

REPORTS FROM LABOR
Tuesday, May 2, 1950
Station KRSC; 10:15 pm
Speaker: Jerry Tyler

DISCLAIMER: as previously.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

Last Thursday, all over ~~in~~ the nation in plants of the Westinghouse Electrical Company, an NLRB election was held. Now the contracts for the employees of Westinghouse have been held, for many years, by one union, the United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers of America. Their slogan was one company, one union. Which is a very good idea, as we'll explain in a moment. However the UE, as it's called in labor circles, was recently kicked out of the National CIO. It was one of the biggest international unions in the CIO, one of the most progressive and militant, one of the most democratic, one of the best in the business when it came to organizing the unorganized. Hundreds of thousands of working people of both sexes, of every race creed and color, walked home with better ~~pay~~ paychecks and better conditions on the job every year because of the hard fighting policy of UE. And for many years, UE was one of the hardest fighters, one of the most effective fighters, in bringing the policy of the National CIO from the resolution and paper stage into actual reality.....Then the policy of the National CIO changed. Very abruptly. National CIO began telling, not asking, the rank and file of its affiliated unions what they should do on certain issues. National CIO began using lots of militant words.... and slacking off on the militant action that caused it to grow from an infant into a powerful, widely-respected among working people organization of over six-million members. Incidentally, that happened in about four years time. And today, by the ~~change~~ change in policy, that six million has

shrunk to an actual membership of less than three million.

Now here's what that change in National CIO policy did to the UE...or tried to do, we might say.

The national secretary-treasurer of the CIO is a man named James Carey. For a long time he was president of the UE. Then, along with the rest of the top brass of the CIO, he changed his policy too. Just to show you how far he changed, recently he sat on a platform along with representatives of the national association of manufacturers and some known native fascist organizations and made the statement that while we had joined with the communists in the last war to defeat fascism....we would join with the fascist in the next war to defeat communism.....that's quite a change.....in fact, it was too much of a change for the workers in UE.....they voted him out of office. And at their last convention, a few weeks before the National CIO Convention last year, the UE convention practically booed Mr. Carey out of the Convention hall.....in other words, he was turned down, figuratively kicked in the pants, by his own international union.

Then came the National CIO Convention. The UE was kicked out of the CIO.....and Philip Murray, president of the national CIO, produced a charter for a new electrical workers union.....a union formed on paper for the express purpose....and this is a sad thing to have to report.....for the express purpose not to organize unorganized electrical workers, but to raid those workers already in the UE. And guess who Philip Murray gave that raiding charter to, with the blessings of the National CIO, with the promise of all out support in the raiding spree.....that's right.....he gave it to James Carey, his quote secretary of state unquote....the very man the electrical workers had practically thrown out of their convention hall only a few weeks previously.

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Well, this new quote organizing drive unquote started off with lots of fan fare. Immediately a few scattered locals here and there, controlled by Carey's forces, overwhelmed by national cio publicity.....and with the aid of the local press too.....left UE and joined Carey's IUE. But there weren't many.....and then Carey's gift horse from Uncle Phil began to run into some tough hurdles. Time and again locals of UE turned thumbs down on Carey's outfit.

In Westinghouse came the first big NLRB election. National CIO left no stone unturned and opened the treasury of the national CIO to Carey in the attempt to win this election. The employers in Westinghouse helped all they could.....and that is significant, because if an employer likes a union and actually tries to help it win an election, then look out....that union must be an employers choice.....for example, in Pittsburg, they actually closed down a huge Westinghouse plant the day before the election. so the workers could go to hear Uncle Phil and his boy Jim extoll the doubtful virtues of the raiding IUE.....the meeting, we hear, was a flop.

Now we don't have, as yet, returns on a national scale of these election. However, here in the local Westinghouse plant, local 1002 of UE cast 41 votes.....3 were challenged, 6 were cast for the AFL-IBEW, 32 were UE votes.. and Carey's outfit got not one single vote.

Local 1002 is one of the sponsors of REPORTS FROM LABOR. And the rest of us tip our hats to them.

However, the sad part of all this is the fact that Carey's raiders are bound to win some of the Westinghouse plants on a plant-by-plant basis. And that will end the One Company- One Union status. And that will mean less money in the electrical workers pockets. Because the employer, who is really the only one, outside of a few pie-cards, who will win by this

election, will now be able to play one union against the other....he'll get one union to sign for peanuts and force the other union to accept the same. The employer has accomplished the old divide and rule position....accomplished it, thanks to Philip Murray, James Carey and the rest of the National CIO top brass.

They should feel very proud of themselves. We have our own opinions. Now this old divide and rule business has for many years been holding back the wages and conditions of those ~~unions~~ ^{workers} who make it possible for the Alaska Salmon Industry to make nice fat profits each year. Just take the case of the cannery workers alone, for example. Here we have cannery ~~local~~ workers belonging to three different unions.....this year a fourth has been added although its only on paper.....the Food Tobacco and Agricultural Workers had some locals, the International Fishermen and Allied Workers had some more....and the AFL-SIU had a handful. The Alaska Salmon Industry had a wonderful time playing each of these unions against the other. And again an employer was aided by the National CIO when Roy Atkinson, regional director of the CIO here, asked for and was given a charter for cannery workers under the banner of the United Packinghouse Workers.....for the express purpose of raiding local 7, formerly FTA, representing the non-resident workers, or those workers who live in the states and are shipped north each year.

Now on this Packinghouse Workers local 77 business, this new cannery workers union which the national cio attempted to set up.....lets take a look at it.

To read the press releases sent out from the CIO Regional Directors office, you'd get the impression that members of local 7 were fed up with their leadership, fed up with their union, just crying to join a new union. And you'd get the impression that hundreds of them had already joined the

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new union. But such is not the case. Here's how it happened.

Last year in the elections of local 7, several officials and former officials who were on the ballot were soundly defeated....in a rank and file, secret ballot.....instead of losing like men, they ran to the CIO Regional Director who got a charter for them. The defeated candidates for office, are the present officials of the so-called new union....figure that one out. Just like UE....

Now we charge that the only membership that charter was granted to was that handful of defeated officials.....and here is what we offer for proof.... In the April 10th issue of the California CIO news....a Philip Murray sheet... they openly admit, in so many words, that the new union actually signed a closed shop contract in the Alaska canneries with an oh-so-eager and willing Alaska Salmon Industry....without having any membership....and now must go out and recruit workers to work under the contract.

Speaking of that contract, its small wonder the cannery workers aren't swarming around to join the new union. Because before they had any membership that you couldn't count practically on your fingers, these ousted officials of local 7, accompanied by the CIO Regional Director, went to the Alaska Salmon Industry and signed a contract calling for quote exclusive bargaining rights unquote for some 1500 workers.....and that contract!!.....it gave away the seniority rights of employment, it put the foremen back into power to open the door to the old graft and brutality of the infamous old contract system which cannery workers fought'.... and some died.....to abolish.....

And to show you that the Alaska Salmon Industry isn't slow on the uptake. they also signed the same identical contract, including the so-called exclusive bargaining rights, with the AFL.....and then they refused to talk business with the union which has held the bargaining rights for nearly 14 years.

That's smart business....if they can get away with it....and that is very very doubtful. Because something new has been added. As was reported to you on the last broadcast of REPORTS FROM LABOR, local 7, the true representative of 1500 cannery workers, voted up and down the pacific coast to affiliate with the ILWU.....and the other FTA locals in Alaska are voting on the same proposition this week. That's going to give the raiding parties quite a headache. And, in addition to this, many of the local unions now affiliated with the International Fishermens Union are also on the verge of joining the other cannery workers in the ILWU.....which will mean that the overwhelming majority of cannery workers in the Alaska Salmon Industry will soon belong to one big union of cannery workers.....And when the AFL-SIU cannery workers see this big ILWU cannery workers union in action....well, it won't be too long before they too will shed their affiliation and join the rest. Then the Alaska Salmon Industry will be in a very poor position to try their cute tricks. They won't have three or four unions to play one against the others....and the men and women who pack the salmon in Alaska will be going home with some money in their pockets for a change. Which is as it should be.....and maybe those quote officials unquote of the raiding packinghouse workers will have to go to work for a living.....do them good.

We'd like to give you some idea of what's brewing in this situation..... but we can't right now. We can only tell you this: underneath the surface plans are being made. The pot is boiling. There's a rumbling and grumbling... and unless some contract talk is made by the Alaska Salmon Industry very shortly with the new ILWU cannery workers.....You'll see a rollicking good fight on the waterfront.....just keep your eyes peeled, and we'll give you the yarn as soon as it breaks.

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We had hoped to have a report for you tonight on the strike situation brewing in the lumber industry here in the northwest.....the strike deadline is May 15th.....and we did go down with our recording machine and interview Walt Belka, who is secretary of the Northern Washington District #2 of the International Woodworkers of America.....but, sorry Walt, we fouled up that tape and we'll have to cut a new one. So, we'll make a date with Belka and President Karley Larsen for sometime this week and get a full report for you. Probably have it on next Tuesday's broadcast. If this strike comes off, and it really looks like it will, it will be the first major strike in lumber in this area in nearly 15 years.....we know you'll want to know the ~~score~~....a we'll get the story.

We've got a big stack of mail here and we'd like to write a personal letter to each person who has written to us. But that's impossible. No office staff, and just too many letters for us to write alone....too much and too little time.....so what we propose to do is make our replies over **REPORTS FROM LABOR**, taking a few letters at a time till we get caught up. We'll grab a handful right now.

→ Here's one from Kent, Washington. We, my husband and I, enjoy your broadcasts very much and try to hear all of them. My husband is a marine engineer and says your broadcasts are the gospel truth. Signed Mr. & Mrs. R. Simpson.

→ Mr. & Mrs. B. Cox write: My husband and I have been steady listeners to your program for some months and though there have been times when we could not agree, we find your program very informative and worthwhile. We feel station KRSC should be proud to allow a program such as yours to continue, your delivery is good and your views stimulate thought.

→ And here's one we got a big lift from....It's from Audrey Admas,

who signs herself as a student of Roosevelt High. She says: I heard your program for the first time to-night and I intend to listen often in the future. I most certainly do think your time on the air should continue. What we need is more opportunity to hear labor's views. People who do not like this free speech are contributing to fascism, and it is they who are wrong.....thanks, Audrey, as long as the coming generation takes an interest in labor...our nation will need have little fear about the future.

Here's one we'll have to comment on. It reads: It is with deep regret that I am sending this correspondence. It is in regards to your Labor Program that is broadcast semi-weekly by a most competent commentator. I am voicing the opinion that he should be allowed to broadcast the views and facts and present them to the radio audience without your tight censorship holding him down to the minimum as you see fit and only to your egotistical advantage. Signed, a constant listener of KRSC programs, George Taylor.....Now we sincerely appreciate your support, friend but we've got to differ with you on this censorship business. Just man to man, and purely on the level, we want to tell you this: We are under no censorship from station KRSC...as long as we don't use profanity, or become vulgar, or say anything that is actually libel.....we say just what we please. We're not conning you a bit. We know censorship such as you describe is a common practice.....but on the level, we get none of it from KRSC. Thanks for your letter.

Walter Alexander writes: If labor has a true friend, it is REPORTS FROM LABOR. By all that is decent to democracy, please keep it on KRSC.

Gladys Young says: Certainly REPORTS FROM LABOR should have the opportunity to stay on the air. I appreciate the information on this program and the way it is presented is excellent. On a few occasions I have had some differences of opinion, generally feeling the situation called for more drastic action than proposed by the program.

Here's an interesting one: Mr. O.M. Pettibone writes: I agree with most of your statements and policies. I certainly believe your program should continue on the air. I would believe that even if I was not in agreement, as a right to be heard is the democratic way. When every liberal thought is branded communism and thus silenced, we will have fascism with us for certain. Being a white collar worker I have never had the privilege of belonging to a union, but have always believed in its principles, if not always agreeing with some of its leadership.

Mrs. Helen Nelson writes: I and my family listen regularly to Jerry Tyler on Maritime News and not only enjoy it immensely but derive a great deal of worthwhile information from the program. He covers a wide range of issues and topics which touch and influence our everyday lives in a most satisfactory informal style. His coverage of the Bridges trial was the only public source where we could get a full story of the trial and events leading up to it. I urge you not to deny his program the air, under any circumstances. On the contrary, it would be even better to place the program on earlier time in the evening, somewhere between 8 and 9 o'clock.

Thanks for the kind words, Mrs. Nelson, but let's make it clear that this speaker is not REPORTS FROM LABOR.....it is not this speaker's program. The program, REPORTS FROM LABOR, is the property of sixteen AFL, CIO and Independent Unions.....they make the news, they call the shots....this speaker only does the job of bringing the reports to you. On this change of time business, when we started on KRSC this was the only time they had available.

As soon as a better time is open, we'll bid for it. We agree 10:15 is a little late.

Speaking of time, ours is up. We'll answer more letters Thursday night, along with more labor news. So until then, good night and thanks for listening.

REPORTS FROM LABOR
Tuesday, July 11
Station KRSC
Speaker: Jerry Tyler (TAPE TRANSCRIPTION)

DISCLAIMER: as previously

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. We were walking down the street yesterday morning and ran into a couple of guys we used to ship with. Both men are aliens, both members of the National Union of Marine Cooks and Stewards. Now it happened that shortly before that we'd been reading an article about Congress recent failure to extend the Alien Workers Act which would have permitted alien seamen ~~from~~ to continue on subsidized freighters. So we started talking to these two seamen about this deal and they pointed out how tough it was going to be for them to get a ship from now on. One of them said, in parting, the only time they want us is during a war.....and he pointed to a news headline on a paper stand nearby. We were okay during the war, he said, but during peace time they toss us in the ash can.

~~the morning~~ We got to thinking about what he'd said. Heroes during war time....in the ash can during peace years. He was right, not only about alien seamen, but about all seamen.

Long as we're speaking about war, how many of you looked at that map in Saturday's Times to see if you were theoretically dead from that theoretical atomic bombing Seattle experienced? Some people are making quite a joke about it. But it's far from funny. Because while the map, ringed with lettered circles around the two theoretical atomic explosions, only talked about buildings destroyed.....it doesn't paint the picture about the people who wander in and around those buildings earning their morning hot cakes.....nor about the women and children in those areas who would have been burned and killed in their homes.

We recall a few years back hearing one of the scientists who had worked on the atomic bomb make a speech. And we remember very vividly his words: I am a very badly frightened man, he said. I do not sleep well at night. I am terrified when I think of the ghastly form of destruction we have brought into existence.

He's a man who knows.

And we remember that newsreel that was shown around the country entitled One World....or None.

And we recall scientist after scientists, back in the days when scientists could speak up without being condemned as subversives and hounded into silence, we remember these scientists telling us that there was no such thing as a secret about the atomic bomb.

For our money, it is stupid to say that we are the only nation with atomic bombs.

And this fact should make us all stop and think. Because there is death....wholesale, blinding, almost unbelievable amounts of death in that fact. Remember, if one nation uses an atomic bomb....others may be forced to use them too to prevent total extermination.

That means world wide slaughter the likes of which we have never known. That could mean setting civilization back hundreds of years. It most certainly would mean a stunning, deadly thing to every man, woman and child in the world.

Now we fully realize that it is unpopular, especially at this time, to speak about outlawing the atomic bomb. That has been labeled a plot of the Kremlin by a lot of politicians and newspapers. But that's all right, we don't mind being unpopular. It's unpopular to ask for better wages and conditions too. And life is far more important than even wages and conditions when you come right down to it.

So we say flatly that we are in favor of outlawing the

atomic bomb. Not just in this country, but in every nation in the world. And it can be done.

If you doubt that.....how much poison gas was used in the last war? Talk to some of the veterans of the first world war. Ask them about poison gas. Or, better yet and far more educational, visit a veterans hospital where men who were gassed over thirty years ago still suffer.

Poison gas was a weapon of wholesale slaughter too. Before the war ended, gas shells were being used. And gas bombs were being perfected. Gas bombs which could have been dropped on cities, bringing agonizing death to hundreds of thousands.

The people of the world recognized how horrible poison gas could be. And they rose up en mass and they told the war makers to outlaw the use of poison gas. And because the people spoke up....probably millions are alive today who would not have been alive otherwise.

The same thing can be done today with a far more horrible weapon, the atomic bomb. We personally, have signed a petition calling for the outlawing of the atomic bomb. We didn't do it on orders from the Kremlin, ~~either~~. We did it because we didn't want our three-and-a-half year old daughter, and millions more like her all over the world, to be killed by the atomic bomb in a war which she had no part in causing.

This is serious business, this messing around with a weapon that can kill thousands of people in one blinding explosion. We don't let kids play with loaded guns. Let's don't let nations play with atomic bombs. Outlaw them. Speak up. It's better to be called names today....than blasted to bits or burned to a crisp tomorrow.

We want to get off that subject. It gives us nightmares. But you might just run your eyes over that map in Saturday's Times again. And see death....instead of just circles on a piece of paper.

~~It's a shame, and we should be punched in the nose for it,~~
but we didn't make a broadcast about Bloody Thursday.

Bloody Thursday. That's July 5th, the day when seamen and longshoremen and others all over the world bow their heads for a moment and thank those who bled and died to build maritime unions. That's the day which, 16 years ago, turned the tide in the big maritime strike of 1934. That's the day Nick Bordoise and Howard Sperry were shot down in San Francisco.

We can't tell you the whole story here. We can't begin to tell you. But if you want to read as realistic, as graphic a word-picture of it as we have seen in years, get hold of a book called The Big Strike. You can get it from the Marine Cooks, the longshoremen or the warehousemen unions we know. It only costs one buck.....and after you read it, you'll understand a lot of things about seamen and longshoremen.....and labor unions in general....that you didn't understand before.

This book was written by a guy named Mike Quinn. It was written only a couple of years after the big strike, and it was written from eye-witness experience. Mike did a real job on it. The Big Strike will tell you far more about Bloody Thursday than we can.

There seems to be a few people around who still do not know what the strike of the International Woodworkers of America, CIO, against the giant Weyerhaeuser Corporation is all about. So we'll tell you.

The IWA negotiating committee, after a series of meetings with local unions and local union delegates, submitted demands to the employers, one of whom was Weyerhaeuser. One of the big demands, that is, one of the most important, was the request for a decent health and welfare plan. Not a pension plan, mind you, but a welfare plan that would protect the worker today.....

Now in the past years, Weyerhaeuser has always been the most powerful figure in the Pacific Northwest lumber industry negotiations. It has been the firm that wrote the ticket as far as the other operators were concerned. It used to suck the other firms into fighting Weyerhaeuser's battles for Weyerhaeuser. But this year things were different. This year the other


operators have made satisfactory settlements with the IWA's Northwest Regional Negotiating Committee. But Weyerhauser hung tough.

Weyerhauser hung tough against some men who know how to hang tough themselves. The result? A strike eight weeks hld now. And still solid.

The demands of the union are well within reason. They are demands that the men are entitled to, demands the Weyerhauser Corporation could well afford to pay. For example, during the first three months of this year, Weyerhauser picked up a neat profit of \$5,938,112. Compare this with their profit during the entire year of 1939, considered a good business year. They pulled about \$800,000 more profit in the first three months of this year than during the entire year of 1939. They can pay.

Now you've seen some news stories every so often about this local or that in the IWA threatening to pull a back to work move.... threatening the break the strike. But don't you worry about it. We talked to some of the active strike leaders yesterday and they told us the score. They said that here and there Weyerhauser had found a handfull of blue eyes, stooges, who issued some press rñleases and tried to start a back to work movement. But they were knocked all out of shape by the membership.

We're having a little trouble pinning a spokesman of the IWA down to get him to tell you the story of the strike.....and we still intend to go over to Everett and let the boys of IWA local 101 give you the lowdown....but we've been in Astoria on the fishermen's union beef, and have to go right back. As soon as we get loose from that, we'll hit for Everett and get a broadcast for you. Incidentally, we remember the fine meal we had during the convention of IWA Northern Washington District #2 a few months back. In fact, we told you about it. That meal was prepared by the Ladies Auxiliary. Well, a report has come to us that the ladies have taken over in the IWA hall in Everett, put a bunch of the boys to work and half filled the place with food. Nice going, ladies.



Speaking of this beef down in Astoria, where the National CIO boys are as busy as little beavers trying to split up a union that was founded in 1886, reminds us of a letter we've meant to read for some time now. It's a letter written to Phil Murray, President of the CIO, and Allan Haywood, Director of Organization of the CIO. This letter was written by a man named Michael Clune, a National CIO Representative. It's dated April 23, 1950. And it reads as follows:

Dear Phil and Allan: Sixteen years ago, I helped found the CIO Transport Workers Union. For the past ten years I have worked with you as CIO National Representative for Buffalo and Western New York.

During that period, when CIO did not permit raiding or union splitting, we grew to over six million members. CIO then organized, instead of disorganizing. Millions of workers got better wages, improved their working conditions and enjoyed a more secure life. CIO was not the tool of any political party, nor did we permit any differences to destroy our labor unity. When our enemies called even you and Phil a "red", you said, "if they're calling us 'reds' it means we're doing a good job."

Under your direction, we have been instructed to devote all our time, energy and CIO money to disorganizing and splitting existing organized unions....for the past six months, we CIO National Representatives have had the distasteful task of splitting unions, asking employers to cancel their contracts with other unions, collaborating to break strikes, and even engage in scab-herding, as in the case of the Leather Workers Strike in New York State.

My full time job, at your direction, has been to raid the UE at Westinghouse in Buffalo, split other unions, red-bait those who worked with us to build CIO and use other tactics the bosses have used against us for the past 16 years. Is it any wonder then, as you know, that CIO has lost three million members?

After 16 years of working together with you, I do not find it easy to leave the once great CIO. However, in good conscience I cannot devote the next few years of my life to undoing the hard work we all put into organizing with our fellow American workers for better conditions. I have concluded that it is impossible for me to serve the best interests of union men and women and at the same time carry out your union-splitting and other CIO orders. I am therefore hereby tendering my resignation, effective immediately, in order that I may again live with my conscience and honestly face the many CIO members I have worked with in the past years..

Well, Mike Clune isn't the only one who feels that way about the once-great CIO. There's lots more just like him. One of these days there will be enough.....and the CIO will again be great.....with new leadership.

Looks like our time is about up. We'll finish transcribing this, get two hours sleep and grab a plane out of here for Astoria, where the national CIO has just announced an invitation to all cannery workers in the Columbia River to join what is supposed to be known as the Columbia River Cannery and Allied Workers Local Industrial Union #1747. The real union down there, founded in 1886, and, we expect, will outlive by many years this raiding outfit, is named the Columbia River Fishermens Protective Union. It has organized both fishermen and cannery workers. But the new outfit says, we welcome fishermen, but since they are independent operators it is rather hard to see exactly how fishermen would fit into an industrial union.

Once again the merry-go-round starts. Once again the national CIO is out to split a union.

Gee, remember the good old days when CIO meant organizing workers, fighting for wages and conditions?

~~Just in passing.....the recent action of the ILMU
international executive board in calling for conferences of those unions now
in disfavor with national CIO officials.~~

REPORTS FROM LABOR
Tuesday, August 1, 1950
Station KRSC; 10:15 pm
Speaker: Jerry Tyler (TAPE TRANSCRIPTION)

DISCLAIMER: as previously.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Last night we had one of the most interesting experiences we've ever had. All day long, between yawns, we've been thinking about. In fact, it was so interesting that we'd like to share it with you. So, pull up a seat and listen.....and we'll take you gill netting on the Columbia River.

You'll recall that on/ our last broadcast we told you about a big fisherman who got such a tremendous boot out of our "fox pass"...that's the Iowa version of faux pas meaning we pulled a boner.....regarding the term "boat puller." We discovered it wasn't a piece of gear, but was a helper on a fishing boat. Well, as we told you, this fisherman, who's name is Phil Lasich, invited us to go fishing some night. And last night we went.

The big salmon run hasn't started down here yet, but the real fishermen along the river, guys who make their living at the trade, have been picking up a sort of haphazard living on the few salmon who have been coming in ahead of time, ~~sort of~~ like people looking for good seats at the ball game, maybe.

So, last night at 6:45 Henry Niemela, secretary of the Columbia River Fishermen's Protective Union, drove us down to what they call the net racks. This is a big wide platform like a dock, on high pilings over the water, boats tied in between, long racks on the deck where the fishermen stretch and dry and repair their nets.

It was a nice clear day with a fair breeze. And the first thing that struck us was a sort of lonely, empty feeling. There was a weird, rhythmic chorus of what we first thought might be sea gulls practicing for some new kind of a concert. But we soon discovered it was the squeak of

pulleys thru which the mooring lines of the fishing boats were tied. They have them on a pulley and weight rig which allows the boats to rise and fall with the tide and the wake caused by passing boats and ships.

A guy named Chuck showed us where we would find Phil Lasich and we climbed down a ladder and into the boat. It was a 28 foot fishing boat. There were no mahogany decks nor fancy brass rails, but she had a good sound hull with nice lines and a fine Kermath marine engine. It looked like a very capable boat, built for work. Phil told us he rented the boat from the CRPA cannery outfit. In turn he has to sell all his catch to the CRPA.

We nosed her around the end of the net rack, stopped to fill the water tank and then "crossed the creek" as they say. Actually we went across the Columbia River to the northern channel, swinging way down river to miss the sandbars which come up at low tide. It was a ride of over ~~6~~⁷~~2~~ miles.

We ~~hit~~^{had} a little motor trouble. The temperature gauge suddenly shot up past the 212 mark and Phil had to go inside to work on it. And then.... if you think we didn't feel very very professional and important and all that, standing there at the wheel keeping her nose pointed toward a buoy on the other side ^{of} the river! One of those "thrills of a lifetime" things, you know.

Phil Lasich decided there was an air lock in the water lines, so he bled them. And the old girl cooled down right away. This reoccurred several times during the night, however.

"We're in no hurry anyway," said Phil. He pointed to the water and said: "clear water. No use "laying out" until it gets dark." Later we found that fish can see the net, duck it, and run. So they wait till it's dark or the water is murky enough. Then Mr. Salmon comes along, pokes his head thru one of the openings in the net and his gills get caught and he stays put till you pull him out. Hence the name, gill net.

Getting real smart, aren't we?

Across the sandbar we headed back up river into what Phil called the Blind Channel fishing grounds. About a dozen boats were already there, with another half dozen strung out behind us on their way up. The engine acted up again and Phil ducked inside, showing us a point to aim at. Well, he was in there quite a while and we passed a boat with a line stretched out behind it. Then we saw the floats of his net stretching across our bows. They were pretty close, so we heeled her over to run alongside the line of floats, figuring we might get the screw all fouled up in the net. Phil popped out of the cabin, saw what we'd done and grinned. "Go over 'em," he said. "We've got guard bars on." So, over the net we went.

We passed several other boats who already had their nets in the water before Phil came out of the cabin again. He took the wheel and we kind of prowled thru the fleet of boats with Phil yelling at nearly every one. It was then that we found he had begun fishing when he was 16 years old. This means about 15 years fishing at least. There are five of the Lasich family fishing on the Columbia, his father and uncle have fished for years "bringing the trade over from the old country" as Phil says, and he also has two other brothers in the game.

We pulled along another fisherman named Matt Storey, chatted for awhile and then Phil said "we'll lay out up above you." So off we went again. Suddenly Phil idled the motor and went up to the well deck up forward. He came back with a wooden keg painted a bright orange and with a little light attached to it. He also brought along a piece of line which was attached to the net piled up in the well deck. He hooked the end of the line onto the keg float and dropped it over the side.

Then the fun began. We saw then why the gear shift, a length of lead pipe, stuck up in the middle of the little aft end cockpit. We saw what is called a "lay-out" made by an expert. We've seen people work fast.... but last night we really saw something. This Lasich guy threw that net over

out behind us in a long line as we cruised along. Tossing with both hands, jerking and hauling like a madman sometimes to keep it from fouling up. About half the time he stood on one foot, his other foot kicking the gear shift into forward, hauling it back into neutral or reverse. Coordination? Indeed! He handled that boat as easily as we walk.

1200 feet of good net went over the side. The floats made a long dotted line back to the keg float which soon lay about a quarter mile behind us. The lead on the bottom pulled the net down. And there it hung, 1200 feet long and 30 feet deep. Everynow and then Phil, without stopping hardly, grabbed a sounding line to measure the distance to the bottom. We stood back to one side out of the way with our mouths hanging open.

When the net was all paid out, Phil kicked the engine into neutral. He bent the trailing end of the net line around a cleat and looked back along the line of bobbers. "Got some new net on there," he said. "First time it's ever been in the water." We asked him what it cost, because a fisherman's gear is his working capital you know, and he said casually "I got 1200 bucks sunk right there."

Well, he fastened the net line onto another float. Then he nearly made us jump out of the boat. There was 1200 bucks floating in that water. We thought he'd gone nuts, because he calmly flipped the other float over the side, threw the engine into forward gear, slapped the throttle.... and away we roared! Leaving 1200 dollars floating in the water behind us.

We commented on this and Phil had another good laugh for himself. Seems that is a common practice. Make your lay out, then go visiting.

We tied up to Matt Storey's boat. He had a little gasoline stove going and the coffee pot was boiling. So, we went aboard. "We hit it just right, said Matt. Good low tide, plenty of show. We oughta have a real good drift."

We finally got that language interpreted. By "plenty of show" he meant plenty of room between the nets in the river. Many times during the

big run, these men told me, so many boats were on the river that sometimes you had a tough time finding room to make a lay-out, then nets got tangled and a good time is had by all. By a good "drift", Matt meant that these nets, hanging down like a screen 1200 feet long and 30 feet deep, floated, or drifted, down the river with the current. Then you "pick-up" and go back up river for another lay-out and drift.

Well, we sat there drinking coffee black enough to float a silver dollar, with the sun sinking. Across the river and down a little were the lights of Astoria. Up river just a ways we could see that grim sight....the bone yard.....where hundreds of good merchant ships lay dead, covered with red lead.....Then suddenly the biggest, roundest, brilliant orange colored moon we've ever seen jumped into the sky. The wind fell, the water gurgled under the hull, glistening as the orange moon rose. Just chewing the fat, the world at peace. It was a really wonderful feeling.

Pretty soon Phil said: Well, if there's any fish in the river we should make a haul tonight. And Matt replied: Right. But you can't catch what's not there to be caught.

Then we climbed back aboard our boat to "run the net." Phil picked up our keg float, which we'd have never found, put a spot light on the row of floats and we cruised down the length of our net. We found the far end had turned, so we hooked onto ~~it~~ and towed it cross river to straighten it out. It reminded us of a farmer going down a row of his corn looking it over to see how it was growing.

We sat around and talked for awhile, then Phil said, well it's flood now, we might as well pick-up. And then ^{we} saw how fishermen get that way....tough ^{we} mean.....He pulled on hip boots, then a wide, all-the-way round apron made of rubber and went up forward. Up in the bow there's another set of controls and a deal called a live drum. This drum revolves something like a winch drum, driven by the engine. However you only slide the net over this drum, it helps a little, but it's muscles that pulls in that wet, heavy net.

We sat around in the little cabin till about 2 in the morning, then went up river a ways and made another lay-out.

Now we weren't going to tell this part, but we might as well. We conked out. We didn't mean to, we just laid down on the little bunk in the nice warm cabin to rest a minute or two. The next thing we knew the roar of the engine woke us up. Phil had made the drift and the pick-up while we were asleep! When he opened her up to head for home the roar brought us back to life. After all, that big engine was practically in our laps!

He'd pulled two more fish out of the net. One about 25 pounds the other he thought might hit 35.

A hard nights work and 85 pounds of fish to show for it. At 20 cents a pound.....seventeen dollars. He'd worked part of the day getting his gear in shape. We'd boarded the boat at 6:45 that night and it was six that morning when we climbed the ladder at the net rack. Easily a 14 hour day. Risking 1200 dollars worth of net. Paying out boat rent and gas money.

We figured it out, standing there in the cockpit roaring for home. And we made a comment on the fact that to us that didn't look like very good wages.

Phil shrugged and said: We get seven months fishing a year. One month, August, is a good month. That's when the salmon run. The rest of the months are what we call hit or miss months. On the average, we make maybe about as much as the average unskilled worker makes on the beach.

So we asked him: This racket looks too tough for us. Why do you stay?

He thought it over for awhile. Then he squared his shoulders and threw his head back and grinned a grin that spoke volumes. Phil Lasich, fisherman, said: "I got in because I grew up in it. I stay in...well..... No boss....No time-clock."

That's our story. We wish you could have been along.