

# SEEN and HEARD around the NATIONAL CAPITAL By Carter Field



FAMOUS WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

Washington.—Most of the efforts of the bigwigs of the United States Chamber of Commerce were devoted at the annual meeting to soft peddling the firebrands. Probably 90 per cent of the business men in attendance were breathing fire and brimstone privately against the New Deal and all its works. They were bitter against the principles underlying the new tax bill, red-headed about the seizure of private telegrams by the Black committee, vociferous against government ownership of utilities and government competition with private industry, and alarmed about the trend indicated by the national labor relations board. In fact, they didn't like the New Deal.

Some of them had a few kind words about the reciprocal trade agreements, but they were not even united about that.

But—their leaders did not want the "convention" to resolve itself into an anti-New Deal camp-meeting. So they put a quietus on the would-be anti-Roosevelt shouters. It was not entirely successful. Every now and then some fire-eater would get over a short speech in tune with the real frame of mind of the business men present. But not too often.

The answer to which is highly interesting. With the exception of a few of the more optimistic, most of the delegates were afraid President Roosevelt would be re-elected, despite what they believe to be the almost unanimous opposition of business. Not necessarily big business. As a matter of fact, the United States Chamber of Commerce is far from being just big business. Indeed there has been more than a suspicion, from time to time, that what is meant when the average man speaks of big business is just a little snooty about the chamber. It is even said that J. P. Morgan does not worry about what the chamber will do, and is not even interested.

### Hurts Little Business

But the average business man of sufficient stature to attend a chamber meeting does not like the things the New Deal is doing to business, big and little. In fact, he thinks it is doing more to hurt little business than big business—despite constant repetition of the idea that the administration's pet economic idea is the drive against big-

ness. Which makes the silencing of the more violent critics at the meeting all the more interesting—interesting because of the conviction of so many of them that as the cards are now stacked, Roosevelt will be re-elected. That would mean four more years of the same, as they see it, and they do not want to put themselves in the position of mice passing the cat. Maybe the cat will get tired of playing with them and let them go before all the life is choked out.

But—not if they make the cat real mad. Some interesting stories of the troubles some of them had been put to already by bureau of internal revenue men pawing over their old tax returns were told at this meeting. The stories had a quieting influence. They played right into the hands of the leaders seeking to hush too violent open criticism of the administration.

Some of the more optimistic promise that when the Cleveland and Philadelphia conventions are over, when the two platforms have been written and the candidate of the Republicans is named, things may take a different turn.

### Hit Short Sellers

Within a few days, the securities commission is going to crack down on short sellers, plugging an obvious—to the trade—loophole which curiously enough had entirely escaped the New Dealers until now. This is to increase the margin requirements on short sales. To buy shares of stock on the market under the securities commission ruling the speculator has been required to put up 55 per cent of the value. But to sell the same stock he has been required to put up only 10 per cent.

This is one of the reasons, it is believed here, for the heavy decline in American Telephone recently, which has caused considerable embarrassment here, as many far sized holders of this stock are very loyal Roosevelt men—some of them of the "For Roosevelt Before Chicago" variety so highly esteemed by Jim Farley.

Another important reason for the decline of this stock is the proposal to tax intercorporate dividends. Experts on the subject believe the American Telephone company would have a very difficult time simplifying its corporate structure. If it could absorb the New England Bell, New York Bell, Chesapeake and Potomac, Southern Pacific, and all the other operating companies in which it owns practically all the stock, and put them into one big corporation, that would avoid much of the tax problem as it stands in the bill passed by the house.

But there are serious objections to doing this. Among other things,

it would make much more difficult and delicate the matter of local relations. Officials of the local operating companies are treated with much more consideration in the territory in which they operate than they would be if they were employees of the big company. In fact, the difference here is difficult to exaggerate. It would arouse an entirely different feeling toward the local companies on the part of the customers, the public generally, and the city councils and legislatures.

### Onerous Alternative

Yet the alternative—paying taxes on the dividends of the subsidiary companies—would be very onerous, indeed, and there is not too much hope that the senate, in rewriting the tax bill, will eliminate this intercompany dividend tax. In fact, the idea is very dear to President Roosevelt's heart. It might be termed his pet idea No. 2 in the whole tax measure. No. 1 being getting the camel's nose under the edge of the tent in the drive against bigness.

What the pro-New Deal stockholders in Telephone who have been squealing about the communications commission probe want to know is what public purpose is served by putting the company to the necessity of revamping its corporate structure. What they hope for is an amendment, which would put all utilities in a separate classification, just as the railroads and banks are put in a separate classification in the house tax bill.

The railroads simply must be relieved of this intercompany tax plan, they point out, because in many instances they are prevented by laws and leases, as well as other difficulties, from simplifying their corporate structures.

### Fear Repercussions

Department of Agriculture officials are just a little nervous over possible repercussions from President Roosevelt's speech in New York. Especially the President's laying so much stress on the community of interests between the garment workers in New York and the farmers who produce the food of the nation. And his statement that if the people of New York city alone could buy all the food they wanted, it would require three million more acres of good land to supply their needs.

For, as agriculture officials sadly point out—very privately of course—Americans bought foreign agricultural products which, had they been grown in the United States, would have taken a lot more than three million additional acres to produce.

Brushing aside such products as coffee, cocoa beans, tapioca, sago and arrowroot, imports of all of which increased, but which are not produced commercially in the United States, there were imports of foreign foodstuffs which could very easily have been produced in this country, thus providing buying power for the products of American industry, and achieving the very sort of solidarity on which the President laid so much stress.

For instance, in 1935 this country imported 38,870,000 bushels of wheat, 43,242,000 bushels of corn, 339,000 tons of wheat by-product feeds, 320,623,000 pounds of barley malt, 378,000 head of cattle, 245,851,000 pounds of tallow, 22,675,000 pounds of butter, and quantities of foreign produced fats and oils greater than ever before in history!

Just to give an idea of the increase, 1935 butter imports exceeded those of the previous year by 1,948 per cent—exceeded the five year average by 1,413 per cent!

### Blame AAA Program

Part of all this flood of food and feed imports, of course, was due to the drought. But by far the major portion was due to the AAA program. It was right down the very alley the President was talking about—keeping prices up. Department of Agriculture officials, in their private explanations, say that while the drought upset their plans, there is also the inescapable fact that they overdid curtailment, even had there been no drought.

On one point the agriculture officials are adamant. They do not admit that they overdid the cotton curtailment part of the program, but there are plenty of outside experts who admit it for them.

As a matter of fact, there are senators and representatives from the cotton producing states who are extremely worried about the whole cotton situation. They are not talking about it in public, for it would not be popular back home.

In the year just past Secretary of Commerce Daniel C. Roper, himself a South Carolinian, has had some apparent justification for his contention during the last three years that Brazil is not really a menace. For Brazil has had a crop failure. But farmers do not discontinue growing a crop out of which they have been making money for several years just because they have one crop failure.



Wine Barrels Are Carried Under the Carts.

Prepared by National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.—WNU Service.

SAO MIGUEL of the Azores islands is turning from oranges to pineapples as its chief source of wealth. Excellent oranges are still grown, but since the island lost the British market a few years ago, pineapple culture has occupied agriculturists.

Natives of Sao Miguel hope to develop their island into an "Isle of Pines" which will provide a good part of Europe with practically all its fresh supply of pineapples.

An Englishman, a skilled horticulturist, arrived at Sao Miguel more than eighty years ago to lay out the famous Jose do Canto gardens. It was he who brought the first pineapples to his employer's hothouse. Twenty years later the fruit was shipped to England, each pine in its pot selling for two guineas. England and Germany are now the chief consumers of Azorian pines, France and continental Portugal following.

The plant, which is here of the smooth-leaved Cayenne variety, is grown under glass, special beds of fermenting heath or some other mountain shrub being provided. All the plants are brought to blossom at the same time by a process of smoking, the value of which was accidentally discovered many years ago when a carpenter, working in one of the pineapple houses, chanced to set fire to a pile of shavings. To the surprise of the grower, the plants, instead of being spoiled, burst into flower. By this method practically all the plants in a hothouse can be marketed at the same time, many months earlier than formerly.

Little glass houses shimmer on emerald slopes in various sections of Sao Miguel, the exclusive producer of pineapples in this archipelago. Wrapped in cellophane or packed in excelsior and crated, the fruit is shipped to the European market by a fleet of three vessels owned by the growers. In 1934 about 2,000,000 pines, worth half a million dollars, were exported.

### Tea, Too, Is Grown There.

Another exotic industry on this island is the production of black and green tea, which here retains its original name, "cha." Ever since they discovered the sea route to India and planted their settlements as far afield as Macao (Macau), on the coast of China, the Portuguese have been a tea-drinking nation.

There is an old belief that tea is better if it has not crossed the sea. Whether this is true or not, Azorian tea tastes to some much like the far eastern variety on its native soil. It is consumed locally and shipped to other parts of Portugal.

A number of Chinese were originally imported as instructors in the tea culture, but now only native labor, chiefly female, is employed. The plantations dot the hillsides on the northern side of the island, which has greater moisture than the south coast. The stiff little evergreen shrubs stand in precise rows, very foreign in appearance, contrasting strangely with the familiar European flora about them.

A motor road parallels the coast of Sao Miguel, with connecting crossroads, enabling the traveler to see much of beauty and interest, even in one day ashore, including trips to the two largest volcano craters.

On the country roads are slow-swaying bullock carts, with wove-willow bodies filled with heath for the pineapple houses. Some are of archaic pattern, with solid wheels of the Roman type, their approach heralded by a creaking "song."

Sao Miguel has a deliciously green and restful countryside. Checker-board fields, brown and green, alternate with woods filled with songbirds. These islands, like those of the Madeira and Canary groups, are the habitat of the wild canary of greenish-gray hue. Its glad note is one of the pleasantest features of the Azores.

which still speaks through vents in the hot sulphur-stained crust around the springs.

It is a beautiful picture from the heights, this quiet, sheltered valley with its long, narrow village meandering like a stream through woods and meadows. The lake, on a raised platform of the craters, lies some distance from the settlement, which is a favorite summer resort.

Prescott, the famed historian, came to Furnas as a young man to visit at the summer home of his grandfather, first American consular officer in Sao Miguel, who was appointed in 1795 by President Washington.

Furnas has a thermal establishment, where sulphur and iron baths are available. Near-by fountains supply various kinds of mineral water, the place being noted for the diversity of its waters and the proximity of hot and cold springs.

One deep, cavellike caldron, belching forth boiling mud and steam, is called "The Mouth of Hell." Its evil appearance and the strong smell of sulphur give the impression that this is really an entrance to the abode of His Satanic Majesty.

Stately manorial houses, erected centuries ago, are to be seen throughout Sao Miguel, usually set on the heights. One such house, built in 1724, is a delightfully romantic old place. The big stone-paved kitchen has a chimney-place which is a room in itself. Standing in it, beside the huge brick hearth, one can look up the wide chimney, which towers above the house, to a patch of blue sky. Such chimneys are a distinctive feature of Azorian houses.

### Life of the Inhabitants.

The upper class of Ponta Delgada leads a pleasant life, quiet as compared with the stress of American cities. There is a social club where dancing is a favorite pastime; a coliseum seating 2,000; a sports field for football, tennis, croquet, and handball; a baseball park; and an open-air sea pool built in the rocks by the shore.

There are motion pictures twice a week, chiefly from Hollywood. American influence is apparent in the English spoken throughout the Azores. There seems to be a genuine liking for the United States. The Stars and Stripes are in evidence at every festival. During the World war, Ponta Delgada was an American naval base.

Economically self-contained, the Micaelenses are no less independent when it comes to their social pleasures. In their amateur shows the scenery is apt to be painted locally, the costumes made in the homes of the young men and women who participate. In their singing, dancing, and acting these young people exhibit amazing talent and poise.

The young folks mingle in crowds, but there is here no such free and easy companionship among them as exists in the United States. The chaperon is still in vogue and "balcony courtship" is carried on with its own prescribed etiquette, the girl leaning over the second-story balcony to talk with her admirer on the street below.

The finest sight on the island is the crater of Sete Cidades (Seven Cities). The view from the rim is magnificent. The cup-shaped crater is nearly ten miles in circumference and holds, besides a lake with a hamlet on its shore, pastures and cultivated fields and three volcanic cones due to subsequent eruptions.

Owing to varying depths and deposits, the lake, shaped like the figure 8, and sometimes spoken of as two lakes, is vividly green at one end, brilliantly blue at the other.

The Lindberghs, on their aerial odyssey from Greenland's icy mountains to the steaming jungles of the Amazon, swooped down over this secluded lake.

There are many among the poor of the Azores who have suffered since money orders have ceased to arrive from Manoel or Antonio, who formerly prospered in Providence or New Bedford. The Azorian assets are a stout heart, a willing hand, a productive soil, and a climate which, though damp and rainy six months of the year, is without extremes of temperature.

### Foreign Words and Phrases

Apropos. (F.) Suited to time place or occasion; pertinent; appropriate.

Compte rendu. (F.) Account rendered.

Dolce far niente. (It.) Sweet doing nothing; delightful idleness.

Experto crede. (L.) Believe one who speaks from his own experience.

In toto. (L.) In all; entirely.

Meum et tuum. (L.) Mine and thine.

Nota bene (N. B.). (L.) Note well; take notice.

Peccavi. (L.) I have sinned.

Sic itur ad astra. (L.) Thus one may rise to the stars (i. e., to immortal fame).

Res gestae (pl.). (L.) All the essential circumstances.

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