

L.J. Sunoco. Thurs, March 31, 1938

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The day in government affairs began early ^{and} in a big way. One A.M. Warm Springs, Georgia, the Washington correspondents in bed, deep in sweet slumber. How those White House newspapermen love their slumber -- never known to stay up all night or anything like that. Anyway, they were slumbering, ~~with~~ when a sudden awakening came. Members of the presidential staff shook them, roused them, handed them ^s a sheet of paper -- a release, and a hot release it was. President Roosevelt does not intend to become a dictator -- what a headline for a newspaperman to flash to his papers.

The whole ^{episode} ~~thing~~ was astonishing, the President making a midnight declaration in the form of a letter to a friend, a letter swiftly passed on to the correspondents for publication. Here's what it says on that critical point of dictat~~ion~~^{orship}.

"I am", wrote the President to the friend, "as much opposed to American dictatorship as you are. For three simple reasons:- (A) I have no inclination to be a dictator. (B) I have none of the qualifications which would make me a successful dictator. (C) I have too much historical background and too much knowledge of existing dictatorships to make me desire any form of

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dictatorship for a democracy like the United States of America."

It was all aimed in the direction of the Reorganization Bill, now so bitterly fought in Congress with ^{many}~~more~~ people saying the bill would give the President so much power that it would tend toward a dictatorship. The President in his letter to a friend defends the Bill, points out the need for reorganization, straighten out the confusion among the many and complicated bureaus in Washington. He says for forty years that has been the demand for efficiency and economy. Now it's needed more than ever. But the part of the letter that overshadows all else is that declaration -- the President doesn't ^{not}~~intend~~ intend to be a dictator.

You can imagine the stir ~~that~~ this raised in Congress.

The Presidential pronouncement was hailed by the advocates of the Reorganization Bill as a great help to their cause -- a timely blow struck for reorganization. ^{Chief among those advocates Sen. Byrnes, it was} But, Oh Boy, how the opponents of the Bill, both Democrats and Republicans sailed to the attack. They denounced the dictatorship declaration as a mere ~~is~~ headline grabber. They said the mere fact that a President should have to deny ~~the~~ dictatorial ambitions should show how dangerous the bill

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hauled

is. And one savage bit of diatribe came from Representative Short of Missouri, Republican. He shouted:- "Assurances are no good when they come from one ~~is~~ who cares no more for them than a tom-cat does for a marriage license in a ^{back} ~~dark~~ alley on a dark night." Those are vitriolic words -- if not catty.

Tonight the Reorganization question is being bitterly fought out in the House of Representatives. The central issue is -- time, debate, how long? It's the old familiar question of how the Administration leaders can stop the talking and arguing and get the business to a vote.

The bad temper of the proceedings is illustrated by a rather comical episode today. One speaker ^{talked} ~~spoke~~ of the possibility of having the Reorganization Bill printed in words of one syllable. "So the Republicans can understand it", he jeered. Opponents of Reorganization immediately jumped in with the demand that the mocking remark be kept off the record. Then the arguments produced the fact that there would have to be a ruling on the matter by Speaker Bankhead. But the Speaker was at lunch. The proceedings were held up for ten minutes while they fetched the gentleman from

Alabama from his luncheon table. Finally he arrived, still chewing no doubt, and solemnly considered the ^{remark} ~~recording~~ ^{about} ~~of~~ the words of one syllable and Republicans. Then he announced with deepest gravity: "It is the opinion of the Chair that the words are not objectionable under the ruling."

The idea of the ^{new deal} ~~Democratic~~ leaders was to cut down the length of the entire debate to six hours, but they failed to put that across. A vote today decided that the debate should be limited ^{according to} ~~by order of~~ Congressional rules, which allow one hour of talk for each member. So now the Reorganization advocates are afraid that many many one hours of talk will stretch things out so long ^{that it will} ~~as to~~ be a good deal like a filibuster.

TOWNSEND

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A lawsuit was started in Chicago today, United States District Court - a damage suit in behalf of the Townsend organization, the Old-Age Pension plan. A Denver member has gone to law, making charges of a conspiracy to malign and slander Dr. Townsend and his Old-Age Pension organization.

All this refers to the Townsend troubles during the past year or so, with the Doctor convicted for contempt of Congress and sentenced to jail. Today's legal action alleges it was all a plot - with charges "trumped up and false." It declares that Doctor Townsend and his associates were grievously and wrongfully injured.

Twenty-four defendants are named, including three members of Congress. The damages asked are:- fifteen million dollars of actual damages, and punitive damages of half a million dollars apiece from each of the two dozen defendants. It all adds up to twenty-seven million dollars. That's the amount of money demanded in this Townsend suit.

It's a lot of damages - the Doctor and his plan must have been damaged ~~plenty~~ aplenty! However, if they get the

twenty-seven million dollars, it ought to keep them in Old-Age pensions for some time to come.

NAVY

An escalator is something that goes up, rising steps.

So what's an escalator clause? It means - something to be stepped up. That's ^{its} significance in the treaty of naval limitation between the United States, Great Britain and France - the top limit ^{may} be stepped up.

It all goes back to the Naval Treaty right after the War in which the United States, Great Britain, France, Japan and Italy agreed to keep down the size of their battle fleets - no naval raise. Then, a couple of years ago, Japan drew out of the agreement - said she wouldn't be bound any more. Whereupon, the United States, Great Britain and France got together to make an arrangement among themselves. Italy stayed out because of questions concerning the conquest of Ethiopia. So there was a three-power treaty, with an agreement not to build any battleships bigger than thirty-five thousand tons. But suppose Japan, being on the outside, should build them bigger? The answer was - the escalator clause, which provided that ^{if} Japan built ^{battleships} ~~then~~ bigger, why then the United States, Great Britain and France could also go above thirty-five thousand tons. And they say Japan is

building them bigger. The three powers made an inquiry of Tokyo, but Tokyo refused to give any information.

What's the news today about all this? Here we have it - a dispatch from Washington announcing that the State Department today gave formal notice to Great Britain and France that the United States was invoking the escalator clause, was taking advantage of its right to build battleships above thirty-five thousand tons. That has been expected for some time, and today it's official with all diplomatic formality. *Britain says she'll do the same!*

H How big will we build them? Washington's diplomatic note today specifies no limit. So, we could build them a mile long, or five miles, battleships with the tonnage of a mountain. The naval experts mention two figures, forty-one thousand tons and forty-three thousand. These figures are likely to represent the tonnage of the new sea giants the Navy will build.

The ~~ing~~ invocation of the escalator clause is a logical follow-up to our huge new appropriations for naval expansion. First we put up the money, and then we escalate the treaty limit.

CHINA

There are some bits of melodrama from China tonight, where the war continues to drag on with obscure military operations, battles and drives. A Shanghai report tells of - a miraculous escape. Who did the miraculous escaping? Why, China's Number One Man, ~~Generalissimo~~ Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. The story tells of an air battle, and the Generalissimo was in it - in one of the planes ^{that} zoomed and darted in the combat. The Japanese claim it was a sky fight disastrous to the Chinese. ^{Nineteen} ~~has been~~ Chinese planes shot down! And the plane in which Chiang Kai-shek was flying was in the most desperate danger, just about to be riddled with machine gun bullets. But it made a miraculous escape.

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That melodrama of Japanese victory is countered by another spectacular bit which tells of a Chinese triumph. And once again we hear the mention of - the big swords. In the past there have been tales of victories won by those Chinese paladins armed with the great flashing blades of old - though there was always a certain ~~probability about~~ improbability about swords licking machine guns. Today's account is more plausible - it tells us that

the big swords fought with hand grenades. That's more like it, more modern.

The Mikado's troops were trying to storm a northern Chinese city, and one detachment got inside a gate with tanks and machine guns. The big swords fell upon them, tossing hand grenades, killed the whole detachment ~~x~~ of a thousand Japanese, and captured three armored cars and twenty machine guns. Such is the Chinese story.

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Still more Far Eastern melodrama - and this concerns the foreign Air Legion fighting for China, the aviation outfit in which American war birds flew and fought. Its commander - Vincent Schmidt of Mineola, Long Island. That Foreign Legion of the sky, led by its American commander, took part in many a perilous bombing raid. It flew and bombed in the Chinese ^{attacks on} ~~part~~ of Formosa, the only time China has made a sky attack within the boundaries of imperial Japan.

Today's word is that the Foreign Legion of the air, Americans and all - has been disbanded. Why? Because of dissensions within its ranks - so says ^{the} ~~a~~ report. And it goes

on to tell about war aviator Jim Alison of Dallas, Texas. He, it seems, got hot and bothered about something - and was the leading figure in the dissention. He tried to see a high Chinese official and they wouldn't let him in. Whereupon, with pistol in hand, he tried to force his way in. He did that twice - so the story says. Whereupon the Chinese authorities thought it was too much dissention and they've abandoned the flying Foreign Legion.

JAPANESE ERUPTION

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In Japan itself fury broke loose today - but no fury of war. It was the flaming rage of Sakurajima. Now, Sakurajima is tall and mighty, rearing up to the sky, and within it are tremendous hidden fires. Yes, a volcano. (in Kagoshima Bay) The fire mountain burst into violent eruption today, with vast skyward surges of flame and smoke. The shock of repeated explosions made the earth tremble for miles. Tonight ten thousand people who dwell near the volcano are preparing to abandon their homes - as Sakurajima erupts with volcanic rage.

(France is faced with a problem -- the streams of ~~re~~ fugitives of the Spanish Left Wing Army. They've been crossing the French border all day long, Barcelona soldiers ^{were} ~~who are~~ driven in flight by the Franco drive in northern Aragon.) Having started ^{to} ~~the~~ retreat, those broken units of Left Wing battalions just kept on retreating -- right into France. The French report declares that two thousand of them have already crossed the border. What to do with them? Send them back to ^{the} ~~that~~ army, to Barcelona? They'd probably be shot as deserters. ^{and} they might be shot if they were sent to Franco. It looks like a case of ~~xxxx~~ refugees for that American-called conference to straighten out. Fugitive Spanish Left Wing soldiers are being turned away from the borders of that little republic of Andorra, high in the Pyrenees. Andorra has just enough food to see its own small population through the winter, and can't feed any more.

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 On the battle-front a late ^{Franco war bulletin} ~~bulletin from~~ declares that the key city of Lerida has been surrounded and is about to fall. And further ^{south} ~~reports are that~~ the Rebel drive to the sea is under full steam -- a move more dangerous to Barcelona ^{even} ~~than~~ the capture of Lerida.

AYLESWORTH

Here's a bit of news of interest in the world of radio and the realm of newspapers.

The world of radio - because one of its top men for years was Merlin H. Aylesworth, the founder of N.B.C. and its first President. When radio was just being born, Owen D. Young picked him to establish a broadcasting organization. The original idea was merely to stimulate the sale of radio sets, but Merlin Aylesworth saw the possibilities of commercial broadcasting, and proceeded to develop that idea. The result was - N.B.C., and its tremendous growth. He was its president for ten years, and then went on to reorganize R.K.O.

The realm of newspapers is concerned - because today Merlin Aylesworth became publisher of the NEW YORK WORLD TELEGRAM, the great Scripps-Howard evening paper in the metropolis, of which Roy Howard is President and Editor. ^{His} ~~For more than a year Aylesworth has been~~ ~~one of the top executives~~ ~~member of its business managers of the Scripps-Howard paper~~ His transition from radio to newspapers was logical enough. As

President of N.B.C. he became the foremost figure in the field of advertising, and business promotion.

Monro.

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BEDELL MONRO

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I was at an extraordinarily interesting luncheon today, an affair in honor of the Town Crier, Alexander Woollcott, held at the Advertising Club of New York. A most unusual ^{group} ~~size~~ of men were at the head table: One, son of a President of the United States; one, maker of presidents. And one, ex-president of a country, along with explorers, philosophers, captains of industry, writers, etc. The son of a president being Colonel Theodore Roosevelt. The maker of presidents being Jim Farley. The ex-president, Dr. Carlos Davila, former head of the government of Chile.

Sitting near me was the youthful head of an important American commercial airline: Bedell Monro, President of the Pennsylvania Central Airlines.

Bedell Monro came along to the studio with me tonight. You may be interested in hearing a remark or two from him, for this reason: he is just young enough and full of enough fight to disregard the recession, and plunge right straight ahead full of optimism and faith in the future of America. ^{Mr.} Monro, [^] ^{have} I understand, your Pennsylvania Central Airlines ~~has~~ been reaching out for new ^{skies} ~~worlds~~ to conquer within the past few days.

MR. MONRO:- That's right. We have just added Baltimore to the list of cities we serve. Our plans^e are now linking up many cities which heretofore have had no air service.

L.T.:- What do you predict for aviation during our lifetime?

MR. MONRO:-

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That doesn't sound like recession. It sounds like going high, Mr. Bedell ~~Monro~~. And so does this.

An altitude record was made today, when a balloon soared to a stupendous height. Who was in it? Who went the highest ever? Nobody -- that's just the point. It was merely a weather balloon, one of those free drifting spheres that carries up scientific instruments to make records. Eighty-nine thousand, three hundred feet -- that was the altitude record established today, nearly ~~seventeen~~ miles! What did the instruments indicate about the states of affairs way up there? Well, the trick-scientific- thermometer gave a reading of the temperature. It was fifty-nine degrees below zero at that tremendous height, in the thin icy air of the stratosphere.

G-MEN

The agents of the Department of Justice are mighty man hunters. The G-Men on the trail — that has become a national legend.

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Today J. Edgar Hoover's office announces a confession made by a man arrested at Laramie, Wyoming. From the story the prisoner tells, it would appear that he was ^{simply} determined to ^{have} ~~put~~ the G-men on his trail.

They say that Joseph Hanley tells how he and three companions held up a man at Sioux City, Iowa, took fifteen hundred dollars from him, carried him along with them, and then released him in Minnesota. That ~~the~~ put the crime under the heading of kidnapping -- and taking the victim across ^a ~~the~~ state line. Which made it a Federal offense and within the jurisdiction of the G-men.

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Hanley's three companions were caught and sent to prison, Hanley himself got away. A little while later he was stopped in his car by a sheriff and deputy ~~ex~~ ^{sheriff} at Rockport, Missouri. He pulled a gun on them, made them get into the car, and drove them to Sioux City, Iowa. ~~Ex~~ There he released them. Once more -- kidnapping and taking the victims across ^a ~~the~~ state

line. A second Federal offense, which put the case doubly under the jurisdiction of the G-Men.

So you can imagine how they hunted Hanley. They got him at Goliad, Texas, and sent him to Sioux City. There he escaped from jail and were the G-Men sore. It occurred nearly three years ago, and ever since they have been after Hanley -- a relentless man hunt. Now they've got him, and say he has confessed. And what have you got to confess, Hugh James?