

SEEN and HEARD around the NATIONAL CAPITAL

By Carter Field
FAMOUS WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT



Washington.—A flood of mail protests, a considerable percentage of which criticized President Roosevelt's lack of action sharply, is what precipitated all the recent talk about a "White House conference" on the sit-down strike situation. Most of the senators and representatives who began talking about this "conference" knew perfectly well that there was nothing the federal government could do, within the Constitution, unless movement of the mails or interstate commerce were directly affected.

But they also knew that something should be done for reasons of political expediency. Some of them hoped to wring from President Roosevelt a scathing denunciation of this method of forcing decisions in labor disputes. That seemed to be what most of the letter writers thought he should have done long since.

Falling this, at least the idea that the President was taking an interest—was holding a conference on the subject—would be a partial reply to the criticism that was pouring in from men and women known in many instances to the senators and representatives as hitherto ardent Roosevelt supporters.

It just so happened, of course, that these complaints from Democrats throughout the country coincided in many instances with the views of the congressmen getting the letters. There has been very little sympathy on Capitol Hill with the sit-down strike, and many ardently pro-Roosevelt legislators thought the President would lose nothing and gain a great deal by coming out strongly against this new labor weapon.

The situation was aggravated by Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins.

Miss Perkins Annoys

Rightly or wrongly, Miss Perkins "backdown" in her letter to Representative John W. McCormack of Massachusetts was hailed as a victory by congressional leaders who had been transmitting protests from constituents to the President. They believe firmly that this letter was ordered by the chief executive.

Incidentally it gave considerable satisfaction to other cabinet members, and quite a few high administration officials, with whom the first lady cabinet member is none too popular.

It seems that Miss Perkins has been annoying some of her fellow New Dealers not only by her actions, but by her lack of terminal facilities in conversation. Washington society has heard descriptions of cabinet meetings at which the secretary of labor rambled on and on, with not a soul present save the President himself who dared interrupt her.

Just recently a group of important personages, about to visit Washington, wished a round table luncheon with a group of government officials. Presence of the government officials at the meeting was approved and arranged for in advance by the White House. The agenda called loudly for representation of the Department of Labor as well as other departments.

Simultaneously came highly unofficial grapevine suggestions from five of the other agencies to be represented: "Couldn't this luncheon be held at the Metropolitan club?"

It was. The Metropolitan club does not admit women.

Snarling Question

The same question that snarls up the Wagner labor relations act—does the federal government have power to regulate something wholly within a state because the effects of that regulation would be important in interstate commerce?—is of the essence in every proposal for the federal government to deal with the sit-down strike situation.

Some very learned constitutional authorities believe that the federal government does have the power—without changing the Constitution—to regulate a factory in Detroit or a coal mine in West Virginia or a steel works in Pennsylvania, on the theory that stoppage of any one of them affects immediately and directly the flow of interstate commerce.

It is curious how often the senators discussing the situation refer to Grover Cleveland. When they apply the illustration of his forceful action, however, they are citing a case where there was never any real question of federal authority. For example, it was the operation of railroads that was involved. There has been no question for a long time that operation of a railroad was interstate commerce, and therefore directly within the power of the federal government.

But there was another point. All the evidence shows that Grover Cleveland acted for one reason, and one reason only. That was that the then railroad strike was holding up the movement of the mails.

So that when critics of present lack of stamina by officials bring up the comparison with Cleveland, they are within the realms of logic

if they apply the criticism to governors of states, mayors of cities or other local officials, but up to date there has been no clear-cut case where application of this comparison to the federal government seems logical.

Can Ask Federal Aid

There has been some loose talk about local governments calling on the federal government for aid but this is scarcely a question calling for new legislation. That power exists today.

For instance, if a sit-down strike should occur in a condensed milk plant in the state of New York, and if the New York state authorities sought by force to eject the strikers from the plant, precipitating riots with which the state forces were unable to cope, the governor of New York could appeal to the President for federal troops to aid him in restoring order.

There has never been any question about the power of the state governors to call for such help, or of the power of the President to extend it if he considered the request justified. It is purely a question of policy with both local and federal executives. No legislation for such an act would be necessary. Indeed, senators studying the situation say that no legislation is likely which could add anything to existing powers.

One development may be forced, however, by the conference on this situation and by subsequent attempts to obtain legislation. Up until now labor leaders have rather avoided responsibility for sit-down strikes. They have affected an attitude of not having planned or ordered them, and of being slightly embarrassed by hot-heads among their lieutenants.

But in any federal move to curb this new weapon it is certain that John L. Lewis and his lieutenants will be forced to take a different position.

Supreme Court

Most of the new arguments for and against President Roosevelt's Supreme court enlargement plan continue to be just as beside the point, and not actually applicable to the controversy, as those advanced originally. Take, for instance, the latest attack on "star chamber" methods by the court in deciding on writs of certiorari, made by Senator Kenneth D. McKellar of Tennessee.

Senator McKellar apparently would have the justices hold in public their discussion of whether or not they would issue a writ of certiorari. In short, all the reasons why the individual justices might think a case should be ordered up from the lower court, to be heard by the Supreme court, should, if the McKellar proposal means anything, be spoken in open court, with newspaper reporters and lawyers and the public present.

Actually, of course, there is never any such public discussion of cases by the court even in cases which are heard. The nearest approach to it is when, in hearing arguments in a case, individual justices ask questions of the counsel.

Sometimes these questions are of profound interest to lawyers trying to figure out how the court will decide the case then being heard. Once in a while the questions make a good newspaper story.

Secret Discussions

It is the secret—"star chamber," Senator McKellar would call it—discussions of the justices later, with no reporters, no interested attorneys, and no public present—where the real views of the justices on the case involved come out—where the real deciding arguments are made.

The present point is that if Senator McKellar's attack on the method of handling writs of certiorari is sound, it would seem to be equally sound that the discussions by the justices on cases which have been formally heard by the court should also be public—not "star chamber."

This would be mighty interesting to lawyers—and reporters. Beyond question, the thing most Washington attorneys would rather do than almost anything in the world would be to hide under a sofa while one of these discussions was going on. But then there are reporters who would like to hide under sofas at cabinet meetings.

However, most lawyers, commenting on the McKellar proposal, take the view that certainly such open discussions would not accomplish the situation desired by the President—or by Senator McKellar. For obviously, if such discussions were in public, there would be considerably more talking than at present, and considerably more oratory addressed out the window—as the diplomats say. Which means that in the nature of things the justices could not resist talking more to the country than to their colleagues. Which, as the senate sessions demonstrate, is scarcely conducive to speed or efficiency—and perhaps not even to sound decisions.

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Springtime in Paris



Spring Scene in a Paris Zoo.

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

SPRING flows across Paris in waves of joy. Tender leaves bring shade to the boulevards.

Horse-chestnut candelabra lighten the masses of new green. In the Jardin des Plantes, the Luxembourg Gardens, and the Bois, hoops, skipping ropes, and all sizes and colors of balls give outlet for a new surge of energy and delight. At Pre Catelan and Armentonville tables and chairs, reappearing after their annual hibernation, invite conviviality. Along the boulevards unscientific but heart-warming braziers, around which cafe patrons clustered all winter, give way to green tubs of pink hydrangeas. Overcoats are laid aside. Windows open wide in unconditional surrender to spring.

Along the Seine the workmen's clubs shine up their houseboats, and ragged laborers, stripping for a sun bath, become as well dressed as any man.

Poor devils along the quays lie for hours on the warm stone stairways, savoring the blessed novelty of being neither cold nor wet. In the industrial suburbs, mild weather lessens the misery.

In the Tuilleries Gardens, human beings suddenly outnumber the statues, and at the Palais Royal, where John Howard Payne wrote "Home, Sweet Home," little boys welcome staunch sailors after adventurous voyages amid the waterspouts of the fountain.

The Gingerbread Fair, with its roaring lions, skin-deep beauty shows, merry-go-rounds, wheels of fortune, and photograph shops, starts its annual round under many aliases.

As the "Fair of the Throne" on the Place de la Nation, this street carnival has its biggest success, for there it is among its own, the common folk who get a thrill out of having gingerbread pigs "baptized" with the names of their proud youngsters.

Under other titles, the Gingerbread Fair later spreads its tents before the Invalides and paves the Avenue de Neuilly with pleasure from the Porte Maillot to the Seine. Along the outer boulevards it competes for custom with cinema and cabaret.

How long it can last, none of the sellers of nougat or spinners of fortune wheels can say. "People don't seem to buy live turtles any more," one veteran sighs.

Plenty of Zoos There.

There are zoos from one end of Paris to the other. Giraffes brush at the clouds with inadequate ears; a fat sea elephant tips its head back like a man gargling, in order to eat fish from the hands of a keeper standing on its back; monkeys chase fleas, lions obey a trainer, and elephants, doing elephantine tricks, collect tips in their trunks.

As for donkeys, ponies, and goats, there are squads of them, each ready to go into action any time a pair of chubby legs straddles its back or a dainty miss of four takes the reins.

Paris offers its children countless simple delights. A youngster can ride a camel, drive a llama or an ostrich, lance rings from a merry-go-round, whirl to music inside a miniature plane, dig in the sand, sail a yacht, or forget the world at a puppet show.

Then there is the Zoo of the Little Ones. Any city might have one. A dozen lambs, two dozen pigs, six donkeys, twenty kids, rabbits, ducklings, guinea pigs, and monkeys to suit the taste—this is the recipe. Paris adds a baby camel and its mother. But that is mere swank. The magic lies in those mutually timorous contacts through which confidence and companionship are established between a child and a pet. Tiny children feed woolly lambs from bottles and squeal with delight when the little beggars suck the nipple off and spill milk down mother's black dress. There is something enormously appealing about being allowed to feed another person's livestock when you are young in Paris in the spring.

Every afternoon, governesses and their well-dressed charges invade the generous expanses of forest, park, and square. On Thursdays, when the schools are out, and Sundays, when everyone is, Paris goes sylvan to an unbelievable degree. Lying on the grass is a major sport. Within smart race tracks at Longchamp or Auteuil, nature lovers stretch out under the sun, some

scarcely raising their heads as prize-seeking hoofs pound by.

The Buttes Chaumont.

Homes of the rich overlook the Parc Monceau, but "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" obtain in the park itself. Working people come in from across the Boulevard de Courcelles as well as children from the aristocratic Avenues Velasquez, Ruysdael, and Van Dyke.

Strangest of the Parisian parks is the Buttes Chaumont, laid out by Haussmann, the boulevard builder, on the site of the old plaster-of-Paris quarries. Rising in the middle of its artificial lake is a seeming mountain, and surrounding verdure glorifies what was once a hideous hole. It is pleasant to think that Haussmann, ruthless wrecker of medieval buildings, could create as well as destroy.

Baron Haussmann did to teeming Paris what L'Enfant had done on paper for a nascent Washington, destined to be the beautiful capital city of a new republic. Haussmann thought in terms of boulevards, with the result that whole regions fell before the hammer of the auctioneer and the onslaught of the house wrecker. But, thanks to him, motorcars move. He was one of the few road builders of his day whose mind was broad enough for anything but pedestrians. His boulevards have brought new notes to a city whose very cobbles have been cemented with human blood.

Spring brings life to the parks and visitors to the Place de l'Opera. People think of the Opera as having always stood there. Yet when the Germans entered Paris in 1871 Garnier's masterpiece was not finished and the Communards, who wreaked their vengeance on hundreds of buildings, spared this splendid structure, down whose grand staircase not an aristocratic evening gown or shirt front had yet passed. The three-acre opera and ballet school, library and museum is younger than many of the spectators.

In this Parisian show place, where evening dress is again compulsory in the best seats three nights a week, you are quite likely to hear Tannhauser singing German to Elizabeth's French, a use of harmony which shows how far art outruns politics. As ballets, "Coppelia" and "Gisela" are much beloved.

On Two Famous Streets.

From the Opera, two famous streets lead south. The Rue de la Paix passes Cartier's jewels, Coty's perfumes, the Ritz, and the Hotel du Rhin, now empty, once leased by a Boston club for its members to use whenever they came to Paris. The Avenue de l'Opera passes Brentano's and the Comedie Francaise on its way to the Louvre.

From the Louvre a broad band of beauty—like the Mall in Washington—stretches westward to the Seine, hurdles a few smokestacks, and continues to St. Germain, St. Cloud, and Versailles, 12 miles away.

Standing in the Place du Carrousel and looking up that incomparable vista past the obelisk in the taxi-infested Place de la Concorde, one can almost forgive the destructive mania of the Communards, for it was they who, by burning the Tuilleries palace, opened this view toward the sunsets.

The Tuilleries gardens seem to have been laid out with square and compass. As if fresh from a beauty shop, Paris here challenges "Am I not fair?"

Yes, more than fair, for this combination of promenade and garden, forest and art gallery, playground and yacht pond, woods with friendliness as well as artifice. Children adore that honest artisan Pere Guignol, who carves and paints his puppets, including Punch and Judy, and then gives them voice and action in his little theater among the trees.

Conspicuous in Paris in the spring are the students. Paris is the Mecca for students from all over the world. Near the Sorbonne or Polytechnique one can eat soup in many languages and curdled milk in many more. University education, born in the cloisters of Notre Dame, soon spread to the Left Bank. Poor but proud, this republic of scholars made Paris the intellectual capital of the Middle Ages, the leavening pan of the Renaissance. The person of a student was sacred, as the Count of Favoisy learned to his cost when his residence was destroyed and he was banished because his lackeys started a brawl with the devotees of Latin and learning.

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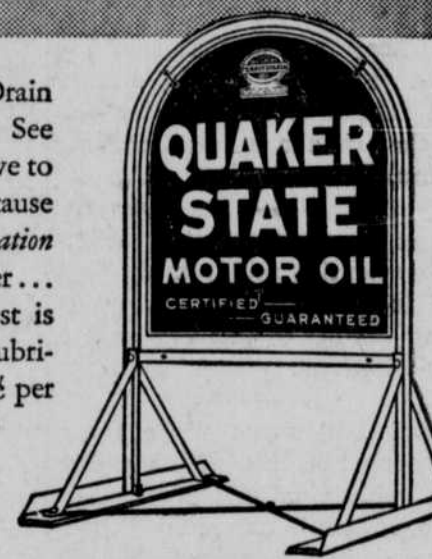
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"I was a sucker to bet I wouldn't have again until you had to buy another quart of Quaker State!"

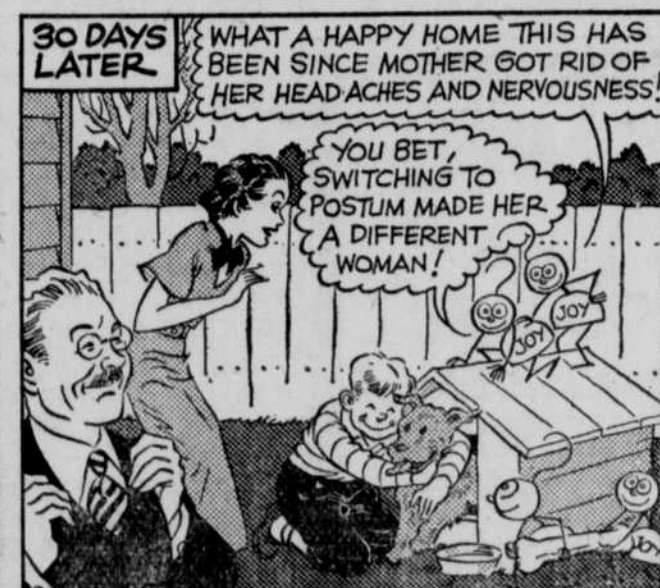
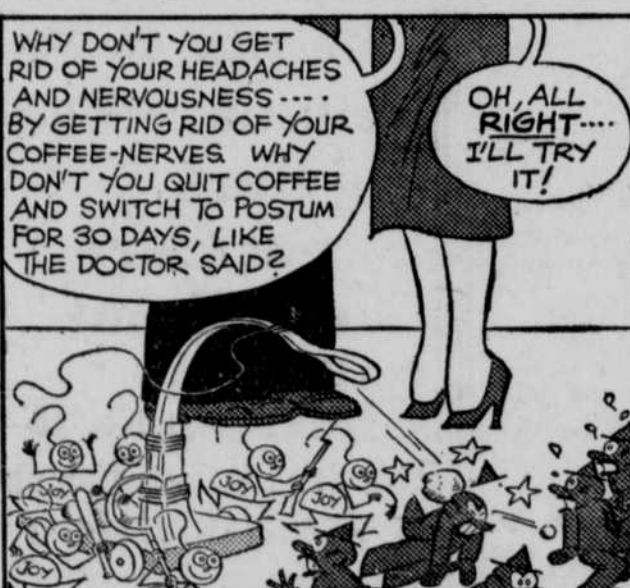
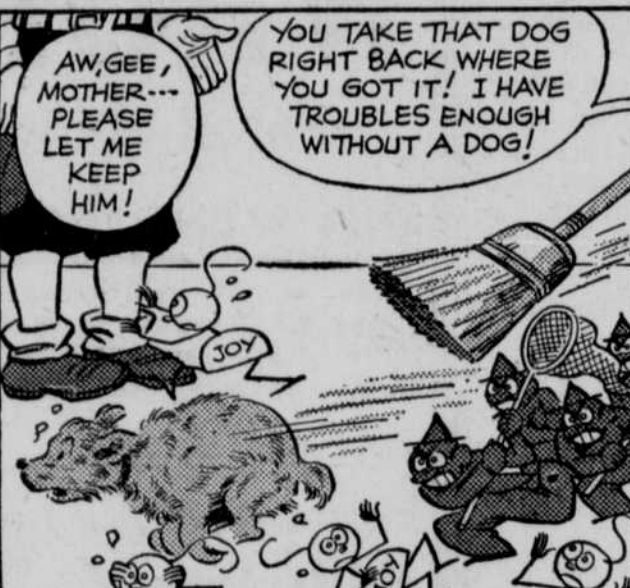
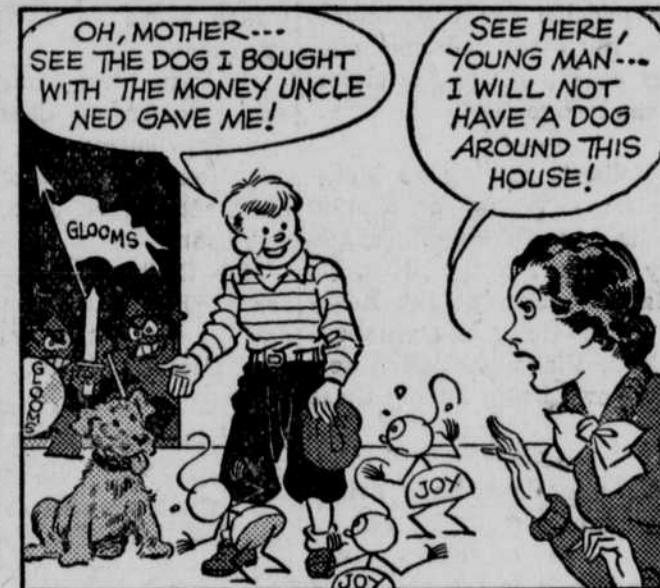


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