

## It Seems to Me

Roosevelt Interest in Coal Companies  
Poses Questions as to Method of Operation



NEW YORK, Dec. 6.—Among the properties and sources of income of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and members of the Delano family there were and, as to some individuals, there still are a coal mine and company town called Vintondale, in Cambria County, Pa.

Frederic Delano, of Washington, an uncle of the late President, and numerous other Delanos, still have financial interests in the properties. Frederic Delano was chairman of the National Resources Planning Board, with offices in the State Dept. from 1934 to 1943, when he retired.

This board is a radical New Deal agency. Its purposes, according to analysis by some opponents, who may be prejudiced, include compulsory insurance "against every hazard from womb to tomb" and a "mixed economy" whereby union agents would first participate in the management of privately owned properties and, eventually, would control the properties entirely.

Uncle Frederic was born in China, the son of Warren Delano, the old Canton opium smuggler, who founded the Delano fortune in this trade, and a brother of the late Sara Delano Roosevelt, the mother of Franklin D. He is one of a dozen relatives in whom President Roosevelt recognized abilities of value to the public and appointed to salaried positions. Ironically, Uncle Frederic's biography reveals that he served for a time as chairman "of the international commission of the League of Nations on inquiry into the production of opium in Persia."

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THUS far my inquiries have not revealed the extent of the late President's income from the Vintondale coal properties. That he was interested was established, by a letter on White House stationery, dated June 29, 1942, and signed by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. "Mr. Delano is my husband's uncle," the letter said, "but my husband sold all interest in these holdings and, therefore, he could do nothing."

This letter was a reply to one from a man claiming to hold \$40,000 in mortgage bonds on the property who believed he was being treated unfairly and that the conduct of the company toward its obligations violated some of Roosevelt's professed principles.

The claimant's bonds were depreciated to negligible value while a sales company called the Delano Coal Co., with offices in New York, was receiving a big income for acting as agent to sell the

coal. The mining company, itself, was having serious financial difficulties.

Sharp complaint was made concerning the financial practices employed but a letter which the claimant says he received from Frederic Delano, from the address "220 State Dept. Bldg., Washington," defended the commissions paid to the sales company. It said that, obviously, "there can be no income from the property except by sales, and I see no obligation on the part of anyone to conduct such sales service without compensation. It is only by reason of advances made by the Delano Coal Co. that the Vinton colliery has been able to operate at all."

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ON MARCH 19, 1940, the Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph published a story from Vintondale accompanied by a photograph showing "miners who woke up this morning to find Vinton Collieries Corp. had shut down the mines and departed without paying \$30,000 in wages. They can do nothing except sit and hope the company will come back. Behind them is the company store. In it is locked 700 pounds of meat, the main supply of the town. They are determined the company will not remove this food."

The text of the story, signed by Arthur Moore, said "imminent shutdown of their power supply today threatened 500 miners' families with blackout nights, schoolless days and irreparable damage to the Vinton Collieries Corp. mine.

"Abrupt closing of the mine left most of the town's 1750 inhabitants without money for food, cut off their supplies at the company store and gave them no hint when the miners will get \$30,000 due them in wages."

Further, Moore's story said, Walter G. Morris, a local public official, charged that "the company moved 86 cars of coal secretly out of the Blacklick Valley. They were in a hurry. And to see that nothing stopped the cars they brought three auto-loads of police. When the cars were leaving the valley the company blocked all the telephone lines so that we couldn't call out."

The story quoted Joe Lutsko, a Vintondale miner, as saying "there is enough food in town but you need cash to get it. We have only 50 pounds of flour and \$2 worth of canned milk in the house." Mrs. Lutsko was quoted as having remarked: "We can't let the children starve and we won't. Our youngest must have milk. The company store has meat spoiling while we stand in want."

"The food problem is so acute,"

Mr. Moore wrote, "that the Department of Public Assistance (poor relief) has already given emergency orders to 70 families. John Biondo, president of the United Mine Workers, local, said he tried unsuccessfully to get food at the company store and charge it against the wages due the miners. He said Superintendent Brandon contacted the company's offices in New York and was denied permission to distribute about 700 pounds of meat and groceries in the store."

ON APRIL 19, the Johnstown Democrat published six photographs under the caption "Apples on Easter Sunday—Meat Goes to Waste." The text below said: "Vintondale miners, out of work since March 14, ate raisins, apples and corn meal Easter Sunday, thanks to the Federal Surplus Commodities Corp., while large quantities of food including beef, ham and bacon, reposed in the company store, owned and operated by the Vinton Colliery Co.

"Notwithstanding the fact that Vintondale miners offered to purchase the meat and pay out of wages already earned, company officials allowed the meat to rot. Wednesday, employees of a rendering company were called to haul away the food, unfit for consumption. Wives and children of local miners stood by."

On May 1, 1943, when a coal strike elsewhere was threatening, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt wrote in her column: "I realize that by the end of the week many a miner owes the company store almost more than he has earned. And, in the past, company store prices have been higher in many places than the prices in other nearby neighborhoods. I think it essential that these men be protected from the abuses which company stores and company towns have brought about for many years."

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## Dice Game Is Raided At Court Hotel Again

Police records told the same old story again today — another dice game had been raided at the Court Hotel, 111 E. Sixth.

Police plainclothesmen arrested the game operator and seven players at the hotel where Halloween bandits robbed persons in a gambling room lounge room before going downstairs where they robbed Sheriff Dusty Rhodes and others.

Other dice raids were made in the 2400 block of N. Main, 3900 block of Hemphill and 1000 block of Main. Nineteen arrests were made in addition to those at the Court.