

AIR MAIL

HOLMES

President Roosevelt's call for the air mail to be referred to private companies as soon as possible raises the question: What has the Army Air Corps learned in flying the mail? They say it has had valuable experience and the Army Supreme Court Justice of the United States -- on this, his ninety-third birthday.

flying, night flying and blind flying.

The President insists that the air transport companies must be reorganized in a way to eliminate the executives who negotiated these old mail contracts. He wants to cast the men on top, the men responsible for what the administration claims was corruption and collusion. It seems like a new wrinkle in government, with the President using his power over mail contracts to demand a purification of the air transport industry.

After the accidents which the Army encountered when it started to carry the mail it is interesting to be told that the Army aviators actually like their new tasks. They are keen about playing the mail men. The reasons are: First, they are soldiers; secondly, they are aviators. As soldiers they take the accidents as all in a soldier's life. As aviators they are

AIR MAIL

President Roosevelt's call for the air mail to be returned to private companies as soon as possible raises the question: What has the Army Air Corps learned in flying the mails? They say it has had valuable experience and the Army boys have learned a good deal about such matters as mountain flying, night flying and blind flying.

The President insists that the air transport companies must be reorganized in a way to eliminate the executives who negotiated those old mail contracts. He wants to oust the men on top, the men responsible for what the administration claims was corruption and collusion. It seems like a new wrinkle in government, with the President using his power over mail contracts to demand a purification of the air transport industry.

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DISARMAMENT

Henry Ford has fired a blast against the armament makers -- the merchants of death about whom I spoke last night. Mr. Ford is vehement on the subject. "The People in general don't want war," he declares hotly, "but it has been forced on them by scheming munitions makers looking for enormous profits. If we could get rid", he bristled, "of the one hundred men responsible for the wars in this world people could enjoy peace."

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Yes, the munitions makers manufacture and sell the implements of war. That's one way of looking at it. The other way is this:- the munitions makers manufacture and sell implements with which we may have to defend our country! Two sides to the subject -- and take your pick.

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Word from Belgium has a curious logical bearing on all this. Belgium has suffered plenty from war and does not want war. The Belgian Prime Minister today declares that the Belgians are alarmed by the armament race that has started among the great powers. On the other hand there is one kind of disarmament that he is not too keen about -- German disarma-

DISARMAMENT - 2

ment. Here's what he says:- "Waging a war as a preventative to keep Germany from rearming would be worse than the evil it tried to correct." He added:- "I refuse to launch our country on such an adventure."

It all gets confusing: we hear about a nation arming itself to prevent war. We also hear of war to prevent a nation from arming itself. I am afraid it takes more than a man to figure out the ways of mankind.

General strike in Havana and disorders in various provinces of the Island of Sugar. The man of the hour is Colonel Batista. The question of the hour -- can Batista squelch ^{the} ~~a~~ smouldering revolt?

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Fifteen years ago Fulgencio Batista walked into the army barracks in a little inland sugar town and signed up as a private soldier at \$40.00 per month. One day he saw a sargeant's stenographer taking dictation from a Colonel. "Looks like a nice quiet job", observed ^{swartley} ~~A~~ Fulgencio. So he spent his spare time studying shorthand. He must have become a pretty good stenographer because the next thing you know he was military court reporter in Havana and was taking down the p proceedings at court marshal trials.

He knew how to make himself popular with the Generals. He had a knack of making friends. As a stenographer he learned many a secret which he kept to himself -- for future reference, and all the time he went to night school.

An outstanding young man -- the more outstanding for his physical appearance - raven black hair, strongly marked features, the eyes of a Chinaman. And obviously intelligent. He built an organization of the enlisted men of the army. Presidents came and went, but Sargeant Batista kept working quietly, under cover. When Machado was overthrown Batista still said nothing but ^{kept working up his} ~~worked up a~~ circle of friends among the common soldiers with redoubled energy. Under Machado's first

successor Batista was still a Sargeant taking dictation, ^{Then} ~~and~~ suddenly he laid down his stenographer's pencil and took out his soldier's pistol. He walked into the army headquarters and said, "I represent the people". What he meant was that he represented the other sargeants and the soldiers and that was plenty. From that day to this he has been Master of the Cuban Army and therefore Master of the Island.

Is he a Napoleon of the West Indies? Or an Emperor Jones? It is sometimes hard to distinguish between those two fellows -- Napoleon and Emperor Jones. ^{And} now Batista has another revolt on his hands.

Governor Kump.
West Virginia.
March 8, 1934.

LT in
Charleston,
W. Va.

Mar. 8, 1934.

I'm the guest ^{tonight} of the Better Business Association
of Charleston, West Virginia. The Better Business men are
gathered here in the dining room of the Daniel Boone Hotel.

The Governor of West Virginia is here, too.

Governor Kump and I have just been discussing the subject of
safety in coal mines. During my trip through these mountains
of coal, I talked to John Daniels, head of the Department of
Mines in Kentucky, and to N. P. Rinehart, Chief of the Department
of Mines here in West Virginia. And now, Governor Kump has just
been giving me an interesting slant. By the way, Governor, won't
you tell it to everybody, instead of just to me.

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THE GOVERNOR: Yes, indeed, Lowell. When any one
of us uses a shovelful of coal in our furnace, we might stop for
a moment and think of the men who brought that coal up from the
dark depths of the earth. Our warmth and comfort depend upon
the army of miners, who fight their battle against Nature, deep
below the surface, contending with the shadowy forces of the
obscure underground. These men must be made safe. And every

thoughtful person will feel better, as he enjoys his warm room in Winter, to know that all that can be done is being done to make the miners safe.

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L.T.: I ran across some striking angles about mine safety these past few days, Governor. Ventilation, as you gentlemen have all told me, is needed to clear away explosive gases that seep from the coal. And then there is the coal dust. When it fills the air, it may ignite and explode. It's difficult to clear away that dust as it collects, so the modern way is to dilute it by spraying it with powdered limestone or soapstone. If there is a certain portion of the inert stone dust mixed with it, why then the coal dust will not explode.

I find that accidents have been greatly reduced in the black mines--one-tenth in some cases of what they were a few years ago. And, with the constant hammering-away at the idea of safety, they expect that major accidents in the coal mines won't happen any more--those accidents which were such a terrifying feature of mine history in the haphazard days of the past.

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Let's reconstruct a picture of a mine explosion some years ago: The miners were working far under the earth. There was a sudden blinding flame, an ear-shattering detonation. Thirty-five men were trapped underground. They were in a remote section of the mine. Shocked and dazed, they gathered. One man took the lead. There is always a leader. Who was he? The records do not say, the story doesn't tell. There are no vain heroics among the men who face disaster underground. No one man takes his place in the limelight. But there was a leader that day-- a nameless, unknown hero. He rallied the men, held them together in their panic, their wild impulse to rush to the outlets, to rush into the deadly gas that blocks the way. The leader holds them back with his cool courage. He dominates them.

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At his direction, the thirty-five trapped men make their way to a room--a room carved out of coal. They throw up a barricade to cut off the room from the rest of the mine. They heap up dirt, beams, coal, canvas, and anything they can find. They wall themselves in, so the deadly gas will not get in.

They put out their carbide lights. These consume oxygen--oxygen they will need for their lungs. They are in hideous darkness now. They lie down, because they will consume less oxygen when they are prone and motionless.

4 The hours go by, hours that remain unnumbered in the inky blackness. Time is long in that blackness, eternally long. They do half-mad things. Some take pencils and paper from pockets, and scribble messages in the darkness--messages to their families, incoherent words. One man begins to rave. They hit him over the head with a shovel, and knock him unconscious to quiet him.

That accident of which I am telling left one fascinating legacy--the written testimony given by those entombed miners after they had been rescued. I say that testimony today, and copied an extract from it. Here it is; here is what one of the miners said: "My partner said to me, 'Sam, we got thirty-five to forty more minutes to live, as best as I can guess at it.' And I said, 'Well, I'm going to call on the Old Master. I ain't called on

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"Him like I ought to in a long time, and I ain't felt the effects of prayer.' So I got on my knees, and I told Him on High, 'Lord, the boss says we ain't got more than thirty-five or forty minutes to live,' and I said 'Lord, You said 'whenever there are three or four gathered in Thy Name that You would be one in the midst, and this is one time I am calling on You.' And I fully believe the Lord answered my prayer, for about twenty minutes from the time I had done the praying, I heard the boys coming to get us out."

Yes, they got them out. And it's stories like that one which put power and fervor behind the present-day drive for safety in the mines, where they dig coal for your furnace and mine.

Another timely theme down here--and timely all over the country, too--is unemployment relief. Governor Kump, how is your West Virginia relief work going?

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GOVERNOR: This state is doing a big job. We have an unusually difficult¹ problem. We have not only our own people,

but a large number of outsiders to take care of. The "boom time" brought us a rapid increase in population, - foreigners and Americans from other sections. They swell our lists of unemployed. Naturally, it is a drain on the state finances, but the unemployment problem is one that has to be faced squarely and without any blinking. But things are improving in West Virginia--improving so rapidly, that I want to make you a promise, Lowell. We are glad to have you with us on this present trip of yours, and the next time you come this way you will find West Virginia flourishing and leading the country in a happy and prosperous life.

HITLER

In New York there were thundering denunciations against the Nazi Dictator. It was in Madison Square Garden last night, and they called it a trial -- civilization against Hitler. Among the prosecutors were former Governor Al Smith, Mayor LaGuardia and Judge Samuel Seabury. The case in favor of Hitler was presented by -- nobody.

GOLD

A consignment of 935 ounces of gold was shipped from Capetown to London. When the box reached South Hampton it was O. K., full of gold. On the train up to London it was carefully watched by Scotland Yard detectives. When the box was opened at London it was full of cement, nothing but white powdered cement. It was worth \$23,900.00 when it left South Africa and when it got to London it was worth 9 cents.

What can we do about it tonight? Well we can try to figure out the solution of that crime mystery. We can sit down and philosophize on the endless ingenuity of thieves or we can shed a tear or two for Scotland Yard.

And we can shed a tear or two, or laugh a laugh or two, as we come to a robbery perpetrated at the United States Treasury in Washington. Outside of the main entrance of the Treasury was a showcase containing a few gold pieces and several bars of gold. That is they looked like bars of gold. They have been stolen. The thief broke into the showcase and swiped those slabs of yellow metal. However, the metal was only painted yellow. They were solid cast iron, dipped in a

GOLD

wash of gold. Your Uncle Sam was not so simple as to leave real bullion lying about in public in a showcase. So the thief who tried to rob the Treasury stole for himself a gold brick.

Several years ago a Turk, said to be 157 years old, came to these fair shores. He was entertained with much publicity and in one instance was photographed with several chorus girls sitting on his knee. Now we learn that the twelfth wife of this patriarch has seen one of those festive pictures and has divorced the merry ~~patriarch~~ *Turkish centenarian.*

Another thing he did while over here was to buy a set of false teeth. They must have contributed to his health because now he is celebrating his 161st birthday and marrying his thirteenth wife.

He is a city employee ~~in~~ *- Istanbul -* old Constantinople and is asking the city fathers to double his salary so that he can support Wife No. 13 in proper style.

It is something to laugh at and then when the laugh is over, to ponder seriously upon. If that old fellow is as old as he pretends, he is an important subject in the study of longevity.

SPAIN

And Cuba's mother country is having her share of labor troubles. A general strike is threatened. They haven't got marshal law - they don't like the phrase. They have a state of alarm. Before they had the state of alarm they had a state of prevention. We, over here, have forty-eight states but neither of alarm nor of prevention.

Public assemblies are forbidden and police and civil guards are being reinforced.

It is curious the way the tides of politics flow. In some countries the swing is violently conservative just now as in Italy and Germany. In others the agitation is radical, and red. Contradictory currents with odd cross eddies.

DWARFS

In Budapest the dwarfs held a parade. Several hundred of the little folk live in the Hungarian capital and they marched through the streets with the slogan--"Justice for dwarfs." They're demanding a law in Hungary to forbid the intermarriage of midgets and people of ordinary size. What's the idea? Do they want to create a race of midgets, or is it some wild, weird mockery of Hitler's program of a pure race? They also demand the right to attend theatres and ride on street cars at half the price of those tall folks. That seems reasonable enough.

FRIDAY, MARCH 23rd, 1934

A new American record, for continuous skating on the ice this time, Edward Raw of Valentine, Pennsylvania - by skating continuously for 138 hours and he is still skating. He hopes to ^{beat} ~~the~~ the World's record of 178 hours which is held by an Englishman. How long can anybody do anything? That seems to be a vital question with some folks. I suppose a slightly more important question would be - how long can anybody keep doing something worth while?

Well I can't keep doing this all night. So ~~along~~ until Monday.

But Franklin D. has received unparalleled support, as

in case.

The first real Congressional outbreak came with the cancellation of those oil-mail contracts. Right or wrong, the swift action among the Army pilots brought a violent storm of criticism against the Administration.

By the way, while listening to the radio today I heard that two more fatalities have been added to the list.

The cause of the Congressional disturbance of the moment is that always dynamite-loaded question of veterans'