Sports-And One Thing or Another

By Frank Mann Harris

It looks very much as though, ere many weeks have passed, folks will be referring to Mr. Leo Durocher—if at all—as "the former ball-player". In fact we wouldn't be too greatly surprised if, by the time these words poke their heads up in print, Baseball wi' already have decided that it can get along without Lippy Leo just as well, or even better.

* * *

Durocher will be missed, beyond the shadow of a doubt; but missed after the manner of the old lady whose big family of sons and daughters had all grown up and left her. "Don't you miss them?" inquired a sympathetic visitor. "Don't you want them back?". The old lady thought over this proposition for a space. "Yes, I misses 'em and I wants 'em" she slowly answered. **"But somehow or other I misses 'em a whole lot more than I wants 'em."**

* * *

Now we're not going to deny that, in his day, Durocher was a good, scrappy ball-player, of the type that battles till the last out and even afterward. The whole trouble seems to be that he suffers from an occupational disease especially common to athletes—the sort of disease which, unless drastic measures are taken promptly, becomes steadily worse with the passage of time. Phychiatrists call it "delusions of grandeur." In the bay-rum and canned-heat set we refer to it as "swelling of the noggin".

* * *

Durocher has recently blasted his way into the ranks of authorship—move over, Mr. Shakespeare please!—with an autobiographical tome entitled "The Dodgers and Me"; and it is this volume which, unless all the signs and portents are strictly haywire, will before long be the cause of his permanent divorce from the game which gave him a full measure of prominence and pelf. And no wonder either. Leo professes to love Baseball with an undying devotion. Baseball might very well reply in the words of the old song, "It's all very well to dissemble your love, but why do you kick me downstairs?"

* * *

For in his first, and we trust last, literary opus Durocher portrays practically everybody connected with the game—himself and Branch Rickey, in that order, excepted—as being more or less closely connected with the **genus pediculus**, or as they'd phrase it at The Arts and Letter Club, just plain lousy. Only he and his boss emerge from the morass of Durocher's prose pure and unspotted; and when it comes to Rickey the author daubs on the whitewash and gold leaf with such a lavish hand that it is even more sickening than his smears of a" the others.

* * *

Take, for example, his treatment of Babe Ruth. Durocher suspected that Ruth wanted to be manager of The Dodgers — a job which Leo doesn't hold at the moment, but for which he had secret ambitions. Words passed between the two, and Ruth threatened Durocher with bodily violence.

* * *

"I leaped off my seat," writes the author tersely. "We tangled." What Leo somehow overlooks mentioning is that, at the moment of the tangling, The Babe was sitting on a chair, and that Leo courageously pushed him into a locker.

* * *

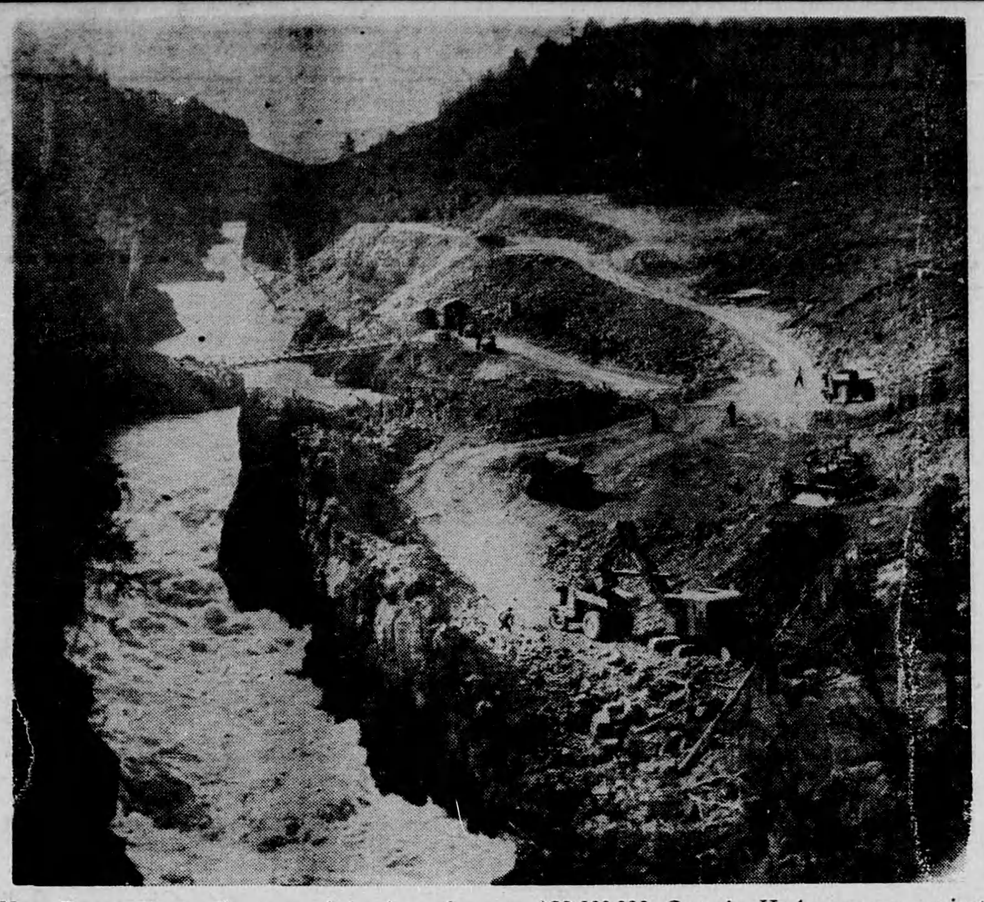
Frank Frisch, Bobo Newsom, Luke Hamlin, Burleigh Grimes, Casey Stengel, Larry McPhail, and Uncle Robby Robinson are just a few of the many who are held up to the light by the budding author—and the light is always murky and unflattering, to say the least. Even when he professes to admire a man, there's ever the touch of the tar-brush. "Grimes, although I was strong for the guy, was not exactly a streamlined manager either. He always kept a red handkerchief in his hip pcket and gave his signals with it." is a sample of what we mean.

* * *

You can almost detect the tears in the author's eyes when he depicts the perfidy of Frankie Frisch, with whom he had been especially palsy. "I felt as if I had been hit on the jaw with a pitched ball," is how he describes his feelings at finding out that Frisch wanted to trade him away to Brooklyn. This, from Durocher, who only a few weeks ago traded Stanky to The Braves for no other reason than that Eddie was too popular with Dodger fans and who—at the time of the Frisch incident, was trying to grab off Frankie's job as Cardinal's manager.

* * *

However, you must read it all for yourself—some time when you land in a hotel room that isn't even equipped with a Gideon Bible. Space limitations prevent us from giving you any more of this masterpiece of ill-concealed venom, back-biting and self-adulation. As one reviewer put it, "When Leo got through he must have had a terrible Charley-horse from patting himself on the back."—which just about sums it up.



New Power Plant—Crews work hard on the new $20,000,000 Ontario Hydro power project in the northland on the Mississagi River. On top of Knob Hill workers drill rock for foundation of concrete mixing plant. One slip here and a man would topple to almost certain death in canyon. New roads have been built for trucks carrying away the tons of rock blasted from rugged walls between which the river still foams freely. In foreground is newly built bridge. Main dam site is at right in this picture.

What Goes On In The World

By Norman Blair

Russia

Does Russia really and truly want peace? That is the $64 question when it comes to world affairs; and a highly experienced observer of such things, especially as they apply to the Land of the Soviets, answers it in this manner — "Russia would really and truly like peace — for a while".

He goes on to point out the reasons why this is so. Here are some of them.

1. The great masses of people do not want war — this is as true of Russia as of any other nation. After the long and fierce struggle of the last war, their nerves are still on edge and they want a rest.

2. Russia is no more ready for war than the United States. Coal, steel and oil production are still far below the mark; and because of shortage of tractors the agricultural output is nothing like what Moscow wants.

3. The people of the Soviets need a period of relaxation. There is plenty of dissatisfaction and grumbling — under the surface, of course, regarding the shortage of consumer goods. With a period of peace assured, much manpower could be released from the armed services to help industry and agriculture.

Without any war, since the Yalta Conference Moscow has been extending its control over the entire area east of the Trieste-Stettin line, with the exception of Greece and, to a certain extent, Finland. Entire political and economic systems have been swept away. It would be more convenient for Moscow to have a period of calm in which to consolidate these changes.

These are some of the reasons this observer gives for believing that the Kremlin really wants peace — for a while. But he hasn't mentioned one that might be more powerful than all these put together. Relations between Britain and the United States have been strained to a grievous degree by what has gone on in Palestine. The Russians are well aware of this, and are watching the situation closely, hoping — no doubt — that the Arab-Israel wedge will drive these two great nations still further apart. With discord between the Western Allies Russia's chance for real world domination would be ever so much better. So perhaps Mr. Stalin was sincere when he said he'd be glad to enter into discussions with the United States — maybe he figures that, at this juncture, the "waiting game" is the best one for Russia to play.

Great Britain

At Scarborough in Yorkshire, the British Labor Party held its third annual convention since coming into office back in July, 1945. Men and women connected with the movement gathered together to take stock, point with pride, and air their grievances, as is the custom with British political parties.

More than 1200 delegates, representing something like five million Laborites, were in attendance; and as a New York correspondent put it, "The men at Scarborough were no collection of street-corner agitators or Socialist soapbox orators". They felt the sobering responsibilities of office."

The mood that characterized the meeting was, in general, one of pride. Statements that full employment had relieved the working classes of fears of hunger that haunted it since the industrial revolution were recieved with cheers and applause. In three years Labor had achieved nationalization of the Bank of England, of civil aviation, of transport, coal, electricity, railways and overseas communication. It had passed legislation for free medical service to all Britons, for reform in Parliamentary representation, together with liberation of India, Burma, Pakistan and Ceylon.

Although there were several clashes one group demanded that Britain should "declare its independence from the United States", when it came to the close of the convention, party unity seemed strong. Government leadership was firmly in the saddle. But in spite of this, there are signs that Labor may be getting ready to make some concessions to the middle-class viewpoint. One of these was in Herbert Morrison's statement that once the nationalized programs already under way—such as iron and steel—are completed, nothing further along this line is contemplated.

Such concessions point to the fact that 1950 is not so far off — and that the heads of the Labor Party realize that when election time rolls around, it will need plenty of votes from outside its own ranks if it is to remain in power.

The Middle East

While the British Government says it has no further interest in Palestine except as a member of the United Nations, actually the British are still deeply involved, not only in the Holy Land, but in the entire Middle East.

There are, for example, Britain's treaties with Trans-Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt, to say nothing of her close connections with the balance of the Moslem world, stretching through Southern Arabia and Iran to Pakistan. Involved in some of these connections are monetary subsidies, provisions for arms, and the loan of British officers to train and command native forces.

Exercising an unheard but still dominant role in the matter is Middle Eastern oil. Then there are the British Imperial bases, starting at Gibraltar and ending at Aden, also the necessity of keeping the Red Sea, the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean open to the British Empire.

All this means that in the eyes of British Foreign Office dignitaries nothing is of much greater importance than the retention of Arab friendship. When forced to a choice in 1939, as war approached, Britain swung to the Arab side; and, whether consciously or not, that seems to be what she is doing now.

Mr. Bevin for one, never concealed his dislike for partitioning Palestine, nor his sympathy with the Arab case. Nor has the Foreign Secretary concealed his resentment toward President Truman and American Jewry, whom he blames for the failure to achieve a compromise in Palestine. Only recently the powerful Manchester Guardian said, "One cannot quite avoid the suspicion that Mr. Bevin has a certain pleasure in making things as awkward as possible for the United Nations."

Ontario to Have More Game Fish

An extensive program of fisheries research is being undertaken in Algonquin Park through the cooperative support of the Department of Lands and Forests, the University of Toronto and the Ontario Research Commission. The investigation is directed towards an understanding of the factors responsible for the production of game fish in Ontario's northland waters.

* * *

For many years the laboratory and resident Park staff have cooperated in the planting of speckled trout yearlings into a large number of lakes. Few instances of definitely improved fishing resulted from this procedure. In later years, the planting program has been reduced to the planting of marked fish into a few lakes, which did show improvement previously, and the experimental introduction of fry and yearling trout into feeder streams, small permanent streams in which trout could be expected to remain for at least a year before moving down to the lakes.

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ISSUE 24 — 1948

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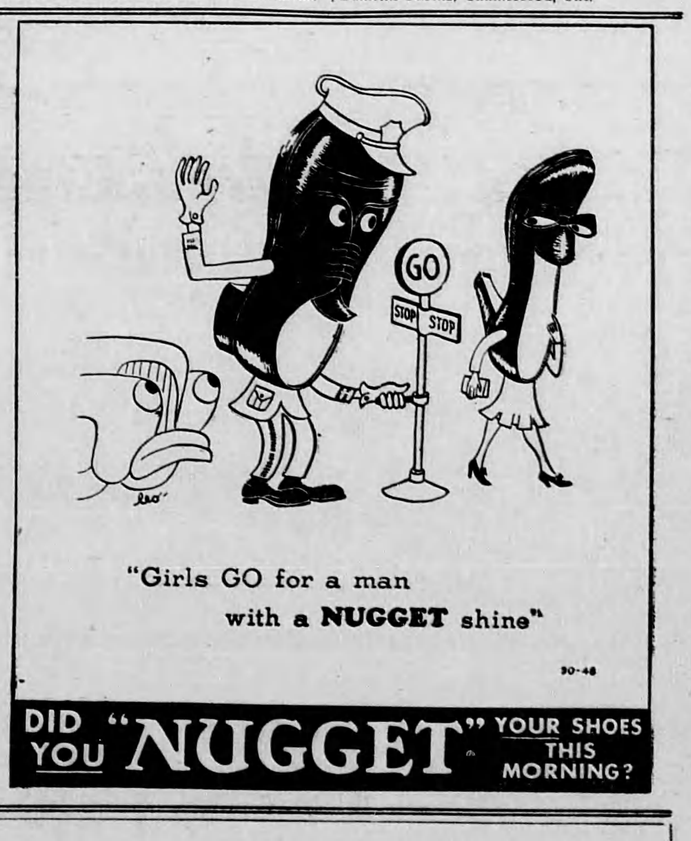

POP—Not Well Posted By J. MILLAR WATT