

SEEN and HEARD around the NATIONAL CAPITAL

By Carter Field

There are plenty of people in Wall Street who are not declared in on these news sources—but who like to pretend to be. Also there are gentry who have very poor or very prejudiced sources of Washington information.

It is these last two classes that produce so much misinformation—whose flat predictions and alleged quotations of what "the President said to Mr. Blank" cause so much grief when the poor Washington correspondent gets a telegram relayed from his paper's Wall Street correspondent through the telegraph news desk.

Causes Big Laugh

All of which is apropos of the "inside" information in Wall Street a few days back that the real reason the steel industry came to terms with John L. Lewis: that certain big interests were said now to be certain that Lewis had been "sufficiently deflated!"

This suggestion was received in Washington with whoops of merriment. Even labor news experts who have a personal affection for William Green and who personally dislike John L. Lewis—and others who believe strongly in the craft union and hate the C. I. O. idea—all agree that Lewis won an amazing victory in his conflict with General Motors, and has made amazing progress since.

There is scarcely a disinterested observer here who does not believe that the C. I. O. now has its head well under two big tents, entrance to which was highly dubious just a few months ago—steel and motors. General Electric was not much of a surprise. It has been printed in these dispatches several times in the last few years that General Electric was very much in favor of what has since become the C. I. O. plan—that what it feared was jurisdictional disputes between various craft unions, which would tie up its plants regardless of its own labor policy.

And there are few in Washington who do not believe that it is only a question of time until both those industries are closed shops. It may take two years—it may take five years—Henry Ford may never come in—but few here doubt that such movement as there is from now on will be in that direction.

And the answer to it all is very simple. Most of the business executives want to make money—now. Few of them are interested in fighting for a principle if such fighting will cost them a lot of money, and provide a motive for both government and labor sharpshooting at every detail of their business and private affairs. Especially if they can be sure of passing any additional cost, with a bit of extra profit, along to the consumer.

The Logic of It
The logic of the federal housing administration, in desiring to allow this function of insuring repair loans to die, is rather interesting, especially as it is slightly contradictory. One reason is that the housing administration believes there has been such an improvement in building construction that there is an actual shortage of skilled workers in many places. To put undue emphasis on repairs therefore, it holds, would endanger the supply of skilled workers for more important construction, and actually retard business recovery.

The other reason is that the banks have learned by experience now that these repair loans are safe and sound, and that therefore it is no longer necessary for the government to guarantee them. In short, it contends on one hand that the insuring of these repair loans is not necessary—that just as many will be made by the banks if they are not insured by the government—and on the other hand that these loans, if encouraged by the government, will lead to so much repair work that there will not be skilled workers enough for the big construction jobs!

You pay your money and take your choice, but attaches of the housing administration argue valiantly for both points. Meanwhile many concerns interested in providing repair materials, and there are lots of them, are very much interested in having the power extended. They seem to think that this government insurance, if continued, would result in more repair jobs than would the idea that banks would make just as many repair loans if government insurance were withdrawn.

All of which would result in considerably more conversation on Capitol Hill if President Roosevelt's Supreme court proposal were not overshadowing everything else.

Get Weird Queries
Some of the weirdest queries that Washington newspaper correspondents get from their papers result from Wall Street tips. New York's downtown financial district certainly is tops in a lot of things. Shrewd Washington observers know it is seldom indeed that a real news development is not known in some sections of Wall Street before it is known to half the officials concerned here. There is money to be made in Wall Street, with the proper information, if it can be obtained just a little in advance of the other fellow. And very frequently it is!

When a lot of money can be made out of a thing, it becomes too hot to handle as a rule, as was evidenced by the attempts to enforce prohibition, and as is evidenced by the difficulty of suppressing pool-rooms, and as is evidenced by racing generally. Racing and Wall Street add to the "hot money" angle the love of most humans for gambling.

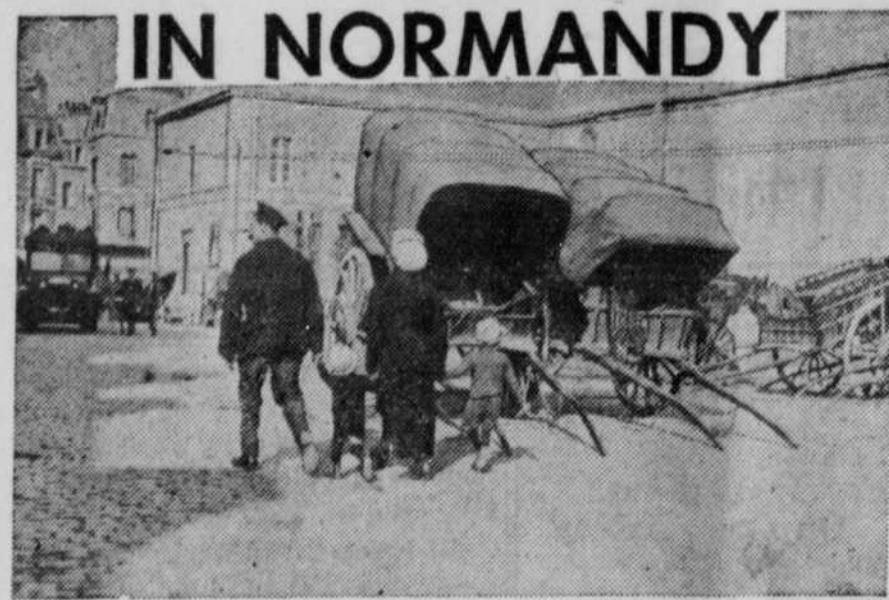
All of which results in Wall Street so frequently being in the position of having bought and paid for advance information. But it also inevitably leads to something else.

The Cotton Question
The cotton illustration is particularly pertinent because Brazil has been rapidly building up her production of cotton ever since the United States government began holding the world price of cotton up, so that Brazil could be sure of a good price for this staple. There were some in the senate who believe that cotton is absolutely an essential war supply, not only because of its use for explosives but for other reasons. At the time Runciman was in Washington some of this group favored absolutely banning exports of cotton to belligerents.

As the bill passed the senate, the President is given discretion as to putting cotton, or any other commodity, on such an embargoed list. He is not given discretion to embargo products to one belligerent and not the other.

As the senate bill stands, however, the President can very easily aid one belligerent and hinder the other by his selection of the commodities to be embargoed. This may rise to plague some future President.

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A Norman Family Takes a Stroll in Cherbourg.

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

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR, cider, omelets, Mont St. Michel—these are features of Normandy that come to mind with the name of that old province of France. You accent, thus unconsciously, history, art, and refreshment.

Cherbourg, the port where Normandy seems to thrust its nose impudently upward—what does it mean to the ocean traveler? So much weariness of the flesh in connection with embarking and disembarking that one is glad to be off. But things are to be seen there, and Cherbourg is a gentle introduction to the heady sights farther on.

It is here that one becomes aware of the value of the fishing industries as a social center. The chatter, both shrill and thunderous, that goes with the business is by no means the least of the interest.

It is not perfunctory, this fish selling by the men of the boats and their wives. Emotion turns the card in many a sale, for if Jean, the seller, takes offense at the low offer of a retailer, he growls a refusal to trade; and if Ginette displays her wares with enticing good nature, she laughingly reaps a big handful of coins for the deep pocket concealed in her ample wool skirt.

And of course there is the exchange of local gossip. Where a few white-capped women gather the talk runs highest, for the woman who retains the bonnet of her ancestors is usually one who prefers word-of-mouth to newspaper or radio. It is a pity the caps are passing. The faces, ruddy and perhaps too irregular, look better when topped with picturesqueness than when frankly unadorned.

In Cherbourg, too, one comes upon the sight of women washing at a public fountain. That is a matter that always interests. How can they work in cold water? What a boon it would be to these hard-working women if a little hot water were supplied! If you have ever watched them at work you have seen grim courage.

In Apple Blossom Time.
In the very first miles out of Cherbourg the charm of Normandy begins to assert itself. Suppose it be May, what is the enchantment? The apple trees. They are everywhere, like the maids dressed in sprigged muslins.

The country is full of little hills, so that each farm has its slopes and its brooks, among which stand the blooming trees. And all this loveliness produces the cider which is the wine of the Norman country and one of its big products.

The farmhouses themselves are approached by these saucy trees which flaunt sprays of pink against the old gray stones. You get an impression that all farmhouses are near cousins of old castles. Their size is often prodigious to American eyes, accustomed as we are to the wooden farmhouse. The wide sweep of well-cut gray stone walls has a dignity of other days.

A round tower, which seems to be set on some part of the building, rises from the ground, a separate entity, yet an indispensable part of the whole. It may be intensely agrarian in its intent, in its interior uses, but it vividly suggests the old story of the castle tower in which a fair damsel was confined in a protection, a protection naughtily defeated by the maiden's letting down her hair as a ladder to a waiting lover.

Even the livestock of the Norman country is conspicuously different from the accustomed. The gait of the immense Percherons sets a pace for the work of the farmer, who is ever shouting to them a strange sound, "Hue!" delivered with reproach or scorn. Magnificent animals they are, but never to be hurried, whether at the plow or along the roads.

As a farmer can go no faster than his horse, his life is regulated by the Percheron. Will he some day exchange this placid power for a hurrying Ford or Citroën?

A light horse built for speed, perhaps five miles an hour, is used for the high-wheeled hooded carts which take folks to market on a market day. Sometimes real beauty hides in these excluding hoods. At Noufleur one sees it often.

Buckwheat, But No Cakes.
The Norman fields are red and white with buckwheat. It is an important crop, but raised for local sustenance. To Americans, the word "buckwheat" means just one thing—griddlecakes, light and brown, eaten with a bit of savory sausage or drenched with melting butter and sweetened with that divine essence of the woods, maple sirup.

But in Normandy the buckwheat cake is unknown. Some missionary from the North-Woods should teach its mixture, or make a pile of "stacked griddles" such as old Adirondack guides can cook. The way buckwheat is used in Normandy is to make of it a sort of bread, soggy, putty-colored.

The call of Mont St. Michel is a call to the heart. You may go hither and yon through France, seeing castles and monuments, flowered lanes and bewitching rivers, but always is felt the tug toward Mont St. Michel, often called, less formally, "the Mount" or "the Rock."

Unresisting, you at last find yourself straight down the coast from Cherbourg at the little town of Avranches, from which the happy pilgrim gets his first glimpse of the Mount.

Avranches is set on a sudden hill, and to reach its gems of interest the road sweeps upward on the steep. In so doing it passes a library. That seems prosaic until into one's mind flashes the remembrance that it is here that great treasures of the Mount have found safe harbor after disturbing conflicts. Here are parchments written in the twelve hundreds.

Here, too, is the work of the monk, Abelard, whose love for Heloise is even better remembered than his treatise, "Sic et Non"—such is the delight one takes in romance.

Up the hill is the Plate-forme, a name which sounds dull enough until, as one stops to survey it, its history comes back from some pigeonhole of the mind. What an astounding chapter of history it commemorates, this simple stone platform ringed about with chains! It is all that is left of the great cathedral which was taken down in 1799 as it began to collapse.

This spot, the Plate-forme, was just before the cathedral door, and it was here in 1172 that the King of England, Henry II, knelt before the prelates and emissaries of the pope to atone for the murder of Thomas a Becket in Canterbury Cathedral. The king, having been excommunicated, was not allowed to prostrate himself before the gorgeous company from the Vatican within the building, but had to remain outside until their absolution was given him; and on his royal knees, which ached miserably.

The Sands of Mont St. Michel.
The time to see Mont St. Michel is at any time when you find yourself near. If a chance to see it is given, even if it be midnight or winter, the sight should not be missed. But if a choice of times can be made, then the time of high tides is that time. And if there is a moon, and one can spend the night on the Rock, then sightseeing has reached its ultimate.

From Avranches the view resolves itself into a map of the Bay of Mont St. Michel and that great space of sand from which the tide recedes. For 22 miles, from Avranches to Cancale on the Brittany side, extend these tidal sands; and in the middle of all this fatness, as if floating in the sky like a mirage, rises the granite rock of Mont St. Michel. Two hundred and fifty feet it towers, and man-made structures have increased its height to 498 feet.

The curious and seeking observer can also note from afar the three distinct tiers on the Rock. First above the waters are the ramparts, splendid in their medieval strength; next, the band of clustered houses, "clinging like limpets to a rock;" and then the buttressed Merveille and the crown of towers and turrets resting on that marvel of masonry.

And just as the Rock has three tiers of architectural interest, the three tiers represent three purposes—fortress, prison, and abbey.

Pontorson, lying on the little river Couesnon, is the place of departure for the Mount. There one would take to the sea, were it not for the causeway of approach, built across sand and water.

In olden times—it can be done now if the traveler likes risk of wetting—the only way to reach the Rock was to walk or ride across the exposed wet sand. Even kings and bishops came that way, risking tides and quicksands. Fancy Louis XI snatching up his long gray robes and picking his way among the salt puddles!

After centuries of wet feet and floundering horses, energy was expended to bank high a causeway and on this to run a little train from Pontorson. And now motor cars by hundreds and even airplanes alight like butterflies on the sands by the ramparts.

It's a Party Sure Enough!



AND the girl holding the curtains back, just looking on, might be joining the fun except for her misconception that "party" clothes are hard to sew. She made the neat sweet house model she's wearing with no trouble at all—but—

And Here's the Story.
"Marge, did you really make your pretty dress all yourself? It looks so elaborate; I'd be afraid to cut into chiffon like that for fear I'd ruin it."

"Be yourself, Rose. It doesn't take a bit more skill to make my dress than yours. The pattern explains everything. You can't go wrong. I get a double kick out of making a party frock—I feel important sewing it and elegant wearing it. I couldn't begin to have so many party clothes if I didn't belong to The Sew-Your-Own!"

Mother Made Daughter's Dress.
"Joanie, dear, aren't you beginning this party business pretty young?"

"No, Auntie Rose, of course not. I've another one just like it that Grandma made for me. It's red and it has blue bands around it. I'm going to wear it to school tomorrow."

"Well, I see where I've got to get some silks and crepe, pluck up my nerve, and have clothes like other people. I wanted to join the Jolly Twelve but I just felt I didn't have anything to wear. Now I've decided to join The Sewing Circle and make a

real fashion debut, come Spring!"
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