

Comment!
W.S.C.

On the train to Cleveland I noticed a distinguished swarthy gentleman in a Hindu turban busy writing. I assumed, of course, that he was a newspaper correspondent from India bound for the Convention -- perhaps a representative of the Bombay Chronicle. But when I asked him he told me No. He was just traveling around the world, and had scarcely heard of the Convention. He spoke excellent English, had recently spent eighteen months at Yale doing scholarly work. He told me his name was Srijut Pandurangi Kodanda Rao, ~~and that he was~~ assistant to the great Indian liberal leader, the Right Honorable Srinivasa Sastri.

I suggested that on his way to the coast he stop off here at Cleveland ^{with me} and observe ^e ~~end~~ of our great American political ceremonies. I told him it might be as interesting to him ^s as I found the Festival of Minak^shi the Fish-Eyed Goddess at Madura near his home in South India. He thought this a good idea. ^S So I took the staid little man in the turban to the Convention -- then asked him to write me a paragraph of his impressions. Here it is:-

"To one ~~me~~ brought up in the politics of India," writes Mr. Srijut Pandurangi Kodanda Rao, "the party system as it appears

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in this country is somewhat mystifying. That ~~my~~ may be entirely my own defect. It would seem to me that it is not easy to divide politics into two parties. And the political questions today are so ~~my~~ varied that the two-party system might be difficult to maintain. But I see I am going beyond my depth. So I will conclude ^{"he wrote,} by saying I was greatly impressed with the immensity of [^] ~~the~~ ^{Republican} the Convention."

Such is the impression that Cleveland makes on a man ^{far off Asia.} from ~~India.~~ And just an hour ago I put Mr. Srijut Pandurangi Kodanda Rao on a train bound for Chicago, California, Fiji, Australia and India -- all confused and dazed -- a little like the rest of us out here.

PERSONALITIES

Actually the Convention today really wasn't held in the great public auditorium at all. Of course the delegates were there - so were we all. They just went through a few motions there, getting set for the rest of the week - an hour of formalities and then adjourned until tonight. Most of the real work today was done in the hotels -- milling throngs in the lobbies and corridors, quiet groups of important political dignitaries in distant suites, with henchmen guarding the entrances, keeping back both the curious and the faithful.

(I spent part of the day with two important candidates -- Senator Dickinson of Iowa and Senator Vandenberg of Michigan. The Landonites had been assuring me, and assuring each other, that they have the nomination absolutely in the bag.) And they've sold this notion to nearly every one in Cleveland. For instance, Publisher Stewart, an important Republican from western Pennsylvania, owner of a newspaper in Washington, Pa., who came here with other Pennsylvania delegates ready to throw their votes to someone besides Mr. Landon, but he said Landon now absolutely has it cold. So, naturally, I ^{can} discussed this with Senator Vandenberg. He laughed at the idea. Said he: "They've

yet to convince me that Landon will be put over on the first ballot. But, they've convinced themselves." And then added Senator Vandenberg: "Their own argument, their own insistence that they have it in the bag will be the thing to let them down. On the second ballot Mr. Landon will have less votes. Still fewer on the third, and you know how it goes after that." And he concluded by saying: "They'll be hoist by their own petard."

Senator Vandenberg, all the time I was with him, was laughing and jovial, carefree, apparently nothing happening to disturb him.

Senator Dickinson, who has been in the race right from the start, a handsome grey-haired statesman from Iowa, preferred to talk about the days when he and I lived in the same country in Iowa -- Shelby County. He, a farmer boy, lived on a farm ~~for~~ for twenty-five years, still is a farmer. I, son of a country doctor, whose patients were those same Iowa farmers. Senator Dickinson said he intended to stay right in his hotel room throughout the Convention. Doesn't believe that a candidate has any business appearing in the Convention Hall, attracting attention and looking as though eager to put himself forward.

We talked about the state of affairs among farmers in the Middle West. And he was vehement in insisting that the farmers, many of them, could have solved their problems a lot better without Federal interference, without having their mortgages postponed from year to year. He said every farmer could have worked himself out of his hole during the depression by getting an immediate settlement with the local people holding the mortgages. And he cited graphic examples, specific cases to prove his point.

We talked about war debts, too. And there his slant was that it might be a good idea for the United States to hold off and avoid a final settlement ~~xx~~ with European nations. He believes those war debts give us a hold on the world, a better opportunity to assert our influence for world peace than might be the case if the nations of Europe no longer were owing us so much money.

Senator Steiwer of Oregon, the man whose name you hear on all sides as the one most likely to be the nominee if the Landon parade is sidetracked, was busy working on that keynote

speech he's to deliver tonight. So I visited for a while with a lovely, charming, gracious, vivacious woman who stands a chance of being the First Lady of the Land -- Mrs. Steiwer. She would indeed be an ornament to the White House. At noon today Mrs. Steiwer gave a luncheon for the wives of the delegation from Oregon.

When I joined her after that at one point in our conversation she said to me:- "Oh, would you like to see a photograph of a real handsome man, the best-looking man I know?" Then she bounced up and got a copy of the magazine TODAY, edited by ex-Brain Truster Moley. Turning the pages to a photograph of her husband she said with complete simplicity, and as though she meant it a hundred times over, "He's the grandest man alive."

Often times a man can be judged by his wife. And by that measure Senator Steiwer must be all that his enthusiastic followers say he is. I for one will be keen to hear his keynote speech tonight, to see if he does it without that flamboyant rather meaningless oratory which is so often turned loose by a keynoter.

Over the luncheon table Congressman Hamilton Fish, who happens to ~~be~~ represent my own district in New York State, declared to me that there was still time to stop Landon. He believes the man to do it is Senator Borah -- that Borah could do it if he'll come out boldly with the statement that Governor Landon hasn't the political experience and hasn't the personal attributes needed by a candidate, and that the Republican party is here to select a candidate who will win.

As you undoubtedly know, the permanent chairman of the Convention is to be Congressman Bertram Snell of New York. He, if anyone, ought to know how long this Convention is likely to last. When I asked him if he thought they'd get it over in a hurry he said he believed it would not last beyond Saturday.

BROWN

One of the hottest of the minor fights here took place among the delegates from Ohio. And -- the real issue behind that row was ex-President Hoover. Walter F. Brown, Mr. Hoover's Postmaster-General, was believed to be holding a trick up his sleeve, a trick that would have thrown a small monkey-wrench into the mechanism of the Landon machine. The Landonites heard that Brown was contemplating the presenting of Mr. Hoover's name to the convention, backing it up with the entire strength of the Ohio delegation.

Several of Mr. Brown's fellow delegates said "No". In fact they did not even want the former Postmaster-General for their chairman. The result was a tight contest. The outcome? Mr. Brown defeated by a vote of twenty-seven to twenty-one in the caucus. So when Mr. Hoover arrives in Cleveland tomorrow he'll find his postmaster general is no longer a National Committeeman. His successor in that position is Frank F. Taggart, a banker from Massillon, Ohio.

PRESS CONFERENCE

You ought to see the way a candidate holds a press conference. The Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Cleveland was jammed at six o'clock this afternoon. Presently you could hear cheers outside, and in came a stout-red-faced be-spectacled gentleman with a horde of cameramen dancing backwards in ~~the~~ front of him, snapping away for dear life. It was Colonel Frank Knox all set to answer questions. He got up on a platform. In front of him were some three hundred newspaper men -- and women. A lot of outsiders in the crowd too. That nearly precipitated a fight because some of the outsiders joined in the questioning of the candidate. The outsiders were told to shut up - told that by the newspaper men, and the outsiders shouted back: "Who are you?" It took a smiling word from Colonel Knox to restore order. As for what he said, here's the gist of it:-

"I've just come from a conference with Senator Borah. That ~~was~~ he declined to discuss and skillfully dodged all the shrewdly framed questions that were flung at him. Then they said, "Are you still in the race?"

"I am!"

"Are you withdrawing in favor of any other candidate?"

"I am not."

"Are you joining any coalition?"

"I am not. I don't know of any."

He went on to say that the most important thing in his mind was the platform. "If the Republican party adopts a platform that is courageous and forthright" he said, "I will take off my coat and work for the election of any other man whom the party selects. But," he went on, "if the Republican party adopts a platform full of weasel words I want to say right now I am not the man."

END CONVENTION

Right now an uproar of music is ringing at Hotel Hollenden. That's the Landon headquarters. Arthur DeTitta of Twentieth Century Fox Movietone, has just phoned me that a huge crowd has jammed and crushed its way into the lobby and is shaking the big hotel with the roaring refrain of "Oh Susannah" -- the Landon ~~xxx~~ song. And the newspapermen there are calling this -- a "Vice-Presidential Convention", meaning that the only question is -- picking a Vice-President. So Susannah rides high, as we close this convention report, and turn to other news -- also important.

CHINA

THE political fireworks here in our own country shouldn't blind us to that black war cloud ~~that's blowing~~ in the Far East. Candidates and platform planks of the Republican party shouldn't make us forget the immense danger ⁱⁿ the advance of the troops of southern China, driving to make all China fight Japan. The word tonight is that the army of the Canton Government marching to the north is now in the territory controlled by the Nanking Central government. The Cantonese have crossed their own borders to the north.

^{Of course} The Japanese are watching with an eagle eye. The ^{military} Mikado's/attache at Shanghai has left for Nanking to ~~find~~ find out what the government there intends to do. Tokio is putting it up to Chang Kai-Shek, the Nanking leader: How about that South China drive for war against Japan? What 's Central China going to do about it?

An ^{ominous} word comes from Hongkong. British troops there have been ordered to stand at arms ready to embark at any moment. Their expected destination -- Shanghai -- to protect British subjects. ~~there.~~

But most menacing of all are the tidings from the North -- from Siberia. Reports drifting through Mongolia, reports that the Soviets are moving vast quantities of arms and ammunition to key points along the border between Siberia and Japanese-controlled Manchukuo. Every Soviet train moving eastward carrying nothing else but war materials -- so the story goes. The meaning? That's simple. If general war breaks out between China and Japan, Communist Russia is prepared to jump in.

This puts the spotlight on a little-known but powerful personality. The name is new to me. I suppose it is to you -- Galen, General Galen. He's the absolute commander of the Soviet Military establishment mobilized against Japan. He has under his command three hundred thousand troops of the Red Army, unnumbered tons ~~of~~ of the most modern military equipment; and unlimited supplies are pouring to his aid.

Moscow is said to have given him an absolutely free hand. He can attack when he pleases.

Though kept out of publicity, Moscow regards this General Galen as the most brilliant military strategist alive

today. He was the right-hand ^{strategist} ~~man~~ to Chang Kai-Shek when that Nationalist leader swept to the conquest of China several years ago. This Soviet war leader is described as completely uneducated. He was once a tinsmith. But he has a genius for war.

PALESTINE

Strife in Palestine has reached its climax. And, says London, it has got to stop. The policy of the velvet glove has failed, so off with it! And clamp down the iron hand on all this tumult in the Holy Land. So it was officially admitted in London today.

The continued and increasingly bloody fights between Arabs and Jews from Gaza to Nazareth have created a state of alarm in the House of Commons. Sir William Ormsby-Gore, His Majesty's new Colonial Secretary, arose from his seat on the Treasury Bench, gravely addressed the House and acknowledged that the situation had got ten out of hand, was hourly growing more serious. Therefore, he announced, His Majesty's Government is obliged to intervene to carry out its obligations under the mandate -- ~~to~~ to preserve peace, law and order. It becomes necessary, he declared, to take stronger emergency measures than heretofore. In other words, more British troops to be rushed to the Holy Land.

All of which creates another awkward situation for John Bull. Those troops will have to be rushed over from Egypt,

where they have been guarding the frontier between the Soudan and Italian territory. Relations between England and Italy are still at high tension. And -- a strong hint was thrown out from Rome today that, unless those League of Nations sanctions are lifted, there will be an active alliance between Duce Mussolini and Fuehrer Hitler.

So we have the picture of Great Britain being forced to weaken her garrisons in North Africa, something London has been afraid of for some time.

Meanwhile the Jews of the Holy Land are preparing for a ritual as old as the Ten Commandments. The Chief Rabbi has issued an order to his ~~own~~ people for a day of prayer and fasting. The Shofar will blow in the streets of Jerusalem, of Joppa and Nazareth, of Bethlehem, Gaza, and along the River Jordan -- calling the Children of Isreal; Not "to your tents" but "to your synagogues, O Isreal! Pray to the Lord of Hosts that the persecution of Isreal may end." The ancient cry that will be heard once more from Dan to Beersheba.

POETRY

Now back to the convention, because I'm in Cleveland,
not Jerusalem.

Convention poetry is in a class by itself. I gave
you one sample last night. Here's another of the verses they
are singing today in the hotel lobbies here:-

Put on your sunflower bonnet
With the prairie streamers on it.
And we'll boost Alf Landon to the skies;
East and West will be behind him
All America will find him
Loyal, brave and budget-wise.

It took four poets, three women and one man, to
compose that one. And all I can add to it is --

SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.