

Orbit Practice Set For Fliers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The space agency said here the first manned rocket flight building up to full fledged project Mercury orbits will be short range missions launched by Army Redstone ballistic missiles.

One of the seven Mercury Astronauts will ride a Project Mercury space capsule up to the fringes of space perhaps 20 or 25 miles above the earth and back down again a few miles from the Cape Canaveral, Fla., launching site, in a matter of seconds.

These tentative probes will be preliminary steps toward the more ambitious ventures.

A spokesman for the National

Aeronautics and Space Administration said the Redstone-launched manned sub-orbital flights in turn will lead to unmanned medium range flights, with animal subjects, launched by Thor and Jupiter type missiles.

He said these medium range flights will not involve manned launchings.

The spokesman said there will be no Project Mercury launchings of manned capsules over ICBM range.

He explained that there would be no point in firing a man from an Atlas ICBM on a 30-minute trajectory to a hazardous landing in the south Atlantic near Ascen-

Record Auto Sales Brighten Economic Scene But Steel Situation Appears Gloomy

By WALTER BREEDE JR.

NEW YORK (AP)—Rising profits, booming production and the beginnings of a spring upsurge in auto sales kept the economy roaring along at a record clip last week.

Strike clouds darkened the steel picture.

As steel labor and steel management squared off for the coming battle over wage negotiations, 12 of the nation's top steelmakers proposed a one-year freeze on wages after present contracts expire June 30.

The United Steelworkers Union said "no."

The steel companies said they wanted to freeze because it would combat inflation, unemployment and foreign competition, create greater stability in the steel industry, and calm the frantic surge of hedge buying that has kept the mills humming at more than 90 per cent of capacity in recent weeks.

Much of the present steel boom has been attributed to frenzied stocking up by consumers against the possibility of a strike that would cut off supplies in July.

But President David McDonald of the steelworkers termed the proposal "a publicity stunt meant to confuse our members and the American public." The industry, he said, "has chosen to employ this strategem because before the month is out it will be embarrassed by record riches which it can neither explain nor conceal."

United States Steel Corp. and Bethlehem Steel Corp. — Biggest of the nation's steelmakers — are scheduled to come out with earnings

on Island, the far end of the ICBM test range—when the same launching mechanism would put the capsule into an earth orbit at satellite speeds.

The seven nominees for the first ride in space—all jet test pilots in their 30s and all family men—were named Thursday.

ings reports during the last week in April.

Washington Beseiged

Other rumblings of labor-management strife were heard in Washington last week. Some 7,000 unionists at an unemployment rally cheered when speakers called for massive job-creating programs or denounced Republicans and President Eisenhower.

But there was applause, too, when the President's Secretary of Labor, James P. Mitchell, promised to "eat that hat you said I was talking through" if unemployment doesn't fall below three million next fall.

Meanwhile the administration, confident that it had something to boast about, called a special news conference to report its latest job figures. The box score: March employment climbed 1,106,000 over the February total to 63,828,000. Unemployment dropped 387,000 to 4,360,000.

The decline in unemployment was the largest February — to March dip since 1950. What's more, government economists said, most of those who found work were fathers with families to support.

But critics said the total of jobless was still too high for comfort.

Stock Market Pauses

The stock market boom took a breather after the government and the New York Stock Exchange told investors to beware of phony tips. Stock sales totaled 15,525,109

shares compared with 15,642,380 in the previous week and 10,373,640 shares in the same week last year.

Bond sales had a par value of \$31,224,000 in the latest week against \$31,951,000 for the week before and \$25,279,400 for the corresponding 1958 week.

Car Sales Pace Boom

The government toted up the score on manufacturers' sales for the last three months of 1958—and it was never better. Rebounding swiftly from recession lows, sales increased seven per cent to a record \$91,700,000,000. New car sales paced the rise.

The sales gain sparked a 22 per cent jump in manufacturers' profits which totaled four billion dollars after taxes.

Briefly over the business scene: Department store sales in the first week after Easter slid 13 per cent below the year-ago week. Easter was one week later in 1958.

Ford Motor Co. researchers have developed a lightweight, supercharged gas turbine engine that packs 300 horsepower. It will

fit under the hood of a Ford car with room to spare.

American Motors' Rambler made the best showing in the Mobilgas economy run, averaging 25.29 miles per gallon.

The widow of financier Robert R. Young, Mrs. Anita O'Keefe Young, was nominated for a seat on the Allegheny Corp. board of directors. Allegheny controls the New York Central Railroad.

Scientists at the Los Alamos, N.M., laboratory of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission scored a major breakthrough in the power field — the direct conversion of atomic heat into electricity.

The market for new railroad cars is coming to life again — Chesapeake & Ohio Railway placed a \$2,500,000 order with ACF Industries Inc. this week for 250 box cars.

Major producers cut prices of Venezuelan crude oil 5 to 15 cents a barrel to keep in step with lower prices of Middle East crude.

General Motors Corp. attorney's coined a new phrase for the government's anti-trust investigation: "A politically inspired fishing expedition."

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