. At the same time, some of the administration vote in the Senate can also be attributed to this, indicating that, with war rushing in on seven-league boots, they are once again willing to follow the President's lead.

Speaking of pressure, it seems, from what I have been able to pick up, without any substantiation, that Schweinhaut's report on the Detroit cases was angled under instructions from Bob Jackson, who, in turn, got instructions from the White House.

The La Follette bill, the only legislative product of the investigations of the Senate Civil Liberties Committee to date, is scheduled to come up in the Senate any day now. The bill is not conceded much of a chance. It outlaws industrial espionage, industrial munitions, etc. The opposition to the bill exploits Diesian logic: If employers are not allowed to use spies against labor it will be easier for racketeers and gangsters to insinuate their way into labor unions, which will work against the laborers themselves; if employers can't ~~do this~~

"scrutinize the affiliations" of prospective employees, "agents of foreign powers" would find it easy to get into our munitions industries; the Senate should not weaken any of the new safeguards against espionage and sabotage. These arguments are, on the face, spurious. Gangsters and racketeers in unions are employer agents, almost universally. There is no prohibition on regular personnel investigations. Even more obvious is the meaning of the "espionage and sabotage" beef. Labor spies wont catch any such people, and to date, the Department of Justice, for all its talk and large appropriations for the purpose, hasn't found any. I am amazed at the number of debates and issues into which the legislators today inject this false propaganda with attendant publicity. If the people don't look behind their lathes and under their benches for spies its not the fault of our Congressmen.

Quite a flurry was created here by a story in the Times-Herald yesterday. It seems that Cissy Patterson thought the tail end of the Pearson and Allen column was worthy of better play, so she rewrote it and front-paged it under their by-line. This I gather from what I have been told. The story was that FDR told an Iowa delegation led by Senator Gillette that he was not a ~~xxxx~~ looking for a third term. Gillette was immediately snowed under a barrage of telephone calls, much to his enjoyment, and he refused to either affirm or deny the story. What really happened is that Gillette lead an anti-third term delegation to the White House in an effort to smoke the President out or embarrass him. Gillette was one of those ~~xxxxxx~~ the administration attempted unsuccessfully to purge. FDR gave his stock story: he doesn't want a third term. This is his fingers-

crossed answer. He doesn't want a third term, but if the people demand him of if national security demands it, then he is willing to make the personal sacrifice. There is little doubt that he will not only run for a third term, but that his boys are working overtime greasing the skids. In this connection, I heard that he has a new brain-truster, Cruse, who brain-trusted Jim Mead race in NY.

Also in this vein, and I have no definite information on this, the DuPonts are behind Willkie. I have heard that Joust Shouse, who ran the Liberty League, is active on Willkie's behalf here.

The banquet last night of the Daughters of the Depression, sponsored by the Workers Alliance, turned out to be a neat pro-third term show. During the preparations for this convention and the banquet there were continual scraps within the organization as soon as Dave Lasser's plan became apparent to those who were familiar with the program. Indirectly Mrs. FDR, and directly Senator Pepper and Caroline O'Day and Oscar Chapman, assistant secretary of the Interior. Mrs. Roosevelt hoped for a change in psychology, the others for the reelection of FDR. Congressman Marcentonio made an anti-war speech, at which Mrs. FDR failed not to show her displeasure. He said the problems of the unemployed and needy would not end with their being sent against bullets and shrapnel. Presiding was the Wife of Assistant Secretary of State Grady, who, of course, added to the third-term business. Her hubby is the No. 4 man in the State Department. He pulled a nifty several weeks ago when he had the daughter of a South American

diplomat crowned queen of the apple festival at Winchester, Va., an important function for that section of the country and an annual affair always well-publicized and usually photographed to death. I think Lasser's performance in this convention ~~was~~ pretty definitely ended the possibility of affiliation with Labor's Non-Partisan League.

The affiliation of INPL and the National Negro Congress became official this week. Even since the meeting of the Congress several weeks ago it has become the target of the most regular red-baiting barrage in the House-even more than the Communist Party itself.

The drive against the Communist Party is on again in the House, however. It comes up periodically. This week the House Immigration, urged by such great civil libertarians as Homer Chaillaux, adopted several. The worst is enclosed. It is a loosely-drafted document that could actually cover Roosevelt, the Socialists, the Social Democrats, the Trotskyites, the Lovesténites and God alone knows what else. I believe that this will prevent its passage. There is a bet or chance that the bill aimed avowedly at Harry Bridges, also adopted, will come up. Its author, Leland Ford, regularly spends the tax-payers money extending his remarks on Bridges, loading the Congressional Record with all sorts of slander and hokum. He yesterday called Bridges "The West Coast Communist Leader". Ford offered his bill in indignation over Dean Landis' report. Yesterday Ford made one of the "fifth column" speeches to which I referred above, this on on HR 8310, the enclosed bill. At its conclusion Congressman Rich, of Pennsylvania, one of the worst reactionaries on either side, out of order, said, "How about putting them in concentration camps".

Sammy Dickstein, whose committee and investigation was stolen by Dies, is chairman of the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization. His sole objection to these bills is a technical one. He believes that in their present condition they will be declared unconstitutional. He has announced his approval of their objectives.

Quietly, Senator Wheeler has obtained permission for his committee which is allegedly (by which I mean it actually is not) investigating the telegraph industry to sit and take testimony during the recess of Congress. This committee is a subcommittee of the Interstate Commerce Committee. Its investigation has to do with the planned merger of Postal with Western Union. The union, of course, is fighting this merger and seems to have forestalled it for a year. They charge that ~~the merger~~ the merger is not in the national interest, that there is plenty of business for both companies, that it will put people out of work. Complaints of telegraph service have been numerous these past few months, and it has been rumored that Postal is giving poorer service deliberately.

Another subcommittee of the Interstate Commerce Committee will hold public hearings beginning on May 21. This is the wire-tapping committee. Its first investigation will deal with Rhode Island. Senator Green, of that State, is the father of the committee.

There are some other items of a military or diplomatic nature that I have been working on that I won't be able to finish until tomorrow. I will attempt to send them in then. If I don't get the State Department releases tomorrow I'll send them in as soon as I do. I didn't get your wire until

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too late to change my schedule for this week, but I will hereafter.

I assume that today you sent me what was due me. You will hear from me tomorrow if there was the regular slipup. I got a check for \$15.00 signed by Gleason today, for the stockings story, etc. This is five ~~dollars~~ dollars less than I believe we agreed upon, and does not include \$3.25 in expenses on that and the two accompanying queries, one on the cotton stamp palm and the other on oil filters. I chased all over town on them and spent a whole day on it. Please send me a check for the balance.

I'll also send the ship stuff in tomorrow or the next day. I have most of it in hand.

On the Pittman query, please, in addition to what you want. specify how much you are going to pay.

Yours

Harold