

L. T. CONVEN.

The first thing I feel like doing in connection with this Democratic convention is to congratulate the Committee on Arrangements. It's the nearest thing to perfection, in the convention line, that I ever saw. I suspect, the Republicans had something to do with it. That is I, I mean, the Democrats went out there and watched how things were run in Cleveland, and decided to profit by all the mistakes. But don't misunderstand me, I'm not referring to politics, merely the mechanics of running this huge affair.

So, let's give ~~prize~~ praise where praise is due and start with the architect, who came up from Washington to redesign the interior of the Philadelphia Convention Hall, Howard Leland Smith. He ~~was~~ has constructed the speaker's rostrum, the benches for the press, the special hanging boxes for the newsreel and still camera men, so perfectly that everywhere the architect goes he gets slapped vigorously on the back. I understand the rows of special boxes behind the rostrum have been sold, each box containing six chairs, bringing

from five hundred to a thousand dollars. The most of them seem to be occupied by Democratic celebrities and their ladies.

Bill Donaldson spent the day listening to words of applause from six hundred and eighty-four members of the press who seem delighted with their facilities. Bill for years has been in charge of the press gallery in the House of Representatives, in Washington. He is non-partisan and handles the press at all national conventions.

And then, if Colonel Edwin Halsey, Secretary of the Senate, were here, I'd ~~xx~~ call upon him to take a bow. He's the sergeant-at-arms, and his end ran so smoothly today that you would have thought it operated on Blue Sunoco and with some perfect Sun lubricant.

At the Republican Convention many complained - speakers, delegates and spectators, of the powerful lights, the lights necessary for the photographers, especially for the newsreel cameras. Here in Philadelphia the lights are even brighter - more of them. But the newspaper men and many

others discovered a way of making shields for their eyes out of sheets of paper. And many are even wearing sun glasses, adding a touch of the weird and eerie, a googly touch.

-- -- -- --

When the delegates first came pouring into the hall, a crowd of women parading up and down outside kept getting in their way. The women carried banners bearing the words: "We want total disarmament." Appropos of what? Disarm who?

The Pennsylvania delegation was the first to arrive: turned up with a fifty-piece band. And we knew then that all the advance prophecies were correct, a noisy convention.

During Him Farley's speech, denouncing the Republicans, which was the feature of the session, the delegates suddenly decided they wanted exercise, so,

they interrupted Jim and spent a half hour parading up and down the isles. ~~suddenly~~^{It} I found myself swept along by the tide. And almost the first two men I collided with were representatives of ~~the~~ two of the most remote parts of Uncle Sam's domain, Emil Hurja, of Alaska, who has gained so much fame during the New Deal regime, as Jim Farley's master statistician and wizard of prognostication. ^{And} With Emil ~~—~~ a delegate from the far off Philippine Islands, handsome, soft spoken, red haired Frank Murphy, United States High Commissioner ~~to~~ the Philippines and last of our Philippine governors. Above the roar of the yelping, howling, singing parading crowd, High Commissioner Murphy told me that he had just come across the Pacific Ocean from the islands to attend this convention, and expects to return to the Far East before long, if -- and it seems to be quite a big "if" -- if his colleagues do not insist upon his remaining here to run for Governor of Michigan.

49
With bulky Emil Hurja, Farley's right hand man running interference for us, Arthur DeTitta^{a Movietone} and I crashed right through the parade and up to the speaker's rostrum, where we found Senator Key Pitman of Nevada, Chairman of the Senate

Committee on Foreign Affairs, the silver senator, and Senator Joe Robinson of Arkansas, Democratic leader of the Senate.

Both ~~were~~ perspiring as though sitting under a tropical sun, and blinking their eyes from the blinding lights pouring down from high up in the rafters.

This was all during the interruption to Jim Farley's speech. *And while he waited I had a chat with him and the* Chairman Farley had his fourteen year old daughter,

and his little son Jim along. Whether it was the noise or the lights, probably the latter, as I shook hands with little Jim, he almost fell over asleep in my arms. I suspect that little Jim hates conventions as much as big Jim likes them.)

50

In one of the boxes sat a man I was anxious to talk to, ~~and~~ I wanted to hear his remarks if he had any to make, concerning Governor Alf Landon. For ^{*New Deal*} Assistant Secretary of War Harry F. Woodring, as you may recall, was Landon's predecessor as Governor of Kansas. Ex-Governor Woodring, now one of the ^{*Roosevelt*} ~~New Deal~~ leaders in Washington, and his wife too, spoke graciously of Mr. Landon. They both said they admired him. And Mr. Woodring was particularly eloquent in his praise

two Senators.

of John Hamilton, Chairman of the Republican Committee, the red-headed lawyer from Kansas who electrified the Cleveland convention. They made an interesting contrast, those two - Hamilton and Farley. So far as pulchritude is concerned, the girls will give their glances to Hamilton. John is a good-looking chap. Tall, fast-moving, laughing eyed, with a noble shock of reddish hair. He cuts a swagger figure on the public platform, speaks well, is magnetic. Jim is somewhat older, rather portly, and as bald as a billiard ball. But you can't blame a man for that. He's no matinee idol. But neither are most of his fellow citizens - you and I.

51

I suppose in point of political acumen, most wise men would give the eye to Farley, the oldtime practitioner of the electioneering arts - and as I watched him today he seemed a past master at it, if there ever was one. But there has been a lifting of smart eyebrows of late at some of the things that Jim has said -- Farleyisms. His talk about a "typical prairie Governor," his jibe about Landon being a "synthetic candidate." Hamilton on the other hand has made a distinctly favorable

impression, especially with his initial declaration that the Landon forces would make a fair, clean fight of it this summer. This, after the Farley remark that it would be a dirty campaign.

52

It is nothing new for critics to say that President Roosevelt is handicapped by his Postmaster General and Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, the man who helped so much to make him President. It is just to the contrary with Hamilton, people everywhere saying he's a mighty good thing for Landon -- although some cynics say: "too much of a good thing. Rather puts Alf in the shade. " He made such a hit at the Cleveland convention that it might have reminded you of John Alden going to court Priscilla in behalf of Miles Standish. Remember what Priscilla said? I heard one Cleveland delegate, a woman, say the same thing:- "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?"

Anyway, it's not the two candidates who are taking the early campaign spotlight. It's the Chairmen of their two National Committees. *And Jim Farley right there in the Convention Hall was having his big day.*

KEYNOTE

One spectator who looked over the ^{convention} scene with anything but an indifferent eye today, was Senator Alvin Barkley of Kentucky, Padach. With one leg over the edge of a box, he discussed the part he is to play in the convention. For many of you will be hearing his voice in just a minute now.

53
(Senator Barkley is the keynoter here, and tonight his colleagues expect him to make the speech of his life. I asked him if he was all set and he said "Yes," but that there would be one thing wrong with it, it would be too long. He told me that it would last about an hour, not counting appluse. Which, by the way, was the exact length of Senator Steiwer's keynote speech at the Republican convention.)

After the session I attended the Farley press conference. And behind Big Jim stood the canny, gray-haired Charley Michelson, the sage publicity shark who did so much to bring that Democratic victory four years ago. When Chairman Jim was talking about tonight's keynote speech, a reporter asked: "Did Charley write it?" Farley grinned broadly and Charley hastened to cry: "He did not. "

"Is Al Smith here Jim?" one of the boys asked in kindly tones. "I haven't the slightest idea, Fred," replied the Big Chairman. "Will his manifesto be read to the convention?" was the next question. "That," replied Jim, "is up to the delegates." At another point in the conference he announced: "This is an open convention, all questions are up to the delegates." "The free and untrammelled delegates!" suggested a correspondent ironically. "Sure," retorted Farley. "You'd better put your tongue in your other cheek, ~~Hi~~ Jim," said ~~ix~~ a voice from the back of the room. ~~He disclaimed the part he~~
~~is to play in the convention. For many of you will be hearing~~
~~his voice in just a little while now. Senator Barkle is the~~

54

TWO-THIRDS RULE

One question I heard brought up at that conference ~~is probably the~~ will probably turn out to be the most hotly fought argument of this convention. Shall ^{the} Democratic Party, the oldest living party in the country, throw into the discard that vexacious rule that a presidential candidate can only be nominated by a two-thirds majority? That's the point on which Chairman Farley underwent his keenest cross-examination.

"Do you know," asked a ~~Washington~~ Washington newspaper man that Senator Pat Harrison has just given out the news that the Mississippi delegation in caucus has gone on record against the abrogation of the two-thirds rule?"

"No," said Mr. Farley blandly, "Is that so?"

"Have you heard that the Texas and Oklahoma delegations have also bound themselves to the same effect?" chimed in a correspondent from El Paso. To which a third man added: "Georgia too."

~~Mr. Farley~~ ^{But Jim} kept his unruffled composure.

"What about the Carolinas?" he asked his questioners. A ~~chorus~~ chorus answered: "South Carolina is against abrogation."

55

Chairman Jim was then queried about the attitude of the Administration. Said he: "The Administration has no definite attitude." "What?" said the chorus, "The President is known to be in favor of the abrogation of the rule."

"But he hasn't said so officially," said Mr. Farley. "The question is up to the free and untrammelled delegates."

Then came a penetrating question. "What of the charge that the abrogation of the two-thirds rule would make it easier for a president to get himself a third term?"

Then Farley grew emphatic. "Of course that charge is assinine," he declared. "We could have had that two-thirds rule discarded in Chicago four years ago, had we so desired. But we didn't want to make trouble. It all has nothing to do with what may happen in 1940."

From what I've gathered in Philadelphia today, the abrogation of the two-thirds rule may eventually be dropped in the interests of harmony. As I am taking, the New York delegation in its caucus has just voted against the two-thirds rule, which puts the question in more of a tangle than ever.

MONTREAUX

This is a conventional day all right. Here's another one of those things - that international convention at Montreaux, Switzerland. In many respects it reminds one of the raucous rally here in Philadelphia. The result is a foregone conclusion. At that ~~BRAYENKI~~ international conference, Turkey is demanding the right to fortify the Dardanelles, which is forbidden by the post-war treaties. Nobody doubts that the other powers represented will graciously grant the permission. In fact, Montreaux even goes Philadelphia one better. President Roosevelt has not yet been formally nominated, but the Turks have already gone ahead and fortified the Dardanelles. They have done it in advance, on the q.t., and now are asking for an okay, a ratification, something like the Roosevelt ratification.

57

And there's another point of resemblance - a walkout, one of the big shots refusing to come to the Montreaux convention. Italy isn't there, because Mussolini refuses to play ball in any international game until those sanctions are lifted. However, the Italians have notified the conference on the fortification of the Dardanelles that Rome is watching

the proceedings with deep interest - probably with more interest than Al Smith feels in the Philadelphia proceedings.

Only one point of contention looms at Montreaux, and it's not the platform ~~of~~ the two-thirds rule. It's the fact that the proposal advanced by the Turks gives Soviet Russia a decided bulge. Mustapha Kemel's government is closely allied to Moscow. On the question of allowing warships passage through the Dardanelles, Turkey wants to give the Soviets the advantage. ~~This is likely to provoke plenty of discussion among the delegates of Great Britain, France, Bulgaria, Greece, Roumania, Jugoslavia, Japan, Russia ~~and Turkey~~ and Turkey.~~

ITALIAN PLANE

28

Last August, when the news was full of Italian plans against Ethiopia, just before the invasion began - a disastrous airplane crash broke into the international headlines. A big Fascist military plane, flying from Italy to Ethiopia, fell a wreck and ruin in the Sudan - British territory. Every one aboard it killed - including the Italian Under-Secretary of Colonies. At that time it seemed that the air disaster meant nothing more than a tragic incident in the history of flying.

58 1/2

Today we hear of a sensation sprung in London - an inquiry in Parliament asking about Italian ~~plans~~ plans to attack Egypt. The labor opposition is demanding that His Majesty's government make a revelation about certain Italian documents in which are said to be outlined Mussolini's military scheme for invading the British protectorate, the kingdom of the Nile. What about these documents? The report is that they were being flown aboard the plane that crashed last August, and were found by the British authorities in the wreckage. Thus is that aviation calamity of last year returning once

more to the international headlines.

And it may lead to some more British-Italian unpleasantness. Nothing serious, I suppose - because it's quite the usual practice for the general staff of any nation to draw up military plans ^{for} every eventuality.

END

9

There was one man I wanted to talk to while the ^{Democratic} Convention was in session today - Colonel Marvin McIntyre, ^{the President's secretary,} the only representative of the White House I saw in the throng. But I couldn't get a word with him. We met in the middle of the hullabaloo, when it was at its ~~waxxxxix~~ ^{noisiest.} We couldn't hear. So, instead of talking we slapped each other on the back, and moved along.

94

And now I'll move along, and SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.