

Looking at WASHINGTON

BIG BUSINESS MONEY IN POLITICS

There are signs that the big business interests, which ran roughshod over the country before the great depression of the Thirties, are getting ready for another attempt to take charge of the destinies of the United States.

Anybody familiar with the history of this country knows that the reforms initiated by Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt were necessary to check the greed, rascality and rapacity of certain big business interests in this country.

With the abysmal collapse of the nation's economy, following the epochal plunge of stock market prices to the cellar in 1929 and 1930, the tycoons and autocrats of the business world lost considerable face. After having their fling and wrecking the country, they found themselves overwhelmed by an aroused public opinion and while they fought bitterly in the courts, vital reform legislation was enacted.

The people of the United States might as well keep their eyes open in the field of political affairs. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that business interests will provide funds for candidates favorable to their schemes. It might also be a good idea for intelligent Americans to weigh carefully the presumptuous claims put out by, for and in behalf of business. The drive for lower taxation, despite the unbalanced budget, and the effort to put a limit on income taxes, are moves along the line of what we have in mind.

From Washington comes information that spokesmen for private power interests, during the annual meeting of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, called the government's power policies confusing and in need of clarification and asserted that they are leading the country into socialism.

None of the spokesmen, so far as we have been able to discover, went back into the past far enough to criticize utility henchmen of the Insull type or the rascality which amazed the American public less than twenty years ago. Neither did they assert that rural electrification, for example, would have been as widespread as it is without the positive action of the Federal Government.

Another Tory business organization, the National Association of Manufacturers, according to an official, quoted by Joseph C. Harsch, chief of the Washington Bureau of the Christian Science Monitor, says that "business, at last, has hit upon the formula whereby it can spend money in politics to some advantage. The trend is going to be for business to operate, not through a party organization at the top, as in the past, but through individual candidates in individual localities."

Mr. Harsch, who reports that the official is highly elated over the defeat of Senator Pepper, says that "business backed Mr. Smathers in a substantial manner" and "it paid off." Consequently, he suspects that business will increasingly adopt the classic technique of the labor unions and support the most friendly candidate in any district, regardless of his party. This means the support of Republicans or Democrats, whoever happens to be a candidate more friendly to business interests.

WILL REPUBLICAN PROGRESSIVES ORGANIZE?

Alert newspaper correspondents assert that a movement is underway to organize a progressive movement in the Republican Party and that, some day in the future, a declaration of principles will be made, signed by a number of Liberal Republicans.

This is in the class for interesting

news, if true. The Republican Party always contained a liberal and a conservative faction. In this respect it is like the Democratic Party. The cleavage in both parties applies to national issues particularly and, in the Republican Party, to international affairs, as well.

The Republican group, according to published accounts, is not satisfied with the recent policy statement of the Republican National Committee. They tend to accept the major social goals of the New Deal and Fair Deal, but disagree with the method of implementing them. They realize that the Republicans must offer a positive alternate which will appeal to Americans as individuals through a Federal-State governmental set-up that will foster individual security and economic prosperity for men and women.

We report what we read without having any accurate information as to the truth of the published speculation. Nevertheless, we are inclined to think there is something to the matter. However, the outstanding feature of American political life, in our opinion, is the failure of liberals in both of the old parties to get together and the similar failure of conservatives to do the same.

SAYS U. S. MIGHT "OCCUPY" MORE COUNTRIES

It continues to be difficult for the average American to get a clear picture of the international situation as it affects the United States.

Despite much talk about the "cold war," there comes from Washington, at very frequent intervals, a reassuring appraisal of the situation from the President and a confident statement from Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson as to the efficiency of our armed forces. From the statements of these officials, one would conclude that if the United States keeps its powder dry, there is no immediate prospect of serious trouble.

From other officials, however, including some of the leaders of the armed forces, the statements are not quite so reassuring. Even others high in official positions, make statements which tend to confuse, the public because they seem to contradict the reassurance and confidence expressed by the President and other Cabinet members.

For example, Vice-President, Alben

Barkley, speaking at an Armed Forces Day dinner in New Orleans, declared that the United States must maintain armed forces throughout the world and perhaps occupy more countries before the "cold war" ends. In addition, the Vice-President declared that "we must drive back this monster (Russia) that has crept over the earth, destroying the freedom of man."

We do not know whether the statesman from Kentucky was talking from the exuberance of oratory at an Armed Forces dinner or whether his remarks constituted something of a trial balloon to test public reaction. Certainly, it is an advance in preparedness and defense talk to suggest that it may be necessary for the United States to occupy other countries. Once this procedure gets underway, there is no telling where it will stop or when a shooting war will begin.

Having said this much, it should not be assumed that a dispatch of limited forces into troubled areas might not be an effective and economical method of preventing further advances by the Reds. Just as the presence of American troops in Germany exercises a deterrent effect,



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much more than their strength suggests, the dispatch of token forces into troubled areas might make it more difficult for Communist agents to penetrate into neighboring states and create confusion which, later, could lead to serious trouble.

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