

[March 5, 1938]

EDUCATIONAL EMPIRE. The Commissioner of Education in the Department of Interior is a sort of national school superintendent who looks after more schools, pupils and school facilities than any person on earth. His clientele consists of 57 state school systems, 126,605 school districts, 271,700 schools, 1704 colleges and universities, 6235 public libraries, 1600 CCC Camps, 611 educational magazines and periodicals, 700 radio broadcasting stations, 49 state Parent-Teacher Associations and a host of other groups. These constitute our Knowledge Factory. It is still our leading industry.

NO S.R.O. SIGNS. A bill is pending before one of the Senate Committees to capitalize the efforts which Uncle Sam has made in the field of PWA Art and the Federal Theatre Project by setting up a Federal Bureau of Fine Arts. Its purpose would be to foster the theatre and the arts and develop a cultural appreciation among a larger group of people. The authors hit upon the idea of having some outstanding actors and actresses come to Washington to testify. Among them was Lillian Gish, Jane Cowl, Orson Welles, and other headliners whose performances often rate as high as \$15 a seat. They appeared before a Senate Committee at 10:00 a.m., which is a bit early for stage folks. They were a bit tired and sleepy and hungry. But no "Standing Room Only Signs" were necessary for the Committee room for only a dozen Senate stenographers and clerks bothered to look in and give the Thespian stars the casual stare. That's irony for you.

A LEPER DIES. John Early, America's best known leper, died the other day at age 64 in the leprosarium at Carville, La., and thereby hangs a tale. Thirty years ago, Early contracted leprosy and was sent to a Leper Colony on Puget Sound. But he escaped and came to Washington, where he frightened folks, caused such startling headlines as "Watch For This Man," caused hotels that suspected him of having been a guest to fumigate from stem to stern, and made all Washington suspicious of \$2 bills because it was said he cashed a \$2 bill in Union Station to buy a paper. But John Early did more. He memorialized Congress to recognize the dread disease of leprosy for what it was and improve the sanitary conditions at the Carville Leprosarium. Sometimes he frightened Congressional Committees by coming to the Capitol, opening the door of a Committee room and shouting, "I am John Early, the leper." He was a one-man crusader in behalf of lepers and accomplished much to improve the care of his unfortunate kind.

LABOR DEPARTMENT'S TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY. President Taft's last official act on March 4, 1913, was to sign the bill creating the U. S. Labor Department. It is the tenth and youngest of Cabinet positions and in the twenty-five years of its existence has moved on to greater size, vastly more importance, and to functions which embrace the welfare of most of the working folks of the nation. Today it includes the U. S. Conciliation Service, Division of Labor Standards, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Children's Bureau, Woman's Bureau and the U. S. Employment Service. During the last five years of its existence such measures

as the Social Security Act, Wagner Labor Relations Act, Walsh-Healy Act, and creation of the U. S. Employment Service have been inscribed on the law books. Cooperating with State Labor Departments, it has witnessed the adoption of minimum wage laws in 13 states, the 48-hour week or better in 11 states, the outlawing of the injunction in labor disputes in 19 states, coverage of occupational diseases in 10 states, establishment of 16-year minimum age levels for boys and girls in 9 states, and many others. Truly, labor has moved forward in 25 years.

THE NEW NAVY BILL. After weeks of testimony by generals and admirals, engineers and experts, publicists and commentators, big navy advocates and little navy advocates, the naval expansion bill has been reported and will soon start its tortuous course thru the House and Senate. In brief, it calls for 46 additional fighting ships at a cost of \$731,095,000, 22 auxiliary vessels such as mine sweepers, fuel ships, hospital ships and the like at a cost of \$246,451,000, 950 airplanes to cost \$106,000,000, a new Zeppelin-type dirigible to cost \$3,000,000, \$12,000,000 for the construction of an experimental "mosquito" fleet, and \$15,000,000 for other experimental projects. Total cost, \$1,113,546,000.

WAGNER LABOR RELATIONS ACT. You've heard much about the Labor Relations Act and the Labor Relations Board. A number of Supreme Court decisions have sustained the findings and actions of the Board. Gradually its jurisdiction is being extended, and for the benefit of those interested, we set out the following brief outline of this act: The first section sets out a statement of policy to the effect that it is the policy of the United States to encourage and protect the right of organization and collective bargaining by workers. Section 2 consists of definitions and includes definitions of "employer," "employee," "commerce," "unfair labor practices," "labor disputes," etc. Section 3 creates the National Labor Relations Board of three members and defines the powers of the Board. Section 7, which is the heart of the bill, guarantees the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively and select representatives of their own choosing. Section 8 defines "unfair labor practices." Section 9 provides for the selection of labor representatives and elections. Sections 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 empower the Board to prevent unfair labor practices and sets out in detail the procedure whereby the Board shall investigate complaints of unfair labor practices, make its decisions and use the Courts to secure compliance. Its official title is Public Law No. 198, 74th Congress, and it is probably the most widely discussed legislation in the nation today.