

EDITORIAL PAGE

La Grande Evening Observer

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Page Two

Cross-Roads of the War



EVENING OBSERVER'S PROGRESS PROGRAM
IRRIGATION—Complete the Grande Ronde Valley irrigation project.
LA GRANDE — A city of 10,000 — Extend the city limits.

TODAY'S TEXT

Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon.—I Kings 1:12.

Death Sentence of the Manpower Bill

One sentence out of the thousands in James F. Byrnes's latest report to the president and congress seems to have given the coup de grace to the dying manpower bill. That was the one in which the director of war mobilization and reconversion urged the bill's passage not only for war production, but for producing essential civilian goods and "later, to facilitate reconversion."

The bill was already drowning in a flood of diluted amendments and compromises tending to render it ineffective as well as unworkable. It only needed an ill-advised remark in an otherwise excellent document to push it down for the last time.

Even Senator Johnson of Colorado, who helped write the compromise bill, said he wouldn't vote for it after Mr. Byrnes's suggestion. He or one of his colleagues might have offered an amendment to limit the duration and nature of the bill's provisions, and avoided the "reconversion" possibilities. But, toward the end, many of the people's representatives seemed to be looking for the nearest exit from the whole subject of manpower.

But the argument for a bill to draft manpower for essential production is as

valid as ever. After Germany's defeat there will still be a major war to be fought and won, and most of our able-bodied soldiers and sailors will be needed to fight and win it.

The recommendation that manpower control extend to the wartime reconversion of essential civilian production is sound, if by essential Mr. Byrnes means such things as trucks, busses, automobiles, farm machinery, tires and similar items whose lack would hamper the war's prosecution.

Conscription of industrial manpower for military production is undemocratic by peacetime standards. But that is not to deny that it is as necessary as conscription for military service in time of crisis. However, it should be limited to the time of crisis. Industrial conscription has no place in the normal American economy.

That is why the suggestion of manpower control "to facilitate reconversion" has a disquieting sound, even though the suggestion is unlikely to find approval in the present congress or the general public. For it is symptomatic of a type of thinking found in certain branches of government.

General reconversion will come with the end of the war. The problem then will be to create peacetime jobs, not to control and ration manpower like a scarce commodity. The only apparent reason for wishing such control would be a lack of faith in the ability of private enterprise to create those jobs, or an unwillingness to give private enterprise the chance.

In wartime every American has the duty to serve where he can do the most good. But in peacetime he has the right to seek the type of work he prefers, and to live where he chooses. Private enterprise applies to workers as well as employers. The proposed manpower freeze during the reconversion period would have denied workers their freedom of choice.

Funny Business



Grandpa's experimenting—he had his beard transplanted!

SO THEY SAY

We are joined together now in a common purpose, and we must remain so joined in order to preserve for ourselves, and for many others as well, the peace for which we fight.

—Sir Gerald Campbell, British Minister to the U. S.

From now on everyone must provide for himself. We are in a position where every square yard of soil must be tilled, every waste lot must be used to grow food—even every flower pot.

German Food Ministry spokesman

What we have done to Germany we are going to do to Japan. The payoff will be the same. We are going to use the same overwhelming air power.

—AAF Gen. Henry H. Arnold.

It is against all traditions of our policy to allow unity among the great powers to become a means to bully the smaller.

—British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden.

Washington Merry-Go-Round

By DREW PEARSON

WASHINGTON — Despite the increasing U. S. meat shortage, it remains unpublished but actual fact that 2,000,000 pounds of Argentine canned beef has been sitting serenely in Mexico for two years awaiting admission into the U. S. and because of British-American red tape, it is still sitting there.

So far no government officials have been able or willing to cut the red tape and permit this canned beef to cross the Rio Grande northward. It is among the choicest corned beef ever produced in Argentina and there is no sanitary restriction against it. Only red tape keeps it out.

Late in 1942, one year after the war started, the SS Rio De La Plata steamed into Manzanita, Mexico, carrying a cargo of 2,000,000 pounds of canned Argentine beef. It was shipped by the Argentine meat cooperative composed of 50,000 Argentine cattlemen. At that time no permit was required to import meat into the U. S. by Mexico overland.

However, just as the ship was about to enter Mexican waters, the British were given the right to be the exclusive purchasing agent of all surplus Argentine meat for the United States and the Allies. This meant the U. S. government could not purchase any Argentine meat. Although we supply the cash, all meat is bought through the British.

Hush Manufacturers Fume
 Meanwhile, the British would not purchase the 2,000,000 pounds of corned beef in Mexico except at a disastrously low price. A deaf ear was turned to the fact that this shipment had been made before British control regulations were promulgated. U. S. hush manufacturers tried desperately to get the war food administration to allow importation into the U. S., but to all inquiries the war food administration sent a stereotyped answer: "The British ministry of food is the sole purchaser of exportable surplus meat and meat products from Argentina."

So the 2,000,000 pounds of canned meat has continued to sit in a Mexican warehouse, eating up storage rates. A trickle of it has been sold to Mexicans and a little bit was shipped across the United States boundary to Newfoundland. But most of it remains. This remainder some time ago was purchased by U. S. hush manufacturers. They, not the Argentines, are chiefly holding the bag. They estimate that the Argentine canned beef, when turned into U. S. hush, represents more than 4,000,000 pounds of fresh meat.

Note—Recently UNRRA indicated that it would like to buy the canned beef in Mexico but the British were opposed. Ac-

tually the British have the sole right to buy meat from South America, but the war food administration apparently overlooks the fact that Mexico is not South America but North America.

Priorities For Veterans
 For some time, honorably discharged veterans of World War II have had to deal through surplus property profiteers in order to buy war goods to reestablish themselves in business.

If they wanted to buy a jeep, a discarded army truck, or surplus anything else, they got it through a secondhand dealer, who purchased these supplies in bulk from the army.

This is because federal agencies have sold in large quantities to secondhand dealers rather than to individuals. However, this has meant that the war veteran or anyone else had to pay double or even triple the original sale price of the jeep or the truck.

Now, however, the surplus property board, in cooperation with the procurement division of the treasury department, plans to change this. They are establishing a procedure whereby veterans will receive a certificate from the armed forces. This will entitle them to go to the smaller war plants corporation, which, in turn, will assist them in finding the equipment they need. Once the material is found, veterans will receive a priority from the treasury procurement division to enable them to buy surplus property without going to war profiteers.

Cigarettes to Sweden
 Guess where some of our vanished cigarettes have been going? To Sweden! And from there? Perhaps to the same place Sweden sent her ball bearings—Germany.

U. S. export figures on cigarettes to Sweden are supposed to be very, very confidential. Why remains a mystery. But when Jesse Jones was secretary of commerce, he would not permit the announcement of export figures on various commodities to any country.

However, the unpublished fact is that Sweden last year was permitted by treaty to triple her normal purchase of cigarettes from this country. She bought two hundred million.

Why the Swedes should have needed three times as many cigarettes in 1944 as their normal import from the United States also remains a mystery. Some people suspect the explanation is that the Nazis are smoking cigarettes which the American public does not get.

Note—Suggestion to Secretary of Commerce Wallace: Why not let the public know about these trade figures from now on? See WASHINGTON . . . Page 4

WE, THE WOMEN

By RUTH MILLET

One newspaper picture will probably do more to strengthen the spirit of wounded men lying in hospitals than thousands of spoken assurances that their sacrifices are appreciated and that despite their handicaps they will be able to build good lives for themselves.

The picture is of a happily smiling 18-year-old bride, beautiful in her white wedding dress and veil, clinging to the arm of a bridegroom in uniform who is standing with the aid of two canes.

The picture tells most of the story. But there's a little more. The bridegroom, badly wounded, wrote his childhood sweetheart not to wait for him because he was "pretty badly shot up."

But she did wait until the man she loved

could be fitted with artificial legs so that he could stand up in a church and marry her in the kind of ceremony they both wanted.

It will take a lot of pictures like that and a lot of stories like that to overcome the opinion service men must have formed of the devotion and loyalty of American girls who were advised not to tie themselves to men leaving for overseas because they might come back wounded or changed by war. Promises to wounded men and pretty speeches won't count for much. But all will be helped by stories about the wounded veteran who finds such promises come true because he has been accepted with understanding and love by those who are dear to him, and has found a real place for himself in the civilian world.

Behind Scenes in Washington

By PETER EDSON, La Grande Evening Observer Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON — In all this squabbling about who gets invited to the San Francisco conference, it is all too easy to lose sight of the one important objective.

That objective is to set up an organization that will end wars.

Getting sidetracked by a lot of back-room brawls over voting procedure, small nations vs. large, Poland, Argentina, the Ukraine and such small potatoes is utterly futile.

Granting that the making of a secret Big Three deal at Yalta was stupid statesmanship of the lowest order, still the present cry that the San Francisco conference must now be delayed as a result is rank cowardice.

Nothing could set back the cause of world peace and security more than a postponement at San Francisco. To moan low that the Dumbarton Oaks proposals are foredoomed to failure is to admit that Nazi propaganda is right and to fall for the Hitler-Goebbels line that peace-loving nations can never be united. Why be such suckers?

When the Dumbarton Oaks proposals were first announced there was naturally much questioning. Perfectionists could think up a thousand details that might be changed.

Until the past week the volume of these criticisms had seemed to be subsiding as people realized that the form of a United Nations Organization, the mechanics of its operation, was far less important than its objective of ending wars.

"We're not interested in how you work it out," the average citizen seemed to be saying to his government, "just give us peace."

Jobs, food, personal security, solution of economic problems as they affect daily living—these are the things which are uppermost in the minds of a majority of the people. The machinery of government and foreign relations are important only as they contribute to lasting peace in which there will be job, food, security. That is the objective worth striving for.

A proper perspective on this present flare-up can perhaps best be gained by looking back on the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787, when the document was being framed on which the United States of America was to be founded. Only 12 of the 13 colonies sent delegates. Spunky little Rhode Island stayed out and didn't ratify the Constitution until two years later, when she was forced into line by threat of economic sanction.

Today it is the United Nations of the world to be organized. What difference if the Lublin Poles, or Argentina or the Ukraine aren't at San Francisco? They can come in two years later, with or without threat of economic sanctions.

There was an issue of large states vs. small at Philadelphia just as there is an issue of large nations vs. small facing the delegates to San Francisco. At Philadelphia the issue was settled by compromise. It can be so settled at San Francisco if the statesmen who represent the nations are of a mind to do it.

More and more, a feeling grows that the government of Soviet Russia may be politically immature in its international relations. That can be said without intended insult with a glance over the shoulder at the record of the United States of America. This country was that way in 1919 and '20 and '21. Suspicious, egotistical in the extreme, unwilling to cooperate with other nations unless we could write the ticket just the way we wanted it. The United States, as a nation in 1925, was like Rhode Island as a colony in 1787. It didn't work in 1787, it didn't work in 1925, and it probably won't work any better in 1945.

But nations learn slowly and the history of 1787 and 1920 will be repeated if the men who represent the nations now become involved in petty protocol feuding sight of what they are supposed to do.

Side Glances



After I've gone to the office, try to make her realize if she won't eat her breakfast quicker I'll lose my job—she won't listen to me!

McKENNEY ON BRIDGE

By WM. E. MCKENNEY, America's Card Authority

TIMING IMPORTANT IN A SMOTHER PLAY

(This is the third of six articles on the smother play, the most difficult play in bridge to recognize.)

In executing the smother play, the most important thing is the correct timing. That is why it is very difficult to recognize this play, as very often you lose the timing before you find out the possibility of the play.

In today's hand, the declarer ruffs the second round of diamonds and leads the jack of clubs, which East of course refuses to win as he does not want to create two entries for the de-

king, declarer will over trump with the ace.

So once again East is smothered out of his king. However, if the defense had been alert, they could have defeated this hand, as I will show you tomorrow.

IN FORME? YEARS

30 Years Ago

March was a month of considerable building activity. Permits amounting to nearly \$13,000 were issued. For March, 1914, building permits totaled \$17,074. W. B. Sargent took a number of Union county people to Harney county to inspect a large area recently put on the market. At Ontario the party was joined by people from the east. This is the second excursion into the district.

15 Years Ago

Discussion of the Connordale park property took up most of the city commission meeting. The commissioners agreed that some work should be done during the year toward beautification of the plot. Suggestions were made that trees be planted and part of the plot be seeded.

Plans were being made for protection of the 10,500,000 acres of forest land under the jurisdiction of the state forester are well under way. As part of the program new lookout houses were to be built on the summit of Mt. Harris, near La Grande, and on Onion Springs mountain east of Glendale. Twelve miles of new telephone lines had been completed to connect the new lookout with the district warden's office.

10 Years Ago

Substantial increase in the number of farms and a striking tendency for population to move toward the farm are indicated for eastern Oregon in preliminary census figures released by the farm census bureau.

Project record books kept by the Imbler Future Farmers of America during the school year 1933-34 showed a total labor income of more than \$1,647. Eighty boys were carrying projects which consisted of swine, beef, dairy, sheep, chickens, turkeys, geese, bees, potatoes, grain and forage.

This Curious World



Judging Odds

SOME SOLDIERS GROW A BEARD ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE CLOSE SHAVES EVERY DAY. SEE MILES J. MCKENNEY.



NEXT: Where they really make big money.