VIII

Mem. Interview with Judge Gary, April 29, 1924

Judge Gary at the head of table as usual - Sites bringing him letters to sign and telephone communications to consider. Received promptly, - evident that the Judge has been wanting to see me, and he surprised me by saying that on his recent South American trip, taken while I was on my lecture junket, he had been setting down recollections. There is a good sized MS on his desk. Of course I jump at this - it seems to make the thing so much easier and possible, and I have my old impulse to throw everything aside and get at it at once. I tell him how my illness has made it impossible for me to come before, and he is very decent. Sites stays with us - sits at my left. This young man proposes to watch every step I take. There is a reserve about me, and I take it that he thinks it suspicious that I should hesitate to undertake this task, that I ought to be overwhelmed with gratitude that I have got the chance. But he is going to make it possible for me to do it - he will be the dray horse in this thing though he doesn't know it. He has already begun. He has interviewed a lot of people in the West about the Judge's early life, etc., also he has gotten together a lot of printed material and promises more.

We talked for nearly two hours - at least the Judge talked, I breaking in once in a while and Brother Sites making notes. Started off on Lincoln, and I told the Judge the story that had just come to my desk of Tad and Lincoln's secret sign. The Judge is 72. "No man is so hard," he says "that children do not get him." There is Mr. Morgan with his reputation. I stopped there one morning on my way down town. He was very busy. Grandchild three or four years old runs in, begins to pull his coat. 'Run away, Grandpa is busy.'

Morgan

Digital Image © 2009 Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

She keeps it up until finally he says, "Well, what is it?' She says, 'My Nurse says that when I see you next time I was to say "Bon jour."' and he described how Mr. Moggan completely capitulated and took her up in his arms and kissed her again and again.

Frick

The story of Frick in his last years. Grandchild running in with a picture book, and he using Mr Morgan's formula, "Run away, Grandpa is busy." She does, but comes running back, opening her book to another picture, which she shows to Mr Gary. This happens two or three times until finally the nurse gets her out and Gary says to Frick; "What will you take for that little girl, Frick?" "Not the whole world," he answers.

Goes over several things that he has told me before - the meeting of the Finance Committee in 1901 (?) when the strike that broke out immediately after the formation of the Corporation was first discussed. Refers subject to

Schwab

Schwab who says, "My policy has always been, when a laboring man shows his head, hit it." Gary repeats his reply: "As long as I am chairman that policy will not apply. This was the beginning, as he told me before, of the difficulty with Schwab. He intimates that Schwab was not himself in those years, and warns me, as he did several times during the conversation, that he didn't want to say anything th at would hurt anybody. This is going to be a point of difficulty. I take it that Schwab in these years opposed all Gary's policies, but he is very proud of the fact that at the dinner the Iron and Steel Institute gave him Schwab in his speech said, "I want to say that always in the past Judge Gary has been right and I have been wrong." He seems very proud of

Digital Image 2009 The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

this admission.

He quotes that Schwab said also that Gary is responsible for a renaissance in business - probably means contribution to the stability of steel industry, hardly expected to be an improvement of the morals of 'big business.'

Roosevelt

Spoke several times of Roosevelt and his relations with him; says he first went to White House at Roosevelt's request, who told him he did not know much about business but had some ideas and wanted to discuss them. Evidently Gary and Rooselvet talked sufficiently the same language, that is, they each had enough leaning toward a different code in business and at the same time were sufficiently united on practical points to talk together. This probably could not have happened with any other one of the men on the Finance Committee.

Gary went several times to the White House and gave out interviews of his talk afterwards. The Board was disgusted. At one meeting a member - I haveyet to find out who this was - moved that the chairman be instructed not to make any more trips to the White House or to give out any more interviews. G. immediately said that as long as he was chairman he should go when summoned and that the day had come when the public must be considered and he proposed when he had anything that he thought was the public's business, anything that the public should know, to give it out.

Rogers

It was here that Henry Rogers came to his support, saying, "Gentlemen, Judge Gary has managed this business well so far, and I propose that we let him go on in his own way."

Frick

Frick was much opposed to the Judge's course. In

Digital Image, 2009, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

conversation one day, he attacked Roosevelt, saying that he was hurting business, that he never helped anybody. The Judge said, "That is not true." "Well, who has he helped?" And Gary, striking his breast says, "Here is a man."

Rogers

Very interesting about Henry Rogers. He was on the Finance Committee at the start and remained there until his

Rockefeller

death. Rockefeller interests much opposed to the code which Gary announced. I take it that he said to them at the same time, though I am not sure of this, that he believed that their first aim should be, Do right for the sake of doing right; but if they could not do it for that reason, to do it because it paid. It was because of this counsel from the chairman that John Rockefeller, Sr. retired after three months on the Board. Gary said that he remarked, "I believe in the Sunday School but I don't believe in making business a Sunday School." This certainly should be verified and used if possible. He doesn't tell me whether Rockefeller said this to him or to somebody else who repeated it.

Rogers

Rogers was not with him at the start. He attacked him on the point of publicity. He brought in his first financial report and announced that he would give it to the press. After the meeting Rogers followed him into his office, saying, "An excellent report. But do you mean that you are going to give this out?" "Yes," the Judge said. "I am an older man than you are, you know." "You will have poor reports, will you give them out, too?" "Yes," said the Judge." Rogers shook a long finer at him: "You won't do it."

They seem to have remained on fairly good terms, Rogers frequently attacking him on policies quite contrary to those of the S.O. The Judge says Rogers softened greatly

Digital Image, 2009 . The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

in his last years. He always came to the Finance Committee meetings, generally a little early to talk over things. One day he followed Gary into his office after the meeting, saying, "Judge, I just want to tell you that when we started I thought you were always wrong, I have learned that you are right, and I wish I had learned it much earlier." The next morning at nine o'clock, Gary says impressively, he was dead.

XII

Cory

Tells interesting story of panic of 1907 when Cory, whose business it was to look after operation and not policies, persuaded a majority of the directors that wages should be cut. Frick and Widner were then in Paris and Cory got a telegram from them approving reduction. At meeting, Gary who did not believe in the reduction at that time, had the decision put off for a week. His idea was that business would revive in the fall. Rogers backed him up in this. At that time Morgan was in Aix, he had told Gary that if at any time he wanted him to do anything, that he should cable him. "Just tell me what I am to do, don't tell why, don't give me any details, just say what you want me to do and I will do it." Gary now cabled him asking him to see Frick and Widner and get them to withdraw their approval of the reduction of wages at that time.

Mr. Morgan did this at once. When the next meeting came, Rogers came to him and said, "I will stand by you in your labor policy."

Perkins

Perkins had also telegraphed his approval. The matter was clinched by the cablegram from Morgan reading, "Frick, Widner and I oppose any reduction of wages at the present moment."

Gary, who is 72 and with signs not exactly of dotage, but of very great satisfaction with the way things have

Digital Image, 2009. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

turned out in his world, the approval of his policies, which I take it came out in the dinner I spoke of before particularly, though he shows me a arather effusive letter from John D. Rockefeller, Sr., in reply to an invitation he had sent him to the dinner to Foch.

Roberts — He quotes Percival Roberts who, he tells me, is the best steel man in the country and who in the early days Schwab was jealous of and constantly disputed with in the Board even one day getting up and proposing to fight it out.

Bacon — Quotes Robert Bacon as having said that Gary established a new set of rules in the business game.

Morgan — Particularly proud of the little speech that Mr. Morgan - "Jack" - made at this dinner. Gary says he had to support himself by putting one hand on his shoulder and the other hand on the table, he was so scared - cannot make a speech.

At the end of two hours am interested in the thing as a task. There is certainly nothing about the man himself to inspire enthusiasm. At the moment it seems to me that he has put over a really extraordinary thing, that is, that he has set going in business an entirely new code, that he went in at a time when the whole Big Business world was committed to the old rules, that he broke with them on vital points like publicity, humane labor policy, sticking to engagements, preventing as far as possible manipulation of stocks - not sure of this yet - Now this is a deserving study, and he must have had a constant war to put it through. He tells me that Percival Roberts said once that Gary's strongest characteristic was his patience, that he knew how to wait for the thing he wanted to be accomplished. And unquestionably

Digital Image 2009, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

it took patience to secure the consent and cooperation of that high powered board of his to any one of his new rules.

As a human being he seems to be likable, has a certain Sunday School morality, I don't know whether he has more or not in private life. Mrs. Gary is going to be a hard nut.

Dennison

Talked with Dennison about doing the thing. He thinks it a fine job, but a difficult thing and not very inspiring. Says "Go to it."

Digital Image 2009 The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library