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WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS

Labor Eyes Outcome of Miners' Walkout as New Wage Guide; Japs Staging Slow Recovery

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EDITOR'S NOTE: When opinions are expressed in these columns, they are those of Western Newspaper Union's news analysts and not necessarily of this newspaper.



As miners in Johnson City, Ill. (lower panel), and other mining communities sat around to await break in coal strike, John L. Lewis (upper left) fenced with government over new contract issue. John O'Leary, UMW vice president, is shown with Lewis.

LABOR:

New Crisis

Once again it was John L. against the government!

This time, Washington appeared determined to force a showdown with the burly United Mine Workers chieftain, but it had its job cut out for it as 400,000 UMW members stood steadfastly by their leader and both the AFL and CIO threw in their support.

As in previous UMW walkouts, Lewis held a hand full of aces. Punish him as it might try, there were the 400,000 skilled and irreplaceable miners who refused to go down into the pits before clarification of the status of their contract; there were approximately 12,000,000 members of organized labor who looked with disfavor upon government use of the injunction to break a strike, and the courts were still to decide the legality of terminating the UMW-government pact.

But, encouraged by the country's overwhelming swing to the right in the recent elections and the possibility that the courts might decide in his favor in interpreting the legal

John L. formed the CIO 11 years ago, CIO Pres. Philip Murray rounded the battle cry for another round of wage increases by lamenting the rise in prices which offset previous boosts and assailing the uneven distribution of wealth.

Seeking to indicate the extent to which recent price rises have crossed out the 18 1/2 cent an hour wage raise won by the CIO earlier this year, Murray said that steel workers now are earning \$13.04 less a week than they did last March. Pointing to the ability of industry to bear higher wages, Murray said that profits in the last quarter of 1946 would total 15 billion dollars compared with 10 billions for 1944.

JAPAN:

On Mend

From General MacArthur's monthly report the U. S. could draw a picture of a vanquished nation struggling to its feet after surviving the effects of total defeat. Suffering from postwar abnormalities itself, the U. S. has none of Nippon's problems of rebuilding a shattered political structure, a war-based industry and a crippled production plant.

MacArthur reported: —Passage of a bill providing for election, rather than appointment, of local officials.

—Increases in production of lumber, oil, paper and aluminum to offset slumps in iron, steel and coke and shutdowns in tin, nickel and antimony plants. Arrangements to boost exports to Russia, England and Australia to pay for needed imports.

—Expansion of trade union membership to 3,745,000, with 24 per cent being women.

—Prospects of improved rice, wheat, potato and barley yields to relieve a severe food shortage, necessitating substantial imports.

HOUSING:

New Wrinkle

The public received its first good look at the Lustrom corporation's heralded porcelain enameled steel home in Hinsdale, Ill., outside Chicago, and the showing marked another step in the battle of the company with the Tucker automobile corporation for possession of the huge Dodge-Chicago plant.

The battle took a sensational turn with charges of Preston Tucker, the auto magnate, that a prominent Washington attorney had promised to use his influence in having the National Housing authority remand its order turning the Dodge-Chicago plant to Lustrom if given the Tucker corporation's legal business plus a stock interest. Named as the attorney, Theodore Granik vigorously denied the allegation.

In using its emergency powers to help speed vet housing, the NHA moved to award the huge Dodge-Chicago plant to Lustrom after War Assets administration had leased the facilities to Tucker. In eyeing the Dodge-Chicago plant, Lustrom declared that it could build 85 of the five-room, radiant heated houses a day six months after going into large-scale output, and 400 a day within 14 months. The houses sell for \$7,000.

Coal Mining Red Style

From Russia, where the Communist commissariat has its own method of settling labor problems, come word of the working of a gigantic new coal field in northern Siberia by slave laborers from Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine and Crimea. Consisting mostly of political prisoners, the laborers are housed in wooden barracks and subsist on porridge and 600 grams of bread daily. About 38 mines have been developed in the 5,000 square mile field.

Aspects of the case, President Truman was set to push John L. to the limit in his efforts to wring wage and hour concessions from the government.

Under the UMW-government contract, the miners received \$75.25 weekly for a 54-hour week, in contrast to \$23.88 weekly for a shorter week in 1939. Lewis' latest demands were said to call for a 40-hour week with earnings approximating those for 54 hours.

Arrival of the latest soft coal crisis saw the government prepared for emergency distribution of bituminous stocks. Only householders, hospitals, utilities and other essential public services were to receive deliveries. Railroads were scheduled to haul only food, clothing, medicine, fuel and other necessities and to reduce locomotive passenger service by 25 per cent.

Humming again after the crippling strikes of last winter, industry faced another slow-down to conserve fuel supplies and spread them over the period of the walkout.

CIO Goal

Like the AFL, the CIO watched the coal strike with interest, not only because of the injunction proceedings generally condemned by labor but also because Lewis' acquisition of new wage concessions promised to blaze the way for boosts all along the line.

Meeting in Atlantic City, where

CAPITOL HILL:

Lobbyists Register

Lobbyists have long become a part of the nation's capital, but until passage of the registration act recently the public has enjoyed little knowledge of their identity or worth to the interests they represent.

Although lobbyists as a whole have attained a certain notoriety, they exercise the perfectly legitimate function of protecting the interests of their clients by seeking passage of favorable legislation or fighting bills considered inimicable. While recognizing this function, congress also realized the necessity for placing the business above board and apprising the public of the interests at work in Washington.

As the lobbyists registered under penalty of losing their lobbying rights or incurring fine and imprisonment if they failed, Purcell L. Smith, representing the power interests, emerged as the highest paid, drawing \$85,000 a year plus unspecified expenses.

CHINA:

Going Backwards

While Japan marched back up the road of recovery, neighboring China remained beset by the political indifferences and economic evils that have retarded her progress during this century.

As both Nationalist and Communist forces prepared for a bloody civil war for supremacy, Chinese currency took a terrific nosedive, with the U. S. dollar commanding as high as 5,000 Chinese dollars on the black market. Coal jumped from 350,000 to 450,000 dollars a ton. Housewives scrambled frantically for commodities.

Throughout the Communist stronghold of northern China and Manchuria, Red battalions threw up fortifications and girded for battle as Gen. Peng Teh-huai predicted stirring victory over the Nationalist invading forces. These forces were reported pressing into Shantung province along the Tientsin-Pukow railway.

RUSSIA:

Struggle for Power

From behind the iron curtain came whispers of a mighty tug-of-war between top Russian officials for the driver's seat when Josef Stalin passes from the picture.

While Stalin first favored Andrei Zhdanov, 50, chairman of the Soviet parliament, for the mantle of succession, Georgi M. Malenkov, 45, has slowly come to the fore, recently being promoted to the all-powerful politburo shaping Russian policy.

Also in the struggle for power are Lavrenti P. Beria, head of the dread secret police, and Gen. Nikolai A. Bulganin, vice minister of armed forces. Despite his prominence in foreign affairs, V. M. Molotov lacks party support for the No. 1 spot.

Writing in the French paper, L'Ordre, Claude Vivieres declared that Russian officials are anxious to avoid war during the unsettled state of party affairs to prevent rival nations' use of bickerings to upset the Communist regime.

BUSINESS:

Making Money

Payments of extra dividends indicated the general prosperity of American business.

—Goodrich brought payments for 1946 to \$4.50 per share by declaring a dividend of \$1 and a special payment of the same amount.

—By authorizing an extra dividend of \$1.25 a share in addition to the quarterly payment of 25 cents, Briggs & Stratton boosted disbursements to \$2.25 this year.

—Elgin National Watch company declared an extra dividend of 50 cents a share besides making a quarterly payment of 25 cents.

—Keystone Steel and Wire company increased its quarterly dividend from 30 to 50 cents and authorized a special payment of 25 cents.

—In declaring a 40 cent dividend, Homestake Mining company brought payments up to \$1.40 for this year after making no disbursements last year.

Meanwhile, the treasury department ordered all corporations to report on their 1946 tax forms if they paid out at least 79 per cent of their earnings in dividends and reasons if they did not. In this way, the government hopes to prevent withholding of dividends to scale down stockholders' income taxes.



Tales of the Town:

They were a couple of wild kids, and their marriage was made in heaven—like lightning. It happened over night. . . . Blase Broadway was even stunned by the news. Like impetuous kids they didn't plan very far in advance, and when it came time to locate an apartment, they found themselves out in the cold.

Imposing on the well wishes of friends, they drifted from one family to another. . . . To bystanders it looked like the marriage would wind up on the rocks of Reno. . . . Then a strange thing happened. Her parents, who had disowned her when she wed the guy, suffered a change of hard heart. . . . "Come and live with us," pleaded her mother. Her father still hated the new son-in-law but allowed him to move in. . . . Well, the marriage is OK now, and pretty soon they expect to have an apartment all their own. . . . Seems her mother and father fought nightly over the new son-in-law, and now mom is Reno-bound!

They were both names on Broadway. . . . Then they drifted into other fields. . . . But he was so busy with his New York nite spot — and she with her magazine articles—that they began to see less and less of each other. . . . Came the inevitable. They split. . . . Didn't see each other for years. Only recently he heard from her. . . . She was suing him and demanding a sizeable hunk of cash. . . . His hot spot, however, is on the rocks. He is flat broke, and he told her so. . . . Now look what happens. Instead of collecting alimony, she is so touched by his pitiful plight that she's sending him a fistful of folding money each week to keep the sheriff from his door.

She is a high-salaried buyer for a department store. Been there for years. Well liked. . . . Came a strike, and all the sales help walked out. . . . The boss asked her if she would pinch-hit as a salesgirl until the strike was settled. . . . As a personal favor she acquiesced. . . . Three days later she walked into the office with swollen eyes that told of sleepless nights. "I'm resigning," she said. . . . "But look," argued the boss, "you've been with us for years; we've paid you well. Certainly you can stick with us through this trouble." . . . "I want to," came the tearful reply, "but for three nights I've been locked out of my home. My husband is a union official, and he refuses to sleep under the same roof with a strike-breaker!"

The town's booking agents are guffawing over this. . . . A much disliked colleague is currently being sued because he borrowed several hundreds from a young assistant, got the guy fired and then refused to pay. . . . Came a letter from the lawyer the other day, and the booking agent furiously wrote back: "I dare you to take me to court over the 500 bucks I owe George. You haven't any proof." . . . And then the chump signed his name! . . . Schelpmeh!

Although the President has no intention of running again, he will not officially announce it until the final moments, if at all. Because "he wants the final say" on the ticket. He will oppose Wallace for president and James Roosevelt as vice-pres, according to intimates. . . . Political observers say Eleanor Roosevelt is the most popular and respected U. S. delegate to the U. N. . . . 20 million white shirts, they say, will be released before the Yuletide holidays. . . . Statistics show that three-quarters of all surplus materials being offered do not exist as presented. Mostly all conversion. . . . The best golfers in the land rate Bing Crosby as a three-handicap man. Wait'll Bob Hope reads that!

Stage Entrance: Burlesque will celebrate its 90th anniversary by having a poll to determine the 10 best comics in burlesque. The winner will be honored with a gold party-ner. . . . Russell Patterson (the illustrator) and Doug Herie are looking for a beautiful Negro girl to "enter in the 1947 Miss American beauty contest." . . . Ames 'n' Andy call the depression the good old days when there was only a shortage of money. . . . Something to recommend if you're in Miami Beach or nearby: The Community Concert series.



BARTER 'FOR BEANS' . . . At Virginia's unique Barter theater, where produce can be exchanged for tickets, pigs, chickens and other barnyard denizens, vegetables and fruits pile up at the box office. Produce received "in trade" provides meals for Barterites

FOR 'BED AND BEANS'

Unique Barter Theater Plays Significant Role in U.S. Drama

WNU Features.

ABINGDON, Va.—In these days of wholesale prosperity and bulging bank vaults it is difficult to recall that a mere dozen years or so ago bread lines reached far up the streets, smoke long since had ceased to billow from factory chimneys, banks clanged shut their doors and threw away the keys, people faced starvation in a land of plenty, farmers could not sell their produce—and the American theater suffered the worst season in history.

It was in this depression setting that the Barter theater was born in 1933. Returning from a tour with Walter Hampden in "Cyrano de Bergerac," Robert Porterfield scanned the dismal Broadway scene. He found hordes of fellow actors out of work and hungry, with no prospects of casting calls.

Recalls Ancient Trades.

He thought of produce left in the fields and the problems of economics. He recalled that in farming communities considerable business is transacted by the ancient barter system. His family, he remembered, had purchased the old Virginia home place from the Indians by barter around 1800.

Reasoning that there was plenty of talent on Broadway—but no money—and plenty of food on farms—but no money—Porterfield decided to bring the two together by founding the nation's first "Barter" theater.

As the site for his experimental theater, he decided on Abingdon, first English town west of the Alleghenies and only a few miles from the family homestead at Glad Spring. He arranged to use the buildings of the defunct Martha Washington college for a home. Near this spot Daniel Boone's trail west crossed the old Wilderness road.

When Porterfield sounded out some of his stage friends, he was besieged by candidates willing to forsake Broadway for three months of acting in exchange for bed, beans and salubrious Virginia mountain air.

Selects 21 Actors.

From the list of applicants Porterfield selected 21 talented thespians, who were willing to double as stage hands, scene designers, seamstresses and general all-around theater people. By wheeling pieces of furniture, old fabrics, electrical equipment, decorations and other properties on a round of shops, stores and wholesalers, Porterfield finally assembled a freight car of material.

By the time Porterfield got his 21 actors and carload of equipment to Abingdon, he had one lone dollar in his pocket. A canvass of the community netted kitchen supplies, tableware and other necessities. Women of the town made curtains; Boy Scouts cleaned up the grounds.



sometimes more. Porterfield begged for money. Today, the reverse is true, about 90 per cent of the receipts being in cash. Taking cognizance of current shortages, Porterfield now begs for produce.

Trace Group's History.

History of the Barter theater is divided into two periods, the prewar barter period and the postwar professional period. The distinction, Porterfield hastens to explain, does not indicate that prewar companies were not composed largely of professionals. During that period, however, the actors received no compensation except bed and board.

Since raising the first curtain on June 10, 1933, the Barter colony has presented 154 plays in more than 1,000 performances. In addition to the regular Abingdon season, the players have trouped to nearby Virginia towns of the "fog circuit," so designated by Barterites because of the ghostlike fog that is whisked each night through the mountains of southwest Virginia.

Gets State Grant.

Now, after being closed during war years when the young founder-director entered the army air forces, Barter theater has resumed operations. Aided by a subsidy of \$10,000 from the commonwealth of Virginia, Barter now ranks as the first "state theater" in history of America. From this start, Porterfield envisions an expansion of such theatrical enterprises throughout the nation until something resembling the Old Vic theater of England has been achieved.

The state grant has enabled Barter to be set up on an annual basis with a permanent company. Although now on regular salary, however, the actors still double as stage hands, box office cashiers, ushers and even as caretakers of ducks, pigs, chickens, goats and other barnyard denizens, some of which are recent box office receipts while others are descendants of the original barter animals.

Plan Extended Tour.

At close of the regular season in Abingdon this fall, the company launched an extensive statewide tour covering 70 Virginia cities in an attempt to provide every citizen an opportunity of viewing the best in drama as staged by the theatrical group which the state has underwritten. Performances in other southern states will follow, with two weeks in New York capping the trip.

On the results of the tour hinges the feasibility of state subsidized drama throughout America, adherents of the project agree.

Constant problem for Porterfield's chief dietitian is to evolve new recipes with which to use the cottage cheese which two elderly women present for their admissions nightly. Once the two women brought more cheese than usual and asked for "ten cents change because we thought we would like to buy a soda after the show."

In early years of the theater's existence, produce accounted for almost 85 per cent of the total take,