

L.J. - Linnoco. Mon., Jan. 4, 1937.

CONGRESS

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The first big fight of the Seventy-Fifth Congress is over. ~~That was~~ the tussle for the floor leadership of the Democrats in the House. We've been hearing a good deal about it from time to time, ~~of~~ the close ^{race} ~~contest~~ between the Tammany Representative O'Connor of New York, and New Dealer Sam Rayburn of Texas. Mr. O'Connor, ~~not unnaturally~~, considered that as chairman of the important Rules Committee, he had ^{the} ~~an~~ edge ~~on his rival~~. However, Texas Sam Rayburn had the more important edge of being supported by such Roosevelt lieutenants as Ed Flynn, New Deal leader of the Bronx.

When it came down to cases, it turned out that Mr. O'Connor had no solid front, ^{supporting} ~~behind~~ him. The first bad news he received in today's caucus was the swinging of the big Pennsylvania delegation to Sam Rayburn, followed by Tennessee. Then to his dismay, ~~Mr.~~ O'Connor found the New York delegation split. The Brooklyn boys, ^{had} ~~an important bunch~~, also romped into the Texan's camp. From all accounts, there were some heated half hours in that caucus. ~~Mr.~~ O'Connor minced no

words in describing the leader of the Brooklynites as a traitor. So Representative Rayburn of Texas will be leader of the administrations' fights on the floor of the House of the Seventy-Fifth Congress.

That was the important part of the proceedings. Prior to that, Mr. Bankhead of Alabama was renominated to the speakership with no opposition. Meanwhile the Republicans reelected Bertram Snell of New York as their floor leader.

SUPREME COURT

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There's a wide belief that the Supreme Court for all its celebrated impartiality frequently bows its head to public opinion. It has been observed that since the last election the eight justices have conspicuously abandoned their hostility to the New Deal. Their action today further confirms the belief. A decision they handed down about goods made by convicts is interpreted as opening the way to the revival of the Blue Eagle.

By a unanimous vote they ruled that the Ashurst-Sumners Act is not unconstitutional. That's the measure passed in 1935 which made it illegal to transport anything made in a prison or by convict labor, into any state that forbids the sale of anything made in a prison or by convict labor.

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{ On the face of it that would seem to be of comparatively minor importance. But the object of the statute, which was a thing that organized labor has long been asking, is to prevent competition between free men and convicts. ~~is~~ The way Chief

Justice Hughes phrased the opinion which he wrote is considered by lawyers to be significant, sweeping, and opening the way to

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the rewriting of the National Recovery Act in such fashion as to make it consitutional. "For," says the Chief Justice, "the Congress may prevent interstate transportation from being used to bring into a state any articles which the state has the constitutional authority to forbid." That means, if each of the states pass their own N. R. A. measure, Congress can pass a national act which will clinch all the state acts. So that's why New Dealers are chortling in Washington today.

The Supreme Court's next important decision knocks out the Oregon Criminal syndicalism law. A Communist named Dirk de Jonge was holding a meeting in July 1934, protesting against the activities of the police in a seaman's strike. The cops raided the meeting. de Jonge was convicted and sentenced to seven years in the pentitentiary for preaching Communism in Oregon. The Oregon Supreme Court upheld the conviction. But now Chief Justice Hughes, speaking for the Supreme Court, says, "We hold that the Oregon statute as applied to the particular charge is ~~very~~ repugnant to the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

FOLLOW CONGRESS

Thus the Seventy-Fifth Congress of the United States will convene tomorrow. The first day's proceedings will probably be perfunctory.

The country awaits the message which President Roosevelt will read to Congress on Wednesday. He has already given a fair idea of some of the things he will propose including measures for minimum wages and shorter working hours. What we don't know is whether he will suggest a constitutional amendment. Senator Joe Robinson of Arkansas, majority leader in the Upper Chamber, said something today which indicated that this is probable. He stated as his personal opinion that a constitutional amendment might be the only method of dealing with the labor problem.

STRIKE

1937 open with on every side either a strike or a menace of a strike. The quarrel between the seamen and the ship owners is still unsettled. John L. Lewis and his United Mine Workers have been talking fight for weeks. And now the whole country waits breathlessly to see whether the combined forces of the State of Michigan and Uncle Sam can avert a walkout in the motor industry.

Thirty-seven thousand General Motors employees are now out.) If the strike becomes general, there'll be almost ten times that many. And millions of workers in other lines will be concerned. For example, the automotive manufacturers are the largest purchasers of rubber, steel, malleable iron, mohair, plate glass, nickle and lead.

~~something to think about.~~ Then again, it took three million, five hundred and twenty-five thousand railroad cars to move automobile freight last year. ~~In other words, it represents, a tremendous share of the business of the entire country.~~

So there's ~~ample~~ reason for us all to hope that Governor Murphy of Michigan will succeed in his self-appointed role of mediator. Before he met Homer Martin, President of the Automobile Workers' Union, ^{Gov.} ~~he~~ Murphy announced that he would be strictly impartial. He also ^{said:} ~~announced~~ "If there is a strike, there'll be no violence. Both sides will be protected by police, but peace and order will be maintained."

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But while he was talking, strikers and deputy sheriffs in Flint, Michigan, were girding their loins for a tussle. The Circuit Court, ~~as we know,~~ has issued an order to the sitting down strikers in the Fisher Body plants of Flint to get out. And the sheriff has proclaimed his determination to see that the order is enforced. So far, however, the fivehundred sitter downers, are still sitting down, still holding the fort.

Nineteen out of sixty-nine General Motors plants closed down.

Some of them have had to quit work because of a shortage of glass, caused by a strike in that industry; President Martin of the Automobile Workers says he has enough enrolled workers to close every G. M. factory in the country. William Knudsen, Executive Vice-President of G. M., was asked whether this was probable.

He replied: "That's not up to me, it's up to Mr. Martin." But he added that by the end of the week, about one-half of all the General Motors employees all over the world will be out of work. The reason is the shortage of bodies. "We have enough glass to last three weeks and enough other parts to last probably through January."

EUROPE

In Europe, troubles and complications continue to pile up. Hitler refuses to budge ~~an inch~~ in his attitude towards Spain. German warships will keep on seizing Spanish vessels the cargo of until [^] the much discussed German freighter, the Palos, ~~the~~ ~~origin of all the trouble,~~ is released by the Spanish government. ~~in fact,~~ ^{The} cruiser KOENIGSBURG seized a third Spanish freighter today.

As for the Spaniards ^{ish Left Wingers} they too are sitting pat. They ^{refuse to yield to} ~~decline the offer from~~ Berlin. What's more, they announce that they are preparing to attack German warships.

To that, ^{the Nazis} ~~Hitler's government in Berlin~~ asks with a scornful laugh, "Attack our warships! With what?" Berlin ~~claims that it~~ has two fresh grievances against the Madrid government. Spanish trawlers fired on a German ^{merchant} steamship, compelled her to heave to, and escorted her in the direction of Bilbao. After examining the cargo, they then let her go.

But still more serious was the Spaniards' execution of a ^{by Spanish Left Wingers.} nineteen year old German Nazi lad. Actually, he was shot two months ago, but the news ^{is} ~~was~~ only ^{now} ~~just~~ received in ^{Berlin.} ~~the~~ [^]

And so, diplomats say, a state of war exists between the German government and Madrid. As H. G. Wells pointed out some time ago, the day has long passed for formal declarations of war. This accomplished fact, this Hispano - German war, is bound to have repercussions not only throughout the eastern hemisphere but in the west. Already a reaction is perceived in Washington. Under the Neutrality Law, passed two years ago, President Roosevelt has the right to place an instant embargo on arms without consulting Congress. It is within the President's discretion to decide whether, when, and where a state of war exists. An embargo on the shipment of munitions from America could apply to Germany as well as Spain.

Now for complication Number Two. It was rumored last week that Mussolini was washing his hands

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of the entire Spanish brawl. That impression was emphasized by the treaty he made with John Bull, in which he guaranteed "the integrity of the present territory of Spain." Now we learn that, treaty or no treaty, four thousand Italians landed at Cadiz on New Year's Day. Cadiz, of course, is one of the Rebel strongholds.

People have been wondering, "What price did London pay Mussolini for that treaty? What was the quid pro quo?" Of course, Britain has tacitly recognized the Duce's conquest of Ethiopia. But the recognition is not yet formal. So there must have been some other valuable consideration. Tonight it seems clear ~~xxx~~ what that valuable consideration was. As had been guessed, Money. Threadneedle Street and Lombard Street this afternoon buzzed with talk of a loan, English money, to develop Italy's new territory in Ethiopia. In ~~xxxxxx~~ centuries past, his money has often been the ace card up John Bull's sleeve.

Complication Number Three. London says to General Franco: "You've got to quit kicking my ships around." The second attack by Rebel trawlers on a British steamer has given another

tweak to the tail of the British Lion. If there is any doubt whether a British ^{so} ~~vessel~~ _人's cargo is legal, the British Navy will attend to it. That's the determination in London today.

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If President Roosevelt decides that a state of war exists between Germany and Spain, it will be just too bad for the ~~VX~~ Vimalert Company of North Beach, New York. It was the Vimalert Company ~~that~~ _{it} aroused the President's indignation by securing a permit to ship airplanes to the Spanish Left Wing Government. If Mr. Roosevelt decides that a state of war exists, the embargo can be made immediate. And that will stop the Vimalert Company from sending to Bilbao the seven planes it is preparing to ship at the end of this week.

A spokesman of the Vimalert Company announced today: "I don't see why we should not come out in the open and admit what we are doing. We have a government permit to ship planes and we aren't doing anything illegal."

One of the planes, designed for war, is the "Lady Peace," the airship that Dick Merrill and Harry Richman flew to

London and back, an ironic end for the "Lady Peace." Scheduled to go to war.

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So evidently the Vimalert Company was quite correct in stating that the aircraft to be shipped to Spain were seconds, not equipped for ~~xx~~ fighting. "You bet they aren't," says my old friend Bert Acosta, one of the American pilots who were engaged by the Madrid government. "And that's why we quit," says Bert. "Can you imagine," he goes on, "what a fix we were in with old transport planes, no guns, sent out to bomb an enemy airport? The only war equipment we had was bombs attached to the under-carriage. We were helpless against enemy planes, especially as the enemy planes were the latest thing in modern German equipment, with crack German pilots. If we hadn't been protected by Russian pursuit pilots, who are even better than the Germans, we'd all have been ~~xxx~~ goners."

All of America's four-man air squadron who were on the Madrid side are now out of the Spanish fight and glad of it.

Aviators will tell you that any ~~px~~ plane which Bert Acosta pronounces too risky for him, even at sixteen hundred dollars a month, is risky indeed. Bert has a safer, if less munificent, job now. He is ~~xxx~~ sitting in a comfortable office in Paris, writing pieces for Universal News Service.

MAFIA

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A Pennsylvania policeman is on his way home tonight from Ontario to New Castle, Pennsylvania. Handcuffed to him is a prisoner he arrested at Kirkland Lake, Ontario. ~~The Pennsylvania cop had to bust into a merry New Year's Eve celebration to make that arrest.~~ The man ^{arrested} ~~he~~ ~~pinched~~ had been known for twenty-three years in northern Ontario as not only a law-abiding citizen but one who frequently had helped the law. He had been the means of bringing to justice many dangerous criminals. And now he himself is approaching New Castle, Pennsylvania, where he will stand trial for murder.

The story behind that arrest has every element of a murder, mystery and detective yarn. It begins more than thirty years ago, in the Province of Calabria, the toe of the Italian boot. At the date when the story begins, Calabria was ruled by the iron hand of the Mafia. A police officer named Francisco Romeo, killed one of the Mafia in a fight. For this he was dismissed from the police force. But he knew that the powerful Mafia would not be content with having him fired. He fled to America. ~~It was a boast of the then powerful Mafia that they~~

The Mafia never forgave the killing of a member. Another Calabrian, named Rocco Esposito, was detailed to carry out the sentence of death on the escaping policeman. Esposito followed his prey to America, and found Romeo in Buffalo, New York. He made his acquaintance, and lived with him several months; having gained Romeo's confidence, Esposito lured him to Newcastle, Pa. The following day his body, riddled with bullets, was found. But he wasn't quite dead. Before he expired, the dying man made a statement accusing Esposito of having murdered him.

The Mafia ~~Trigger~~^{man} disappeared from Pennsylvania. All that happened thirty years ago.

Some seven years later a man calling himself Rocco Strange appeared in the mining camps of northern Ontario:- short, stocky, pale, quiet, somewhat of a mystery to the miners. He obtained employment with the Ontario Mining Association as a detective - a stool pigeon. Ten years ago, a Russian was hanged in northern Ontario for the murder of a provincial policeman. It was the mysterious Rocco Strange who laid the crime at the Russian's door.

But in all these years the law of Pennsylvania hadn't been sleeping on the murder that took place in New Castle, Pennsylvania in Nineteen Six. The Keystone state continued to look for Rocco Exposito. But always he was a few jumps ahead of them. Now finally, they've found him, so they say, in the person of the mysterious Ontario stool pigeon, Rocco Strange, father of four children, an agent of the law in Canada. And now he'll have to convince the law of Pennsylvania that he is not former killer of the Mafia.

And - - - - - SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.