

BUSINESS

An important decision is announced by that spectacular group of industrialists and financiers meeting at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, with accent on the West! I have been combarbed with telegrams, raking me over the hottest kind of coals because the other night I left out the West. I've been to White Sulphur Springs, had the time of my life, and ought to know what state it's in.

The big business gathering in its plan laid before the President announces all kinds of cooperation with the Government, if certain objectionable features in the recovery program are modified. They want the Administration to tone these down. Then business and industry will fall in line with the New Deal for a harmonious forward march.

What are these objectionable features? Certain phases of the NRA? Yes, certainly! But above all, Government in business -- the intrusion of the Federal Government into the fields of private enterprise.

And this comes right along with President Roosevelt's

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grant yesterday of PWA funds for the construction of a Municipal plants in New York, with further possibilities of partnership between the Government and cities in the power business, though only in cities where Washington thinks the private rates exorbitant.

Within a few weeks a Board of Delegates appointed by the White Sulphur Springs conference meeting at the Greenbriar will journey to Washington. This Board is called the Joint Business Conference for Recovery. It will go into sessions with President Roosevelt, to talk about the offer that business is making -- of cooperation if those troublesome features are removed. And it's a good guess that the new Federal Municipal power idea will be one of the dominant themes in that heart-to-heart talk. It is expected that the committee of business leaders will meet the President before January 3rd, when Mr. Roosevelt, is tentatively scheduled to stage one of his fireside radio talks to the nation.

RECOVERY

Secretary Roper of the Department of Commerce announces that Christmas business this year is running twenty per cent ahead of last year. Figures gathered by private statistical ^{and} survey agencies are a little different. They have an even better look. The firm of Dunn & Bradstreet reckons that Christmas business is from eighteen to twenty-five per cent ahead of last year. The National Retail Dry Goods Association has made a survey of seventy cities and finds that the retail trade is almost as good as it was in 1921, back in the prosperity era.

There's one trade that fails to show any similar large increase. And it sounds like a good thing. The liquor trade! The alcoholic refreshments business is lagging far behind other lines. ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~showing large recovery increases.~~

TAXES

The President's newest tax move reminds us how peculiarly heavy the tax burden in this country can be -- with the cash being raked in on three different political levels: Federal, State and Municipal:— The Government reaches out its hand and [^] takes some. The ~~THE GOVERNMENT~~ State in which we live takes a whack at our pocketbook. And then comes our own fair city for the final clean-up. That's the background, when the President talks about overlapping. These three different agencies of taxation frequently overlap, ~~each other~~ slapping on the same kind of tax to beat the same thing, several times over.

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The President has ordered an investigation of these overlapping taxes. The Treasury experts are going to make a survey, showing the way that Federal, State and Municipal taxation tends ^{s to strike} ~~to hit~~ in the same place. When the study is complete and the report is in, the White House is ~~is~~ expected to call a nation-wide conference to devise ways and means of keeping business and individuals from getting socked ^{over and over in the} ~~two or three times in the~~ same solar plexus. same places.

As an instance of overlapping, Secretary Morgenthau of the Treasury points to gasoline, which he calls a prime example of a commodity taxed first by the Government, then by the State, and often by Municipalities.

This leads us to an interesting decision handed down by a court in Vermont. A rural letter-carrier insisted that while delivering mail he was a Federal employee performing his duty and saw no reason why he should pay the State tax on gasoline. The case dragged ~~to~~ its way up to ^{the} Vermont Supreme Court which now has decided that, no matter whether he's using gasoline in ^{his} ~~the~~ Government ^{work} ~~surveys~~ or not, he has to pay the gas tax like any other citizen. And maybe they will take that obscure Vermont case all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States, ~~as~~ a question of fundamental principle. It's an odd incident in the story of the gas tax, which overlaps all over the place.

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MAIL

The Post Office Department has asked me to request all of you folks to follow the example of Robert Glass. That is, Uncle Sam's mail man issues the usual annual warning, asking you to address your Christmas packages plainly, wrap them securely and mail them early. Well, mailing them early is following the example of Robert Glass. He lives on the island of ~~Trixt~~ Tristan da Cunha, immensely remote in the South Atlantic, halfway between the tip of Africa and South America. Robert Glass, in fact, is a direct descendant of the first man who settled on that ^{isole of} ~~island~~ solitude, one of the loneliest in the world.

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This year he sent a Christmas card to a friend in Montreal, and ~~he~~ mailed it nine months ago, way back last spring. It had to go nearly all around the world, via Singapore, ~~and~~ It didn't get to Singapore until ~~24~~ September 24th, as the Singapore postmark shows. And now it has just arrived in Montreal.

That's doing your Christmas mailing early. You have to, if you live on the island of Tristan da Cunha.

LONG

Huey Long has been cracking down on the Louisiana Legislature, threatening the law-makers with arrest unless they take their seats and pass his thirty-one bills, making him a dictator of the Bayous. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia has been doing a bit of cracking down on its own account. And the Kingfish is the crackee, *on the receiving end.* ~~The Court handed Huey a joke today.~~ It concerns that suit for libel which General Ansel has filed against the Kingfish. The Kingfish was sore because of the General's activities as counsel for a Senate Committee investigating election activities in Louisiana. There was an explosive wrangle, upon which the General sued, demanding damages for various remarks that Huey had made. The most explosive of these Kingfish remarks was that General Ansel had bribed his way into the job of Judge Advocate General of the United States Army.

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Huey claimed that he couldn't be sued, because anything said on the floor of the Senate was privileged and immune from legal proceedings. The General pointed out that the Kingfish remarks had not only been spoken on the floor of the Senate but had been printed and distributed. So his first action in court was to

demand the right to sue the Louisiana Senator for libel. After a long legal battle he won that point, when the Supreme Court of the United States, several weeks ago, decided that Huey could be sued. So, the General went right ahead ^{with his} ~~to do~~ the suing. The Kingfish lawyers battled against having the case come to trial. They've lost out again, ^{when} ~~with~~ the Supreme Court of the District ~~Court~~ of Columbia ^{now} order^s ~~ing~~ Huey to court for the trial of the libel suit.

CHRISTMAS

Let's talk about Christmas trees for a moment. It's the appropriate season, and right here in Rockefeller Center, ^{outside my studio window} they've just started one of the most spectacular tree celebrations in the history of Christmas. In the Sunken Plaza they put up a seventy foot Norwegian spruce, and decorated it to the king's taste - or rather Santa Claus' taste. And today a series of glittering and cheering Yuletide ceremonies began. They'll continue every day for a whole week.

So let's talk about Christmas trees, the more so as the Rockefeller Center Weekly, in discussing the giant tree in the Sunken Plaza, goes on to tell us the rather surprising fact that Christmas trees are not nearly so old as we think. The familiar tree with lights and gifts and trimmings, as we know it, is less than a hundred years old, so far as the world at large is concerned. It originated in Germany and made its debut in Paris in Eighteen Forty. It appeared in England a year later, when Prince Albert, consort to Queen Victoria, set up the first English Christmas tree in Windsor Castle. The Prince consort was a German. He was introducing a German custom. Nine years later, in Eighteen Fifty, Charles Dickens still called the Christmas tree - a new German toy.

BARCLAY

Something new and fancy in the way of parties is having a
fling ⁱⁿ ~~with~~ a swanky New York apartment tonight - a jail party.

Yes, the guests, instead of getting invitations, got warrants of
arrest. They'll wear convicts garb, they'll be behind ~~prison~~ bars,
prison bars not joy bars, and they'll eat bean soup, the favorite
prison dish.

The jail party is being thrown by the well known magazine
illustrator, McClelland Barclay. It is a sentimental gesture -
in memory of his own recent jail experience, when he fell behind
in those weekly payments and was flung into the alimony hoosgow.

MOB

The fury of the mob at Shelbyville, Tennessee, yesterday, makes today's quietude all the more striking. Things are relatively tranquil in Shelbyville, following the arrival of heavy forces of state troops, which have overawed the rioters. The newspapers today have given us a graphic picture of the wild proceedings - the raging attempt of the crowd to storm the heavily guarded courthouse, where ~~an~~ a negro was on trial for ^{an attack on} ~~killing~~ a fourteen year old girl. Savage fighting between the mob and the soldiers on guard, gunfire and two of the rioters killed. The negro spirited away, disguised as a soldier. The return of the mob, the burning of the courthouse, the attempt to blast it with dynamite.

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While rehear^sing this scene, we get an all ^{the} more vivid impression of the quietude that has followed the arrival of powerful detachments of the State National Guard. Violence subside^sg in the face of superior power.

STORM

Once more the gales lashed the ocean! Today was another stormy one on the North Atlantic - ships delayed, ships in danger. The flashing radio ~~flashed~~ calls for help, Rescue vessels putting out on errands of mercy. One ship ~~reported~~ reported in distress right outside of New York Harbor.

This has been an exceptionally bad season of winter storms on the North Atlantic. These months are commonly tempestuous out there on the deep, but this year can almost be called a year of storms.

ITALY

Last night I tied together the Italian dispute with Abyssinia in Africa and the strained state of affairs between Italy and Turkey on the coast of Asia Minor.

The Mussolini Abyssinian angle is up before the League of Nations, though no formal protest on the part of the Ethiopian King of Kings has yet been filed. Mussolini has announced in advance that he will reject any attempt to have the League arbitrate the wrangle in Africa. Today the Abyssinian Foreign Minister gives a detailed story, accusing the Italians of aggression. He cites the official British version. For the British had a prominent part in the border dispute that led to fighting.

His Majesty's Foreign Minister told Parliament how the Italian-Abyssinian row started while a mixed British and Abyssinian commission was making a survey of the border between Abyssinia and British territories in Africa.

The commission came to the frontier of Italian Somaliland, where there is a considerable strip claimed alike by the King of Kings and by Mussolini. The Italian troops were in

possession. The Abyssinian-British Commission tried to pass across the border into the disputed territory, but were stopped by the Italians. Sir John Simon told Parliament that arrangements had been made with the Italian government for the commission to enter the Italian zone, but word had simply failed to reach the commander of the border troops at that remote point.

The Abyssinians were exceedingly angry. Just who started the fighting that as usual is the old "he-hit-me-first" argument. The Foreign Minister at Addis Ababa tells us of an Italian airplane reconnoissance of the Abyssinian camp, which was followed by a swooping down of bombers, machine-gunning from the air, and a fire-spiting charge of an Italian tank.

This formal declaration from the government of the Lion of Judah puts the imbroglio more definitely than ever before the League of Nations, and this in turn brings Turkey into the picture, Turkey and Mustapha Kemal, who has his own quarrel with the Italians. The Turks are afraid of Mussolini's ambition, apprehensive of Black Shirt Fascist expansion. Italy has been

fortifying Rhodes, the chief island of the Dodecanese group, held by Italy, and just off the Turkish coast of Asia Minor.

And now, as we heard last night, the Turks are making a show of military power along the Asiatic shore opposite the Dodecanese.

And here's the curious combination, the peculiar tie-up: The Council of the League of Nations, which is scheduled to consider the Italian-Abyssinian dispute, will have a new President when it meets on January the eleventh. And that new President will be Tewfik Rushdi. He is a Turk, Turkish delegate to the League, Turkish Foreign Minister, in fact. He will preside over the deliberations concerning that African quarrel, which basically is a question of Italian expansion in Africa, the same Fascist expansion which the Turks fear in Asia.

It is significant of the era in which we live that these complications involve not merely three nations, but most decidedly three men:- Mussolini, Kemal, and the Emperor Haile Selassie, conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, descendant of the Queen of Sheba.

Napoleon once said:- "It's not men that count, it's the man." And here we have the Duce, the Ghazi and the Lion.

ITALY

New laws of censorship have just been passed by Mussolini, laws that certainly will place a hard problem before the foreign newspaper correspondents. Anybody transmitting news with a military angle will be liable to punishment for espionage. A correspondent sending home a story embodying military information will be regarded as a spy.

It looks as though the boys might have to limit their journalism to Asti Spomonte and Lacrima Christi. Because almost anything may have a military significance, from the opening of a new road to an airplane flight.

There may be military significance even in the phrase:-

SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.