

WASHINGTON

L. T. - Sunoco - Thurs., June 18, 1936

Cum gratia
MSB

He
I guess I won't say anything about the Corporation Tax Bill tonight, I might get into trouble with Representative Doughton. There was a bit of fireworks in Washington today when the Congressman raised Cain with a group of newspapermen. He hurled at them the charge of -- violation of confidence. That's a serious matter in Washington, where it's customary for Government officials to speak mighty plainly to the correspondents, and tell them all sorts of secret things that are not to be printed -- off the record. And that's a strong point of ethics with the newspapermen, not to divulge anything that is told to them, off the record.

Representative Doughton, who is Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, claims that he told the boys a few things about the new Corporation Tax rates, which his committee is figuring out. He says he revealed figures in strict confidence, but in spite of that they were published.

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I can say something, however, about the Deficiency Bill, which hands out two billion dollars to be used for relief. Tonight the big money bill is at the White House for the President's okay. The Senate passed it today, after the

House had already done so.

And the Senators followed the example of the Representatives in striking out the proposal to resurvey the Florida Ship Canal project: ~~was~~ Congressional thumbs down on that much-discussed canal for navigation across northern Florida.

Tonight's Washington news included a cheerful word for towns that are broke; busted municipalities. If an individual or a corporation can go into bankruptcy, why can't a municipality. That's what Congressman Wilfox of Florida wants to know, ~~He~~ he sponsored a law decreeing that towns shall have the same right as corporations under the Bankruptcy law. But the Supreme Court threw it out. And when the Supreme Court says "No", that sounds final. ^P However, it is possible for the nine justices to decide to reconsider, and they did that today in the case of the Municipal Bankruptcy Act. They decided to reconsider their previous unfavorable verdict, look at the rights and wrongs of the case again and that gives a new ray of hope to towns that are broke, busted municipalities that would like to go into bankruptcy.

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STRIKE

Labor troubles loom large in the news tonight. Far and wide across the world -- also in our own country. At Kent, Ohio -- a pitched battle. No, not in the tree tops by the Davey Tree Tarzans of Kent. This concerns strike picket lines surrounding a steel tool factory. Two truckloads of strike breakers trying to crash through. The pickets jumped in to stop them. Shooting broke out. Both sides firing with shotguns; tear gas bombs tossed at the pickets. Men injured on both sides.

The strikers took refuge behind a barricade they had thrown across the street and continued the battle. There was continuous sniping for six hours. The strikers blazing away at the strike breakers and at the factory. Finally a halt was called, a truce. And the sheriff was allowed to go to the factory and remove a batch of strike breakers besieged^{ie} in the building. Casualties? -- fifty-fifty, or rather seven-seven. Fourteen injured, half of them strikers. The next thing -- the Militia will be called out unless the trouble quiets down.

That's American strike news. And we find an American angle in the labor troubles abroad.

FRANCE FOLLOW STRIKE

The other day we had a bit of news, rather light and trivial, of how the French strike epidemic was affecting Americans in Paris. Labor troubles had shut down those favorite Parisian restaurants and bars patronized by United States citizens sojourning along the ~~Sin~~ Seine. And festive Americans in Paris couldn't get a drink. That was a frivolous angle of the nationwide labor agitation in France ⁻⁻⁻ those "folded arms" strikes with seizures of factories and buildings.

Today once more we find Americans in Paris affected. But this time it is no affair of light comedy. There is an American hospital in the French capital. Right now it is caring for eighty-five patients of the United States, some of them in critical condition. Tonight the hospital is tied up. Strikers are taking possession of the kitchens and laundry, and refuse to leave.

Yesterday the American Embassy, knowing what was coming, asked the French Government to intervene and stop the strike. The Minister of Labor gave assurance that--"necessary measures would be taken." But these "necessary measures" don't

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seem to have materialized because the hospital strike occurred today with the seizure of the kitchens.

The latest is that American Ambassador Straus has intervened -- or tried to. He made a protest today to the French Government. His attitude was that the hospital employees had a right to strike if they wanted to, but they had no right to seize part of the building and hold it as a fort. He asked the authorities to make the strikers move out. For a while today Americans in Paris were on the hospital jobs -- doing chores, helping to look after the patients. Later in the day it was settled.

All of this is merely an American headline above a story of continued labor trouble in France. The "folded arms" strikes are spreading from place to place. As fast as one is settled, another breaks out.

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(The best-dressed diplomat in Europe took a dressing down today. Foreign Minister Anthony Eden stood in the House of Commons and listened to yells of: "Shame -- resign.") And bitter it must have been for him, the Sir Galahad of the League of Nations, the fair-haired boy of sanctions, that debonair young idealist of British aristocracy who had flung the defiance of the League of Nations ^{and} ~~at~~ the British Empire ⁱⁿ ~~to~~ the massive, glowering face of Mussolini. (Today in succinct realistic phrases he told the members of Parliament, in ^a formal statement that everybody knew in advance, -- that England admitted defeat in the Ethiopian affair. Eden declared the plain facts that Italy had won swiftly and decisively ~~in further explanation of facts that in Ethiopia~~ Ethiopia, the League of Nations had failed, sanctions had not worked, there was no way to make Mussolini back down, no way to re-establish the independence of Ethiopia) -- no way short of war.

He declared that the only possible way to make Italy recede was by the use of force -- war in the Mediterranean, ^{and} His Majesty's government refused to bring on war.

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Thus having ~~f~~^laced the facts, he proceeded by strict logic to declare the determination of Prime Minister Baldwin's government. The sanctions, having failed, must go. And Great Britain will take the lead before the League of Nations in abolishing ~~ix~~ them. London, having brought the sanctions in, will kick them out.

The dapper Eden, as he spoke this complete back down of all he had previously stood for, winced under the mocking outcry from the benches of the opposition -- "Shame -- resign." Once his temper flared, and he retored^t with as much violence as an English aristocrat allows himself. "The honorable members," he reproved his hecklers, "are making cheap jibes."

In the debate that followed Lloyd George, the old world war horse, took the lead in attacking the government. He declared that by abolishing sanctions, the British Government was sinking the League of Nations, and that would bring international anarchy. Members of the Labor Party in their speeches bitterly jeered the government and especially Eden for the defeat of British policy, the loss

of British prestige. At one time the controversy grew so angry that the Conservative members began to move over toward the opposition benches and it looked as though there might be a physical clash.

Anythony Eden used to be their knight in shining armor, but now they are screaming in rage at him.

GORKY

(This week removes from the world of writers and readers two of its best known figures, for today died Maxim Gorky, while on ~~Tuesday~~ ^{Monday} came the news of the passing of G. K. Chesterton. And so the grim reaper's symbolical scythe has swiftly removed two of the most vividly contrasting figures in the literature of their time - the gloomy Gorky with his drab, sombre ~~xxx~~ stories, and the gay, lusty Chesterton with his brilliant paradoxes.)

Gorky's death comes with some of the brooding tragedy that he wrote into his books. Back in the day of the Czars, this foremost writer of Old Russia was a revolutionary, and was driven into exile. When the old Imperial Regime was overthrown, he returned to Russia. But he couldn't agree with Lenin and Trotzky and their Red terror, so he went into exile again. Some years later, he made his peace with Communism, and had a change of mind. He came to regard the Red rule of the Kremlin as approaching Utopia. Once more he was back in his native land, which he loved with the dark, almost lugubrious

fervor of a Russian. But he couldn't stay there. He was in high favor with the Soviets, acclaimed by them as the lordly Apostle of Proletarian Literature. ^{They} Made him a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist party. But still he had to go - because of his lungs. He was chronically ailing, and in his old age could not endure the rigorous Russian climate. So the Red author and his weak lungs betook himself to milder skies, a balmy sea-coast-sorrento, Capri, Italy, Fascist Italy. And there he lived facing the blue splendor of the Mediterranean.

That was Maxim Gorky's last ~~ex~~ exile; it was followed by his last return to Russia. He went back to live there permanently, and to die there. He fell ill several weeks ago, his last illness - a chest malady, that same weakness of lungs, which could not stand the Russian climate. So now the last page in the book of his life has been written.

His real name was Peshkov. His nom de plume was Gorky, which means "The bitter one". At nineteen he tried to shoot himself. The bitterness of his soul and of his pen is

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called "The lower depths".

What a contrast comes with the name of Chesterton, the jovial, fat man of English letters - who turned his soul back to the rollicking England of the Middle Ages, so medieval that he went back to the church of the Middle Ages and became a Catholic. His favorite fare, ^{so I found when I knew him in London years ago} utterly English, ~~was~~ beef and beer. His favorite sport was laughter, loud and long. And there was laughter in his pen as he wrote his brilliant paradoxes and paradozical philosophies - eternity plus laughter.

"Why," he once asked, "is it funny that a man should sit down suddenly ^{— fall sprawling} in the street? There is only one possible and intelligent reason - that ~~ix~~ man is the image of God. It is not funny that anything else should fall down, only that a man should fall down. Why do we laugh? Because it is a grave, religious matter. It is the fall of man. Only man can be absurd, for only man can be dignified".

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(It seems as if a bit of the soul of gloomy Russia and of hearty England, ~~is~~ has passed this week - with Maxim Gorky and G. K. Chesterton.)

ECLIPSE

A few hours from now it will be sunrise in Libya, or rather it won't. It will be a mere fractional sunrise, with only a part of a solar disc rising above the horizon of the Libyan Desert. That's where this year's eclipse of the sun will begin. The shadow of the moon will touch the glowing face of the sun as it rises over the sands of Libya. The Nomads of the desert will gaze in solemn awe. They won't be so astonished as they would have been in former times, because the Italian rulers out there have spread the word among the desert dwellers that the eclipse is merely a natural phenomenon, and no sinister portend of evil and ~~is~~ disaster.

From Libya the shadow of the moon will race to the Northeast, and the eclipse will have its greatest period of totality in the region of the Ural~~s~~, which divide European Russia ~~in~~ and Siberia. There, too, eyes will gaze with awe as the sun goes out at midday -- noon. And there likewise vigorous attempts have been made to abolish the supernatural aspect of the eclipse. The peasants of the steppes and the Tartars of the tribes have been the objects of extensive

propaganda. The Soviet Government has assigned the task to its anti-religious outfit, the Society of the Militant Godless -- the task of convincing the isolated backward folk that the eclipse has no supernatural significance. Indeed, Moscow has distributed batches of cameras among the peasants, giving them instructions to photograph the eclipse -- stacks of snapshots to supplement the observations of the scientists with their telescopes.

Out there on the verge of Europe and Asia many a ~~xxxx~~ scientific party is waiting right now. Soviet Russia alone has sent twenty-five. The United States is represented by two, with camps on opposite sides of the Urals. One, from Georgetown University, reports that the thermometer in the Photographic laboratory has been registering a hundred and ten in the shade. Another, sponsored jointly by Harvard and Massachusetts Tech, led by Dr. Donald Menzies who was on the air here with me telling us about it just a year ago, has had to transport telescopes, spectroscopes and color cameras on camel-back to a camp surrounded by burial mounds of a stone age. For them there will be the usual observation of the Solar Corona and the stars around the sun, with special

emphasis this year on the effect the eclipse will have on short wave radio.

Let's hope the scientists will have a good time, although the indications are not propitious. The word right now is that in the Ural Mountains the sky is gray and opaque

with clouds. Dr. Menzies asked me to accompany him to the other side of the world. And the latest is that he'll probably not see a thing. Such, so often are the rewards of the patient scientist. — And on the same day when a couple of fellows are making a fortune by just boxing a couple of rounds! Who says it isn't a cockeyed world!

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FOLLOW ECLIPSE

But wait a moment. The weather in the Ural Mountains not only may interfere with the eclipse, but it's even worse in New York. The weather has put the kibosh on the Joe Louis - Max Schmelling fight tonight. Raining all day, the bout has been put off until tomorrow. The weather man certainly is a rogue to fool around with both the solar eclipse and the prizefight. So the fight will be tomorrow. The eclipse will be tomorrow! And,

SOLONG UNTIL TOMORROW.