

Bell Recites Plagues of New Deal Administration

Made chairman of funds for the Republicans this year, Cyanamid's president speaks from the depths of business pessimism

W. B. Bell, American Cyanamid's president, has a main rôle in raising Republican funds for this year's presidential campaign. Reading his thesis *Come, Sit in the Directors' Meeting*, expounded to an October meeting in Chicago of the Illinois Manufacturers' Cost Association, it is easy to see that he goes at his task barehanded and determined to give the best possible account of himself. He is of the old business school that numbers in America her most successful men financially, men who believe Washington now tries to do too much and taxes the people too much for funds with which to do it: men who are convinced that the formula by which America grew rich is a good one by which she might remain rich, and that the depression however harsh, always moved, tended to move out, and would now be out, with prosperity in, had the Roosevelt administration not held it back.

These shrewd men surmise that Americans are a profit-motivated folk. Instead of disparaging the profit motive for life, they glorify it; they again hold it up to the people for glorification, and, given the accuracy of the *Literary Digest* polls, they bark up the right tree precisely and have at least a fighting chance to put their candidate in the White House next November.

Bell outlined at Chicago, as if to a directors' meeting, 3 several projects for further risk of capital. Each had been experted, each recommended by Cyanamid technologists, each was up for executive action.

No. 1 project was for making certain starches, now mainly imported into the United States, from potatoes; everything normal taken into account, the project promised to capture the bulk of the trade and make a neat 10% a year on the investment. Patents protected the process proposed, and the company would have a long start over competitors in foreign markets where patents were not the cash for the venture was in hand.

This project, though sound, was not taken up. The notorious *Potato Act* specifying maximum potato production without penalty stood in the way. When Bell talks potatoes, he talks, as he knows, to many voters; women particularly prick up their ears, rural housewives being interested in such catch crops, or cash crops on a large scale sometimes—wanting the money for extras of family importance that the other crops do not provide.

Bell's directors lay the starch project on the table until protective at Washington is, in their view, more American.

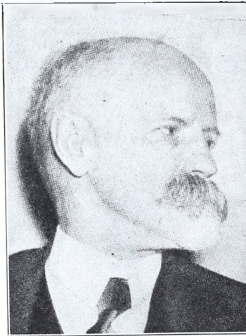
Project No. 2 is for an electric furnace employing a new process for reduction of manganese ore, an outlay of \$4,000,000. A manganese deposit in the United States is in view, and the duty of 1 cent a pound on imported manganese (that would not apply to the Philippine ore) would be sufficiently protective. But this project too is tabled because it is learned that the Federal government proposes working a manganese deposit, to give work to unemployed men and supply the war department—"the government might expand and sell the product to other consumers as well, under guise of establishing a yardstick"—an allusion to Tennessee Valley Authority prac-

tice in disposing of power.

Project No. 3 Bell hesitates to mention. It is for making synthetic aromatics for the perfume trade, but after its perfection Washington effected a reciprocal tariff with a European country that would take American farm products in exchange for sale of its aromatics and perfumes in the American market.

"It may be good politics to destroy the American perfume industry, that employs but a few thousand workmen. I may not know. . . . I suspect it is bad politics, and it is bad judgment; because I believe the American farmer knows that his best market is a prosperous industrial America."

The Bell address as a whole, warm and pulsating with conviction, has, of course, its inconsistencies. Just here, for instance, the great emphasis on domestic trade, but later, in discussing money, the broader view of international commerce. But advocates are not constrained to consistency: we suffer in the Philippines from the extreme national view Bell sponsors as an American industrial policy, but we do not make America very consistent trade propositions—the Islands give themselves wide moral latitude in this matter, as politicians commonly do on the stump.



W. B. BELL

... he takes you to his Directors' meeting

But the Bell address is consistent in its main point, thorough business opposition to major Roosevelt measures. Government of the old school reestablished at Washington, Cyanamid's president thinks business confidence would be restored at once. Within 30 days, most existing plant facilities would be running full time turning out badly needed consumer-goods; and skilled and professional men would be back at work with capital bursting all bounds in search of profitable employment—"in 6 months . . . the steady march of an army going back to work . . . most men will have already forgotten the greatest depression within the memory of those now living."

Within 18 months: The \$5 billion dollars of accumulated demand in the construction and the durable goods industries, now inert through fear, will overtax the capacity of this country and its citizens.

The ring of good campaign material is in this final broadside. While there are philosophers who see no prudence in overtaxing the productive capacity of America and her citizens, and in fairness they should be mentioned because they are not partisans of the other side, they do not have ranks and files of votes and will count but little this time in the elections. What is most interesting in the Bell address is its accurate report of the prevailing business view of politics at home.

Walter Lippmann cites Roosevelt's antagonism of industry as his major political error; he has succeeded with the farmers, failed with the cities. The Bell address brings this out. Often rebuffed, industry no longer seeks Washington's co-operation—it would put a new boss in charge of that job.

American Cyanamid is represented in the Philippines by Botica Boie, under the management of Roy W. Springer. It is prosperous. A *Journal* friend bought its stock about a year ago at 19, and currently the market is around 34. The Bell sentiment doesn't come from a company that has not been able to weather through, but from a stable active one anxious to forge ahead.