

JOHNSON

L.T. Sunoco. Wed. July, 11, 1934

Good Eae. Everybody-

I wonder what's happened to General "Crack-'em-down" Johnson. He seems to be losing his self-confidence when he comes forward with the idea that his NRA job is too big for any one man. He has suggested to the President that an NRA commission should be appointed to supervise the industrial future of America. When they asked the General if he would serve as a member of his proposed NRA commission he replied: "Not if I can help it." "But, he added, "if the President needs me O.K."

We rather had the idea that no job was too big for the General, or rather that all jobs rolled into one were about ^{the} right ~~size~~ size for him. But seriously, the task of running the NRA with its tangled complications and its immense scope would seem to be something for a batallion of super-men with a few demi-gods thrown in. It has ~~put~~ ^{put} an inhuman quantity of work on the shoulders of the sturdy ^{ex-} cavalry officer whose swaggering way and barking voice reflect a world of energy.

He is showing the effects of his tremendous devotion to his job, just plain overwork, from early morning until late at night.

Several weeks ago he went to a hospital where the doctors told him to stay for two weeks, after two days he was back in his office driving ahead again. It's no secret in Washington that his present vacation trip is --doctor's orders. ^π He is losing his good nature too. The strain is getting the best of that loud rollicking blustering joviality. The trainer of the Blue Eagle is becoming irritable and impatient.

Recently there was a staff dinner of NRA employees. A series of burlesque skits were included in the program. ~~W~~ One young man got up and gave an imitation of the General ranting through one of his "crack-'em-down" speeches. The humour was sharp and of the meat-axe variety.

The lord of the Blue Eagle as he listened got red in the face. His eyes glared. Suddenly he arose and stalked out of the room, very very angry.

Who was the young man who delivered that funny "crack-'em-down" parody? Why he was Lieutenant Kilbourne Johnston - the General's own son.

LYNCH

However, the proposed NRA commission is a thing of the future. The last word General Johnson said before leaving on his Western tour was this brief comment: "There's no commission running the NRA while I'm gone." No there isn't. It's still a one man job, and the one man is a Colonel, Colonel Lynch. The General's administrative assistant.

It might be a good idea to make the acquaintance of the new temporary keeper of the Blue Eagle. He will have plenty to say about business affairs in the next few weeks. Colonel George A. Lynch was a classmate of General Johnson at West Point. The General went cavalry. The Colonel went infantry, and presently found himself in far-off China. He commanded the Twenty-ninth, part of the Legation Guard in Peking. Later he was head of the Intelligence Unit at Governor's Island and it was there that he performed what he calls his greatest military exploit. What did shoot? Why, he shot a hole-in-one on the Governor's Island reservation course.

He is fifty-three, large, gray-haired, well-groomed,

neatly mustached and altogether military in appearance.

General Johnson has called him "the most advanced thinker in

the army." The Colonel when talking about his military

heroism and also about his advanced military thinking, prefers

to tell about that hole in one.

PROHIBITION

A lot of people are puzzled when a state votes heavily for the repeal of ^{national} prohibition and then votes just as heavily to retain its own state ^{local} prohibition. Here's Mississippi which has now voted definitely and positively to keep its own prohibition law. ^{The same that} ~~when the~~ state in its ratification referendum voted two to one for repeal.

What's the answer? Can it be that the answer is--- taxes? Or perhaps it's a case of the people of the state not wanting liquor from other states. Or is just the natural perversity of the human race -- man's way of changing his mind.

TESLA

Let's see what that latest scientific marvel is like -- the death beam which Nikola Tesla claims he has discovered and perfected. In the year's most astounding scientific statement, the seventy-eight year old wizard of electricity claims that his death beam will kill whole armies and bring down ten thousand airplanes at a time -- all at a distance of two hundred and fifty miles or more. He claims this death beam is quite slender, about the thickness of a lead pencil. Yet it propels tiny particles with such unbelievable rapidity that enemies in its path would fall by the hundreds of thousands.

Tesla, born in Jugo-Slavia, has for many years been America's prime exponent of the wild and fantastic in science. Tesla believes that one day the earth will become too hot for human life, and that mankind will move over to other planets. He is quite sure the other planets are populated. He also has devised a scientific diet, which he claims has freed him from the poisons which cause death and will enable him to live on

and on and on. And now on his seventy-eighth birthday --
that weird death ray.

Yet this theorist of the fantastic was a co-worker
with Edison, the great exponent of the practical. Like Edison
he doesn't believe in sleep, just catches a cat-nap now and
then. Some people call him a "crack-pot", others hail him as
the great wizard of electricity and father of this age of power.

One bit of news today made me stop and think hard -- Sven Hedin captured by Chinese bandits, Sven Hedin the Swedish savant, in some ways the greatest world-traveller of them all. He's sixty-nine now and covered with honors. He's the President of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. Only last year he was appointed by the Chinese government to be surveyor-in-chief of a fifty million dollar road and railway project along the old Marco Polo route across China. Now the word comes that Chinese bandits have nabbed him and are holding him a captive, together with four Swedish assistants, ~~and~~ three Chinese, and three Mongolians.

Several years ago I paid a visit to this dean of world-travellers, ~~I called on him~~ at his home in Stockholm. ~~He had just returned for a brief stay from an expedition in the Gobi Desert,~~ ~~Me~~ I was surprised to find him so thoroughly unlike most of ~~the~~ other explorers -- the bold Viking Amundsen, or Wilkins with his piratical black beard, or the jaunty Dick Byrd. Sven Hedin looks like the more practical type of college professor or the more thoughtful type of solid business man.

He is short and stocky, with grey hair, a shrewd face and a matter-of-fact way of speaking. He told me of his adventures in some of the most forbidden places on this globe, hunting down the signs and evidences of lost civilizations and forgotten races of men. He has always combined adventures travel with scholarship and science. In his present series of explorations across the wild western half of China he is reported to have found ten thousand scripts painted on wood, ancient writings telling the story of the silk caravans that journeyed across Asia from ancient Cathay to ancient Rome -- yes, and the raids of ancient bandits on those almost forgotten silk caravans.

He has of late been adventuring along one of the oldest trails in the world, the trail of silk -- also the trail of Marco Polo. And, that trail seems to have been safer then than now. Bandits didn't capture Marco Polo, but they have captured Sven Hedin.

I suppose they are holding him and his companions for ransom, and perhaps the Chinese government will have to pay to get them free.

Those Chinese bandits are becoming more and more of a menace out East. How much of a menace is told by Lieutenant-Commander T. T. Laurenson, who has spent his life on the China Seas. He says the bandits clean up many hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. It's nothing usual for them to get as much as fifty thousand dollars from a single ship -- ransom for the passengers they nab. Sometimes the pirates are dressed in the most luxurious style, like generals or mandarins. They have modern rifles, though nobody knows how they get them. Must be some fancy gun-running somewhere. Often, they are not so ferocious in their ways, in fact quite courteous. In a recent spectacular raid they made at Bias Bay, the Corsairs took every penny the passengers had. Then, the pirate leader suddenly remembered that people need carfare. So he pressed five dollars into the captain's hand, small change for those passengers not being taking away for ransom. The Christian charity of a heathern pirate.

The word is now final that this world of ours is to be relieved of its most terrifying political institution. In Red Moscow the decree has gone forth -- abolishing the OGPU -- the Oh-Gay-Pay-Oo. In place of the bloodcurdling secret police organization, the very name of which is terror, Soviet Russia will have a Commissariat of the Interior.

This will be under the command of the present chief of the OGPU -- Yagoda the Terrible. We've heard that Yagoda the Terrible is the only man in Russia of whom Stalin is afraid. But, this new Commissariat of the Interior will not have those murderous powers that made the OGPU a veritable monster. It will not have the power of death, to act as accuser, judge and executioner, secretly, without trial, without explanation. It will, however, condemn people to imprisonment and exile. But, hereafter, those sentences of shooting will be imposed only by the regular Soviet courts of law.

What weird stories they could tell -- those grim Communist fanatics of the OGPU. Take the tale of the crazy poets. They

were crazy with poetry -- and cocaine. One of their leaders was the peasant poet, Essinin, who became the husband of the famous American dancer, Isadora Duncan. He killed himself. And that set all the other crazy poets brooding.

Then, Golganov the maddest of them all, began to preach an insane gospel of how they could all destroy themselves.

A great Communist parade was soon to be held. On the reviewing platform in Red Square would be Stalin, and other ~~top~~ lords of the Red regime. That, Golganov told the crazy poets, was their chance. He would give them hand/grenades. They could approach the reviewing ~~platform~~ platform. And they could shower their bombs on Stalin, and the other great commissars, and blow them into crimson smithereens. The crazy poets would be shot, of course; But that was the main idea, their own self-destruction.

Golganov talked them into it. He had them wilder than ever with poetry, cocaine and the strange suicidal scheme.

Over and over they repeated their hysterical catch phrase: "After we've thrown our bombs, we'll climb beyond the skies."

One night in the cellar where they met, Golganov was babbling away as usual. One of the poets got bored, thought he'd play a joke, a humorous prank. He stole around, lighted a match and touched it to Golganov's long flowing hair, greasy, plastered with oil. The hair blazed up, burning. Pandemonium broke out. While some beat out the poet's flaming tresses, the others ~~shrieked~~ shrieked like a gang of fiends.

The uproar brought in the city police. Then the shrieking grew wilder than ever. One woman, a crazy poetess, leaned against the wall, her mouth open, yelling incessantly:-
"When we throw our bombs, we'll climb beyond the skies."

The police caught the word "bomb", always significant in Russia. They called in the OGPU. ^{And} It didn't take much pressure to extort confessions.

The upshot of the affair is told by Walter Duranty in his stories, "The Curious Lottery." The OGPU found that Golganov was perhaps not so crazy after all. He had been an anti-Bolshevik conspirator in Southern Russia, and he was using the Society of the crazy poets in a fantastic attempt to

do away with Stalin and the Commissars.

There were two secret executions -- Golganov
and, another of ~~the~~ poets who seemed rather too sane.

The remainder were herded off to a psychopathic ward.

And now the OGPU ~~is~~ has heard its own death
sentence.

LLOYD'S

A little while ago we heard a protest because Lloyd's the great insurance center of London, was issuing policies on the life of President Roosevelt. Betting on a President's life, they called it, and Lloyd's said -- "All right, we won't do it anymore."

Now the word comes that Lloyd's have also refused to issue policies insuring the life of Hitler & also Hitler's boss-lieutenant, Goering, and the German Chancellor Von Papen, and Germany's President, Von Hindenberg. There doesn't seem to be any ~~matter of~~ international^{al} courtesy involved. In the opinion of Lloyd's, the lives of the rulers of Germany are not ^{such} ~~very~~ good ~~as~~ a risk ^{right now}.

DOLFUSS

Now a few bits serious and funny about a world's statesman who is really a person to be reckoned with most seriously, and who always contrives to be a bit funny.

Chancellor Dolfuss the dictator of Austria has achieved quite a master-stroke. He and his cabinet have resigned. With his fellow ministers he handed in his portfolio. Then he formed a new ministry and appointed himself to head it as Chancellor. He also appointed himself Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Defense, Minister of Public Security and Minister of Agriculture. He's a whole cabinet rolled into one, just like Poo Bah in the "Mikado".

.In this Poo Bah kind of statesmanship the Austrian Facist dictator is emulating his teacher, Benito Mussolini, who has been known to be minister of everything in general and a lot of things in particular.

Dolfuss has just paid a visit to Mussolini in Italy. So the Duce's hand is undoubtedly to be seen in this new Austrian cabinet shake-up which is interpreted as further

DOLFUSS

progress toward complete Facism.

It's quite a serious political development -- but now the funny part of it. Over in Austria they are endlessly inventing new jokes about the Tiny Autocrat. One of the latest tells about a new postage stamp, soon to be issued, same dimensions as any other postage stamp, and, on it a life size portrait of the Austrian dictator.

Recently there was an attempt to assassinate Dolfuss, which furnished food for another Vienns joke.

One wise cracker remarked: "If that would-be assassin who tried to kill our Chancellor had succeeded, it would have been a stupendous scientific achievement."

"How so," someone remarked.

"Because he would have succeeded in splitting the atom," was the reply.

And splitting my last second, I'll add just one more atom -- I mean item:- SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.