BRITISH ELECTION C.J. - 49 Feb. 24, 1950 - Friday.

The best picture of the British election is a comparison. In the previous election, in the post-war year of Nineteen Forty-Five, when Winston Churchill was tossed out - the Labor Party won a huge majority of two hundred seats in Parliament. In the House of Commons elected yesterday, they will have a majority that you can almost count on your fingers.

The latest returns, with only eleven ~~twelve~~ election districts to come, show the Labor Socialists with three-hundred-and-fourteen seats in Parliament. The Conservatives - two-hundred-and ~~s~~ ninety-four. A Labor ~~margin~~ margin of - twenty. The Liberals have eight - which leaves Labor with a majority of ~~eighteen~~ twelve over the two non-Socialist Parties.

And The popular vote is equally eloquent - Labor taking thirteen-million, one-hundred-and-~~twenty-seven~~ thirty-two thousand. The Conservatives - twelve-million, ~~two~~ three-hundred-and-~~seventy~~ 44 thousand. Which gives a Labor majority of less ~~than nine~~ eight hundred-thousand. But, the Liberals took two-and-a-half-million.- ~~so that there's~~ Which means a

Labor minority, as compared with both of the non-Socialist Parties.

Five top ranking figures in the Labor Government were defeated - one a cabinet minister, Kreech-Jones, Colonial Secretary. The Communists were wiped out, ~~in Parliament,~~ losing the two seats they had. Communists ~~They~~ took a disastrous beating - and all over the place are losing forfeits they had to put up, under the British election law. Each candidate in every district posts a hundred-and-fifty pounds, four-hundred-and-twenty dollars; - and, he loses the money if he fails to get as much as one-eighth of the votes. The Reds failed in so many cases, that it is costing them a small fortune. Left wingers lost out everywhere, including five Labor rebels, who had been tossed out of the party for leftist activities. They were defeated yesterday - as were all the candidates with a record of opposition to British collaboration with the United States. In the new House of Commons there will be not one anti-American.

So It was a huge swing to the right - ~~which~~ developing in dramatic fashion. Last night Labor piled up a big lead - but the returns were mostly from large cities, where the Socialists are strong. Today, the returns from the country sections were counted, and the lead for Labor dwindled constantly, until it almost vanished. ~~But~~ Then Labor picked up a bit, and comes out with the present small majority. There are six ~~five~~ districts from which the vote will not be announced today. Four of these are in the remote north of Scotland - and three of those are Conservative areas.

The net result of it all is to leave Britain in a state of political indecision. Tonight Winston Churchill speaks of what he calls - Parliamentary "instability." Which means that Parliament will be virtually paralyzed - the Labor Party unable to govern effectively with such a small majority. All new schemes of Socialism will have to be put off, apparently - in a Parliament so evenly divided. Tonight the guessing in London is, that a new election

will have to be called within a year - to resolve the ambigious uncertainty brought by those figures we have tonight.

FOLLOW BRITISH ELECTION

The latest tonight pictures the strange predicament of that once great Liberal party. They lost so many election forfeits that the total comes to more than one-hundred-and-seventy-five thousand dollars. At four-hundred-and-twenty dollars per candidate, the figures show that in more than four hundred districts the liberals failed to capture one eighth of the vote. Yet they polled two and a half million - and, if they had joined with the Conservatives, the anti-Socialist forces would have won an easy victory -- with a sizable majority of the popular vote and a strong control of Parliament. So the Labor party stays in power technically - because of a divided opposition.

NAVAL ATTACHE

In Vienna, the Austrian police and the U.S. Army authorities join in saying that Captain Eugene Karpe, American Naval Attache to Romania, was probably murdered - thrown from a railroad train in an Austrian tunnel. After investigation today, they've ruled out suicide as - impossible. Nor is it likely that it could have been an accidental fall from the train. Which leaves - murder. American Army authorities declare: "It looks like a planned job." There was no robbery involved, and the surmise is that the murder may have been - political.

Captain Karpe was leaving his post in Bucharest, capital of Red Romania, and was on his way back to Washington - to be reassigned to some other job. He proceeded to Vienna, where he stayed for fifteen days, and had minor medical treatment. One dramatic and possibly significant fact is this - Captain Karpe was a close friend of Robert Voegler, the American telephone executive recently put on trial in Red Hungary and sentenced to fifteen years in

prison - after making a confession. During his stay in Vienna Captain Karpe called frequently at the Voegler home, visiting his friend's wife. On Wednesday he escorted Mrs. Voegler's sister to the opera.

Then he took the train, the famous orient express, which runs between Constantinople and Paris. Before he left Vienna, he is quoted as saying that he thought he was being "trailed", and expressed fear for his life. Thereafter, all is a mystery - about what happened as the orient express, speeding toward Paris, passed through an Austrian tunnel. But the belief is - that Captain Karpe was hurled from the train;- murder, possibly political.

GENERAL MOTORS

General Motors has cut prices and wages. On automobiles, the reductions range from ten to forty dollars; that much less per car. The wage cut is two cents an hour, applying to union workers - while salaried employees take a reduction of ten dollars a month.

All this is under the union contract signed two years ago - a union-company agreement that caused much discussion. The contract has a provision tacking wages to the cost of living. Every three months, wages are to be raised or lowered, according to the cost of living index issued by the U. S. Labor Bureau. They have been lowered twice previously - now a third time. Today new figures came out, showing a cost-of-living decline of about two and a half percentage points. Which, according to the union contract means a wage decrease of two cents an hour. Putting this into effect, General Motors also cuts the prices of its cars.

The union is not pleased, and says the contract will not be renewed with any clause tying

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wages to cost of living. Instead, the union will go for a pension-welfare program, when the present contract expires - as it does in May.

REUTHER

In Detroit this evening the jury returned a verdict of "not guilty" in the trial of Carl Bolton for the shooting of Walter Reuther, President of the Auto Workers Union. Bolton a former union official and a convict right now,denied he was anywhere near the Reuther home when the shotgun blast was fired -- and this the jury believed. The prosecution brought forward a ~~xx~~ lot of circumstantial evidence, but was never able to place Bolton near the scene ~~xxxxx~~ of the crime. So now, exonerated - he goes back to ~~xxx~~ prison. He is serving a term of ten to fifteen years for a robbery committed after the Reuther shooting.

COAL

The miners union has been ordered to trial for contempt of court. This decision was handed down today in Washington by Federal Judge Keech, who cited the United Mine Workers for both civil and criminal contempt. Opposing this, the defense attorney argued that John L. Lewis, acting for the union, ordered the miners to get back to their jobs. He tried to call off the strike - twice. But the miners have refused, acting individually - defying both union and court injunction. This contention the judge rejected, turning down the plea that the miners are in revolt against Lewis and the union.

The trial will begin on Monday, with the possibility that the United Mine Workers may incur heavy fines - as it has on two previous occasions. In Nineteen Forty-Seven, Federal Judge Goldsborough decreed an enormous fine of three million dollars against the union - and ten thousand dollars against John L. Lewis. But the Supreme Court reduced the three million to seven hundred thousand dollars. The

next year, Nineteen Forty-Eight, that same Judge Goldsborough fined the union a million four hundred thousand. Lewis - twenty thousand. This time the Supreme Court upheld the verdict, and the fines were paid. So now the same sort of thing may be repeated all over again - though Lewis himself is not accused. Under the charge of civil contempt, the judge might impose on the union a running fine of a large sum of money each day, which might pile up so much as to break the union treasury - estimated at between thirteen and fifteen million dollars.

~~This is the background which~~ Present negotiations are still going on between the mine owners and the union. They had a session today, though Lewis did not attend. He was on his way to Springfield, Illinois, where his sixty-nine year old brother, Thomas, committed suicide this morning - following a heart attack. In the absence of the mine union chief, his lieutenants continued the negotiations.

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PRISONERS

At Manistee, Michigan, the jail burned down today, and inside were seven prisoners. Which represented a problem for Sheriff Harcy Holmgren.- or rather it was no problem at all. As the flames roared through the county courthouse, in which the jail was situated, the sheriff opened the cells, and told the prisoners - to go home. But they didn't. They stayed right there and fought the blaze - helping the firemen in a futile effort to save the courthouse and the jail. Then they went home.

"I'm not worried about the boys," said Sheriff Holmgren. "They'll come back when I ask them." That is, when there's a new jail in which to put them.

FOREIGN AID

Extra

There was a neat bit of dialogue in Congressional proceedings today - concerning funds for European economic recovery, the Marshall Plan. Paul G. Hoffman, the foreign aid chief, appeared before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives and presented reasons for putting up the next installment, nearly three billion dollars to aid free nations of Western Europe against Soviet Communism.

But the neat bit of dialogue occurred at a Senate hearing - on that same subject - funds for the ~~Marshall Plan.~~ Secretary Tom Connally of Texas today criticized the British for cutting down their purchase of American oil. The chief of the Marshall Plan mission to Britain, John Kenney, tried to explain British policy. This aroused the ire of the gentleman from Texas - who demanded, "Are you being paid by the government to destroy American trade?"

After which Tom Connally pressed the question; "How much do you make from the government?"

Kenney replied that his salary was seventeen thousand, five hundred dollars a year.

"How much did you make before you went to work for the government?" Connally demanded.

The reply was in a mild, quiet tone: "Between seventy and eighty thousand dollars," said Kenney.

"Oh," grunted Connally, and changed the subject.

All of which was an example of how devastating a soft-spoken retort can be - silencing even a senator from Texas.

DENVER SMOKESTACK

Denver, metropolis of Colorado, seems about to lose its most famous landmark - a three hundred and fifty foot smokestack. A couple of generations of Denverites — including my wife and a host of my own schoolmates — have grown up in the shadow of that tall tower - which now is to go toppling down to crashing ruin.

The smokestack, rising high over a smelter, was put up at the turn of the century by one of Colorado's last - 'Bonanza Kings', Barney Currigan - who won millions out of the gold and silver mines in those days of abounding treasure. Now, however, the city fathers declare that the lofty structure is a menace, might fall down - the danger being all the greater, as the three hundred and fifty x foot smokestack is right next door to the stockyards stadium, and might crash into a crowd attending the ~~some~~ annual Denver Livestock show. ~~athletic event.~~ So the order has been given - dynamite the tower. Tomorrow, ~~when~~ Mayor Quigg Newton will touch off the blast. It's to be a public spectacle - with crowds watching the giant collapse.

Engineers declare two cracks have appeared at the base, and a lively gale off Mt. Evans and those big snowy mountains nearby might do the trick. Or there's another possibility - the dynamiting tomorrow may be stopped by sentimental Denverites, who argue that the smokestack is a beloved landmark, and should be spared.

Shoot, if you will, this old grey head - but spare our beloved smokestack - today they said.

Shoot Nelson!