

## [Mr. MacCurrie is interrupted]

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Monday, Feb. 6 '39 Mr. MacCurrie is interrupted in his discourse on the Waterbury trial today by the appearance of Mr. Fred Robertson, one of the members, who has "caught up on his work down to the shop." Mr. Robertson is mildly disgusted with the management of the factory under the new regime (it remains [?] "new" to the older workers though it has been incumbent since 1930) but has adapted himself philosophically to change.

"Might as well make [?] the best of it," says he. "They're tryin' to get the place down to a fifty cents [andx?] an hour shop, and they'll probably do it, before they're [?] through. I doubt if the average is much more than that now."

Mr. MacCurrie: "They were workin' over time there for a while, weren't they?"

Mr. Robertson: "For one week they were. They got some government orders they're tryin' to push through. Then they found out they'd have to pay time and a half for everything over forty hours on government work, and they cut that out. Nobody works over forty hours now. Only the office. They work overtime tryin' to figure out ways to cut the help down more."

Mr. MacCurrie: "How many they got in the office now?"

Mr. Robertson: "I heard somebody say there was a hundred and nine, altogether. Non-producers, that is."

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Mr. MacCurrie: “Lord Jesus! And about four hundred out in the factory!”

Mr. Robertson: “Less than that.”

Mr. MacCurrie: “I see that new lad from the west is here to take Potter's place. The purchasing agent.”

Mr. Robertson: “Well, that seems to be their game. They want to get rid of all the old help—the higher ups anyway, and replace 'em with their 2 own men. What they're tryin' to do is to introduce their own system of makin' clocks here—the same way they make 'em out west.” (The local company has been swallowed by the General Times Instruments Corp., the parent organization of which is Westclox, at Lasalle, Ind.) “But they don't seem to realize that the same system that works with a dollar alarm clock can't be made to work with expensive models. They've cheapened everything. Put in this time study system. You have to work like hell to make anything, and naturally you push the work through as fast as you can. Don't make any difference [?] whether it's good or not, long's you make your time. What's the result? Lousy clocks. The repair department's the busiest in the place.”

Mr. MacCurrie: “You still cuttin' wheels, Fred?”

Mr. Robertson: “Yeah. Forty six years, I been cuttin' wheels. But I never had to work the way I do lately. They time everything you do. Every new job you get there's one of these lads standin' at your shoulder checkin' every move you make. He puts the price on it, but he don't make no allowances for work runnin' bad, or anything like that. No allowances are made for anything.”

Mr. MacCurrie: “It's a great system.”

Mr. Robertson: “For the company. It's fine for the company. Well, if business picks up, there'll be something doin' down there. They'll be leavin' like rats.”

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Mr. MacCurrie: I hear they won't hire anybody from town these days.”

Mr. Robertson: “I don't know about that. They got quite a few workin' from out of town in the machine room The boss is from Waterbury. He seems to favor Waterbury men.”

Mr. MacCurrie: “A lad was tellin' me he was standin' down there 3 the other night when the whistle blew. He said goddomit he didn't know any of them that come oot. Of course he hasn't been in town for a few years.”

Mr. Robertson: “Well, there is a lot of out of town help.”

Mr. MacCurrie: “Well——” He looks up at the town hall clock. “I guess I'll take a bit of a walk this afternoon. It ain't a bad kind of a day.” He begins a search for his rubbers, punctuated by grunts as he bends over to peer in corners and profanity as he fails to find them.

Mr. Robertson: “I was listenin' to the radio the other night, and I heard one of these old time fiddlers. Remember how popular they used to be a few years ago? [?] Remember when Ed Spurr used to be on the air with his fiddle? Ed was a real old Mount Raggie. First time I ever see him was once I was on a fishin' trip up to Twin Lakes.

“I went up with George Stone and Frank Gilbert. We hired a horse, and we had a bicycle, and up we went through Torrington and Goshen—what's the name of that mountain in Goshen? Ivy Mountain—when we got that far we put the bicycle in the wagon—I forget who was ridin' it. But it was a long trip—forty five miles. We started five o'clock in the mornin' and we got there five at night.

“Well, we was there a [?] couple of days, and you know how it is campin' like [thatCCox?] that—something comes up and you get to fightin'—nobody wants to cook, or get the water, or anything. Anyway, we was all on the outs. So I took a boat one mornin' and started out. I had a pint in my pocket. I got down near that island in the big lake, and I hear some

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music. So I thought I'd row over and investigate. I beached the boat and went up on shore, and there was a gang of lads, the wildest lookin' crew I ever laid eyes on, all listenin' to this fella playin' the [f fiddlek?] fiddle know who it was? Ed [?] Spurr. They all looked at me, but [?] they didn't say nothin', and neither did I. I didn't 4 want to get in any trouble. After a while, one of them comes over and he says, "Stranger here, ain't you?" I says, 'yes,' I says. 'Then I pulled out the pint, and offered him a drink. That made a hit. 'If you got a friend, I says, [?] 'bring him over.' He called the whole [gag?] gang. They finished it quicker than you could [?] spit.

"Mount Raggie [?] is [?] somewheres over beyond Salisbury. It used to be full of these squatters, but they say there ain't many left. They were worse than gypsies. I met an old farmer up there that same time, I was walkin' along the road and I see this lad lookin' [ag?] at [the?] this pile of bones over in his pasture. 'that there used to be a cow, mister, he says. 'that's all they left me.'

"Yessir, and Ed was a Mount Raggie, all right." Mr. Robertson lights another cigarette. He is a [????] "chain" smoker, and has consumed at least five since he came in. We are joined by Mr Lumpkins, a member of "the other side," who is apparently seeking company. He is employed in a Bristol factory, and he says his week begins on Tuesday. He explains that they permit him to work virtually and day he [?] pleases so long as his required number of hours are in.

"So I thought I'd come down and have my teeth cleaned today," he says. "I just come from the [denstest?] dentist's."

Mr. Robertson: "You don't remember [?] Doc Pucie, do you? Used to live up in the block. He used to have [?] a fifty dollar bill he'd hand over to [Lemmon?] every time he wanted to drink. Of course they never could change it. Finally his bill got so big they changed it for him one day. Then they caught him tryin' to sneak the liquor out of the cellar. He left town shortly afterwards."

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Mr Lumpkins: "First tooth I had pulled [and?] Doc Goodwin did it for me."

Mr. Robertson: "They used to charge a quarter [fod?] for an extraction, the doctors did. The dentists would soak you half a dollar. Old Doc 5 Pease pulled one for me, [one?] when I was a kid. Put me in an old rockin' chair, and got a pair of pliers and got ahold of the tooth. He yanked and grunted and pulled with one hand on the top of my head, and finally the [damn?] [?] tooth come loose. 'There,' he says, 'that's a damn good job. Now spit and get out, boy.'"

Mr. Lumpkins: "The doctors used to get a half a dollar for an office visit and a dollar for a call."

Mr. Robertson: "They were the days. They got this hospital plan over in your place?"

Mr. Lumpkins: "No, they haven't, but I've heard quite a lot about it. What do you think of it?"

Mr. Robertson: "It's a pretty good plan, seems to me. They got it down to Seth Thomas."

Mr. Lumpkins: Does it cover maternity cases?"

Mr. Robertson: "After the first year, it does. Not until after a year."

Mr. [?] Lumpkins: "Well, it sounds pretty good. Well, I think I'll run along up town. You goin' up Fred?"

Mr. Robertson: "I believe I will. Might's well go home and see what the neighbors brought in."