

It all concentrates on the Speaker and it acts like a band on a bandstand; whereas any of our parliaments are side and side, red-plush, bow-your-leave affairs. No man could ever address our Commons from in front of the Speaker without being a Janus. But when anybody feels like waking up Congress all he has to do is to ask the Speaker for the unanimous consent of the House to deliver a prescribed number of minutes' talk. And he may use the whole space of thirty feet by ten for a roster with Congress right under him, close to him—first violins, wood-winds, brass and tympani.

Sometimes—some climaxes. Here is a convention of talkers who must be talked at. It's an audience of high gear. It is also of vast temperamental diversities. Our Commons is variegated enough. Compared to Congress it is quite simple. These people under the beak of Champ Clark are a real Midway convention of State types: plain Yankee, borderland semi-Canuck, Hoosiers, long-gear democrats from Arkansas, aristocrats from Carolina—old family—or Virginia, blizzards from Idaho and Minnesota, gold-bugs from the East, mountaineers from Montana and Colorado, pulpiteers from Pennsylvania and connoisseurs from Florida, savants from Massachusetts and anti-Orientals from California, along with the Prince of Hawaii, delegate at \$7,500 a year with no vote, and the delegate from Alaska. Yes, it is rather a conglomerate. In one language it is potentially Babel. Foreign tongues are suppressed. There is one great language—American. That may be as the sounds of the sea, but it is always the same wind blowing. And sometimes she blows a gale.

Of all men Champ Clark knows it best now since he took the gavel from Uncle Joe Cannon. C. C. knows how to scream above the gale, down the decks as he wallops the table,

"The House—will be—in Order!"

THE Speaker is a strange figure. Champ Clark might have been President if Tammany had done it. He got the Speakership. But when they handed him the bomb that used to be the boss Joe Cannon's, the time fuse was gone. Champ Clark is merely the President of Congress. Uncle Joe in the days of Taft and Roosevelt and McKinley used to be the appointer of all Committees, at times greater than the President. Uncle Joe was the boss. Champ Clark is the chairman. But he wears his disappointment—if any—like a giant. He is a big, statuesque man, not a hair on his eagle-like visage. His face is a composite photo of Bryan and McKinley. You would pick him out anywhere in a crowd. In the chair you are impressed by his clothes when he rises customarily with left hand deep into a trousers pocket. I saw at least three separate suits on Champ Clark the three days I attended Congress. One was a light brown, another a grey, and one afternoon he was togged in black—always the long cutaway, always the dab of handkerchief in the upper left pocket looking like a magnolia boutonniere, often a red tie. The afternoon he wore black was the day he received the felicitations of the House on the fact that he had become a grandfather. His references to that event were tersely American. He packed a whole sermon into three minutes. Clark knows how to condense language. He speaks very slowly.

"Gentlemen—take—their seats!"

Whack-whack-whack! goes the gavel. One misses the ponderous mace as we have it in Parliament. That "bauble" was never used in Congress.

The only tables outside the reporters' and the clerks' are two large tables behind the railing. The nearest approach to a mace on either of these is Republican leader J. R. Mann, who sits on one of them most of the time when he isn't horning over to the centre aisle to tell some speaker where he is out of order. Mann is a lop-shouldered, hip-along, old pedagogue who knows by heart all the rote and the routine of the House, what was said last week, what was unsaid yesterday, why the Speaker should have done so and so, and just how the gentleman from Buckaroo is out of order. In tactics and knowledge he is the Pugsley of Congress. No man has quite his knowledge of the House. But he is a tyrannical, cold-headed old manipulator who is scarcely ever absent from the House, always from his corner of the table hawking over the assemblage, missing nothing, smiling about once a week, about as popular in his party as a case of measles, but the

everlasting boss who knows how to pump cold water on enthusiasm, how to drive the Republican gang and how to shoot shrapnel into the Democrats. At home in Chicago he is a lawyer. He is the kind of man that never could be President. Quite possibly Congress could worry through a day's work without him. But Mann doesn't think so. That's why the party never can get this strait-jacket off. Mann is also a pacifist. And all the enthusiasm he has for England you could put in one corner of your left eye without hurting it.

His rival leader, Claude Kitchen of the Democrats, who replaced Oscar Underwood when he went to the Senate, is a complete contrast. Kitchen is from one of the Carolinas; a young, smooth-talking, suave man, who knows the House about as well as Mann and has the gift of highly flexible gab that deals with psychology and sentiment. Mann seldom or never takes a rise out of Kitchen, who is popular on both sides of the House, where Mann is popular on neither. Kitchen is a pacifist, voted with the minority against the Naval appropriations of \$368,000,000, but is friendly to England.

Observe the G.O.M. of Congress, former Bible Class teacher, Uncle Joe Cannon. No wonder they call him uncle. He is 81; oldest man in the crowd that once he ruled with the blacksnake of self-ap-



The House will be in Order!

pointed committees. He is such a national figure that they have given him a free room in the Capitol building. You might take him for a first cousin to Abe Lincoln; he has that high-boned, lean face, that sort of long jaw and genial smile. Most historic figure in Congress, it is doubtful if he will ever be remembered in the same category as Lincoln, though he has come up through from the bottom and has lived to dominate his party by personal peculiarities as Mann does by parliamentary methods. He is a long-headed, strange old reactionary. My best glimpse of him was as he shot up the elevator from the cafe to the members' floor. He had a pair of flapped striped trousers, a low double vest, a seven-ways black spraddle of a bow and a diabolical long cigar with an inch of toed-up ash at the ragged end. Cannon must be a humorist. No man with a habitual cigar and black bow like that could be anything else. He is a regular sitter at Congress, though rather less regular than Mann. And his knowledge of that House compared to Mann's is that of a psychist compared to a blacksmith. Old Joe can wriggle his way into the general respect of both parties on the strength of a smile and a few wry words. He seldom speaks, listens well, knows more than he cares to tell most people, is not a warpath,

believes in trusts and even in child labour. I don't imagine he has any Utopian dreams about the democratic ideals of the United States. No orations move him. He has been through heaps of them; has felt that House quiver oftener than any other man alive, was the practical boss of Taft, sometimes of Roosevelt and of McKinley; a practical philosopher, a man without book larnin' but plus the wisdom of a great deep experience in the hearts of men. The guile of United States democracy along with much of its old-fashioned thrift and practical wry humour is high in Uncle Joe. When he slips out of Congress the boys will miss him. There will be a national funeral such as befits only a President. Joe Cannon has never yearned for the Senate, for—oh how he loves that excitable, outspoken congress!

Cyclone Smith from Kansas is a character; a long-haired Prince Michael of a man who when he first struck Washington as a congressman disdained to wear even a collar and tie. But he has slicked up a bit of late and now looks as though he belonged to the 20th century some of the time. A Democrat, he is also a peace man, because Kansas is a long way from New York and California. And though he may not be much on White House receptions—I should love to behold him in a swallowtail—he takes a great delight in expressing his views in the House, which he does very well.

NO Canadian appreciation of Congress would be up to standard without a word about Congressman Charlie Nicholls from one of the Detroiters. Charlie is a Canadian born as a hundred thousand Detroiters are. He was a newspaper man in Detroit before he became city clerk, which is a very responsible position. When he was sent to Congress he took with him all the trail-beating, enterprising, much-alive equipment of the average Canadian who succeeds in the United States. There is no congressman on either side who has a keener scent for the general issues that confront Congress; none who keeps his mind freer of merely party alliances that are un-American. Charlie is as proud of the United States and its mouthpiece Congress as any Canadian is of Canada. And he is doing a big useful work in representing a constituency which has a very large Canadian element.

There are fifty other characters in Congress almost as conspicuous as these. Some of them are caricatures. Some are fine intellects. Many are good speakers. And there is a great passion in Congress for the rights of free speech. But the rules of the House are very rigid. A four-hour speech would be a sensation. Outside of the regular allotment of so many minutes—five to twenty—for each Speaker on a side to talk to a bill, any member desiring to speak must get the unanimous consent of the House before he is permitted. One black ball prevents him. The House must be unanimous.

"Gentleman from Missouri wishes the unanimous consent of the House to speak for ten minutes on this bill," says the Speaker. "Is there any objection? The Chair hears none. It is so ordered."

If it is a short speech the member rises in his seat. If a long one—20 minutes—he may prefer to get out in the arena and face the audience. If a member desires to interrupt a speaker he asks:

"Will the gentleman yield?"

The gentleman may yield; in which case the time taken for the heckling comes off his schedule. Or he may refuse to yield. Sometimes there are four members on their feet at once all waiting their turn for the gentleman to yield.

At a Call of the House—three bells—all the members are called out by name. This is on what we would call a division. As the names are called each member answers aye or no. If at the end of the count some members may have missed hearing their names in the hubbub they step down in front of the Speaker, who rises and say over and over:

"Was the gentleman in the House and listening?"

If so, he is allowed to register his vote. If not, he is passed up.

"The House—will be—in order!" shouts the Speaker.

Down comes the gavel—whack! five times over.

"Gentlemen, take your seats!"

It is a noisy, democratic assemblage. With less decorum than our Parliament it has much more rigid rules and technic of debate. Members are not per-

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