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Speakers

Address of Honorable John E. Fogarty, Member of Congress from the Second R. I. Congressional District, at 11th Anniversary Banquet of the Sign & Pictorial Painters Union, Local # 729, at the Narragansett Hotel, Providence, R. I., on Saturday, October 28, 1944 - - Broadcast over Station WPRO at 9:45 P.M.

My talks with you men tonight have been reassuring. It is honestly inspiring to know the Signpainters - Local 729 - has devoted so much time and effort to perfecting plans for the Post-war period. You present positive evidence that members of unions are making a definite contribution to the future economic life of our country.

While planning for the future certainly is vital to our welfare - it is, at the same time, highly important that we devote some consideration to the present - and to the past. It has been well said - "We find our way in the future - by light from the lamp of the past. Permit me, therefore, to speak of the present - and a little bit of the past.

Because it has been my sincere conviction that the people of Rhode Island are not interested in muck-raking politics - I have refused to get concerned over charges and counter charges which have been hurled by G.O.P. spell-binders. However, I cannot sit by when rank hypocrisy takes the stage - when there is a deliberate, bold attempt to misrepresent the facts; when there is a positive attempt to create confusion.

Never in the history of political campaigns was the worker loved and wooed with such zeal as is evident today. Never was he promised more - and on the G.O.P. record - guaranteed less. In previous campaigns they have contented themselves with flirting with the working men and women of Rhode Island - but this time it's all-out - they have everything under control - they want one more chance!

Now, no one objects to a little attention once in a while - least of all Labor - Heaven knows we went without it long enough - but honest men do object - and object strenuously - when, speaking to others, the G.O.P. asserts the working men and women of America will be the greatest drawback to economic recovery - - that all the patience - skill and tolerance - Tolerance, mind you - that is possessed by business - will be required to deal with the working men and women of Rhode Island - while wages are forced down.



No assurance there will be cooperation - no confidence there will be jobs - no effort to understand our problems - - NO - they'll tolerate us while they patiently tell us our skill cannot support our standard of living.

The working man must not sit at the table with management and have all share in the fruits of industry - he must be content with what's given him - he must be seen and not heard.

Up and down and across the State - another G.O.P. campaigner - the veteran legislator he is termed by Rhode Island's independent Newspaper - has sounded the clarion call as the champion of Labor. This is no pretense. He offers unimpeachable testimony of his right to the title. Here it is - - -

In Westerly - (quote) "I love the working man and woman" (end quote).

He loved the working man and woman back in the days when he was first elected to the General Assembly - when the working men and women of this State beat their knuckles bloody against the stonewall of States Rights - when their voices were weak with hunger and couldn't be heard past the bronze doors of the Rhode Island State Senate - when the veteran legislator prided himself on his consistent opposition to every semblance of liberal legislation which was able to find itself into that august chamber where his Party ruled; where no legislation could pass - in his words - (quote) "without my party's approval" (end quote).

Over the radio - (quote) "I served as President of a Local Federation of Labor" (end quote). He founded a union and was its leader - but it died - like most of the liberal legislation he led into the pigeon holes of the Committees over which his Party presided on Capitol Hill - where no legislation could pass - (quote) "without my party's approval" (end quote).

Again over the radio - (quote) "I considered it my duty to hear all factions and to judge pending legislation from the viewpoint of what was best for all" (end quote).

Then tell us, Senator, what faction - as you term it - you listened to that prevented you from hearing the voices of the working man and women of Rhode Island - back in the winter of 1932 and 1933 - when they walked the streets of Providence and the roads of Rhode Island's



Towns, vainly searching for a job that wasn't to be had? What faction had your ear while men - not bums - fathers of families - scavenged for stale bread and crackers to take home to the mouths of hungry children? What faction had your ear - while thousands pleaded in vain for help - what faction stilled your voice - where was your championing of Labor in those days - when you weren't seeking National Office - when you didn't need those votes?

Again - over the radio - Quote the Senator, "I am not and never have been concerned over the source of proposed legislation."

You should have been concerned, Senator, with the source of the legislation which wanted to make it possible for Labor in Rhode Island to organize and bargain collectively - whose purpose it was to diminish the cause of Industrial disputes. That is the measure that has been termed "Labor's Magna Charta" - and you voted against it, Senator, as late as 1938 - - the date? - it was April 21st, 1938 - - and the Bill? - it was H-759.

On April 20th, 1933 - that was America's blackest winter - the veteran legislator voted against the Minimum Wage Act - and on the same day he opposed consideration of an act to give Rhode Island mechanics, teamsters and laborers preference in employment on Public Works. In June - 1933 - the veteran legislator opposed passage of a Resolution to create a commission to study conditions of employment in manufacturing establishments - that was an act which could have demonstrated his love for the working women of Rhode Island - had that love been present.

But like the union he founded - progressive legislation in his party's Senate, came to a speedy end - unwept, unhonored, and unsung. For nothing could be done for anybody - (quote) "without my party's approval" (end quote).

The veteran legislator, in another speech, decried the fact that I had objected to the delay of big business - which he champions - along with labor - in the original program of converting from peace-time to National Defense production. If the Senator doesn't know that big business held out until it could get its own terms - then he's been asleep the last five years. Industry has done a great job in War Production - but it has been because of the team work of labor, management and Government.



Take an example of the big business he champions - in one case the private capital invested in the company amounted to around two and a half million dollars. In 1942 - the company realized a profit of \$22,720,000. Let me add, to make it specific, after the payment of ALL taxes - the owner of this company - one man - would have earned a profit on war contracts of Five Million, Two Hundred and Five Thousand Dollars!

Take another case - a partnership had \$600,000 invested in a business. In 1942 the partnership realized a profit of Two and a Half Millions of Dollars!

Renegotiation - one of the Senator's "crippling restrictions" - eased some of this money back into the Treasury of the United States. But the Senator wants to get rid of "ALL crippling restrictions" on big business.

As a matter of fact, Navy Renegotiations, as of September 22d, of this year, totaled Two Billion, Sixty-Six Millions of Dollars; Cash refunds, 943 Millions, and Contract Adjustments totaled One Billion, 123 Millions of Dollars.

nothing could have passed without my party's approval" (end quote).

He has also said - "I shall represent all the people" - - Let's take a look at the record - remember he was elected to represent the people of East Greenwich - but - what does the record show? He represented those - and only those - who were politically right!

Who was he representing when he championed the conspiracy to wreck the reputation of a Rhode Island Jurist - - - a Judge with an honorable character who had been guilty of a "horrible" crime - he had imposed a fine of a hundred dollars for the illegal sale of liquor - in a shop allegedly operated by a G.O.P. big-shot in a town thirty miles away from East Greenwich!

What happened - Senator - couldn't you CLEAR IT WITH ERNIE?

That's what the record says he did for North Smithfield and Woonsocket.

What faction was he sitting down and talking it over with - when he championed the



opposition to investigation of the Cranston Sewer fiasco - a mess if ever there was one.

That's what the record says he did for the people of Cranston.

Whom was he representing - of all the people - when he opposed, soon after he was elected as a legislator, the abolition of the infamous Providence Safety Board - a G.O.P. concoction - fabricated in violation of the very fundamentals of home rule and representative government.

That's what the record says he did for the people of Providence.

In 1934 the Textile workers had a strike - - A Democratic Governor called out the State Guard to protect their lives and their rights. The Senator wrote into the Republican platform of that year a vigorous condemnation of the Governor's - (quote) "timorous and vacillating policy".

Who had his ear that time? That's what the record shows he did for the working men and women of Rhode Island.

But look if you will - through the pages of the Journals of the Rhode Island Senate - search in the files of the Independent newspaper - and find if you can, one act - yes, one word - of the veteran legislator - for the people of East Greenwich - the Town he was elected to represent.

I wish I had more time - I shall have to close.

These campaigners, in their frantic search for votes, have toured the State promising everything to the working man and woman of Rhode Island. The veteran legislator has thumped the tub for labor at every appearance he's made. It would appear that he considers nothing of greater importance. He wants to speak for Labor - be its champion.

No, Senator - you're wrong again. No one speaks for labor - but labor itself. Every day of our lives - if we are men at all - we are speaking for someone. Every day of our lives we are championing the right of others to speak out - whether it be in the area of labor, race, religion, or otherwise.

We are all part of that small, noisy minority you rant about. We dare hope for a better future - for all men - and, Senator, we dare to work for it.



We've spoken out in the past - when it wasn't the expedient thing to do, in your judgment. There were days when it was not popular to champion Labor. But the road has been turned - and the working men and women know the good-time-Charlies will be coming out - the second guessers - the breast-beaters who would save labor from itself.

You have offered the people of Rhode Island nothing, Senator, but criticism of me. You can point to nothing, Senator, to justify your claims. You have offered no leadership - when it was important to do so. When the going was tough, Senator, you never raised your voice.

Your position of authority, Senator, you perverted to political purposes - - To use your words - "A man with that concept of Government is unworthy of public confidence!"

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