

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

DREW PEARSON & ROBERT ALLEN

SAVING MONEY
One of defense price regulator Leon Henderson's staunchest supporters is Donald Nelson, dollar-a-year OPM purchasing chief.

At a meeting of his lieutenants, Nelson said: "We've got to watch price advances like a hawk. Our national economy won't stand for any price skyrocketing. I want you to catch every bid where prices are out of line, and if we can't scale them down, we'll turn the case over to Leon."

Several days later an assistant, examining cotton gauze prices submitted by three companies holding army contracts, smelled a mouse and showed the figures to Nelson. The prices of two of the firms were okay, but the third had boosted its bid 10 cents. Checking, Nelson found that wages in mills had not advanced and that a large stock of cotton was on hand.

So he called the manufacturer and firmly informed him that unless his price was put back into-line the fur would fly. Next day the company submitted reduced figures.

Note—Nelson's biggest problem in keeping defense prices from soaring is the military brass-hats, who are rated chiefly for their ability to get materials for the army and navy, and not on the price the government has to fork out.

BILL OF FRILLS

Press gallery wits have taken to referring to the stymied \$150,000,000 emergency defense housing measure as the "bill of frills." This is a soft impeachment. Not in a long time has an important piece of legislation suffered more from congressional obstruction and inconsistency.

Introduced several months ago to meet an urgent defense situation, the bill was stalled for 10 days in the house rules committee by a noisy row over the installation of "frills," such as refrigerators and gas stoves, in homes for defense workers.

Finally, after inserting an amendment barring these appliances, the House passed the measure and it went to the senate. There it ran head on into another "frill" tangle—in reverse. This time a "frill" was put into the bill.

Brick makers protested that the \$3,000 limit specified for each housing unit barred the use of bricks, and demanded that the ante be raised to \$3,500. One of the chief pro-brick spokesmen was Sen. Bob Taft of Ohio, a leading economy advocate, who sought to slash the kiln-lease appropriation on the ground that it was excessive.

On the argument that savings in paint, repairs and heating through the use of brick would more than offset the \$500 difference, the senate approved the boost—and added another delay. For now the amended measure has to go back to the house for it to decide whether bricks fall in the same "luxury" category as refrigerators and gas ranges.

Note—In an effort to make up some of the time wasted by the frill-conscious boys in Capitol Hill, Defense Housing Co-ordinator Palmer has gone ahead with plans for a number of projects, ready to start the moment the bill becomes law. One will be the largest low-cost housing project ever undertaken by the government.

MERRY-GO-ROUND

Mrs. Roosevelt has been invited to address the national Townsend Plan convention in Buffalo early in July. Meanwhile, Sen. Sheridan Downey of California, chief Townsendite spokesman in congress, has told leaders of the movement that he will force a vote on their old-age pension plan in the senate by offering it as an amendment to the tax bill next month.

Justice Stanley Reed follows the practice of the late great Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes in picking a new legal clerk every year, explains that he does it chiefly for his own benefit, to get the different viewpoints of bright young men.

Feature of the latest issue of the Republican, monthly party magazine, is an article by a Democrat on "What's Wrong With the G. O. P." In a poll of 5,765 college students on the "greatest weakness" of the Republican party, 35.2 per cent answered "Lack of touch with common people"; 24.4 per cent held "No co-ordinated program"; 25.6 per cent "Divided leadership"; and 14.8 per cent "Other reasons."

The late Sen. Morris Shepard of Texas was known to the public chiefly as the father of prohibition, but on Capitol Hill he was considered a great worker for preparedness as well as a tolerant, kindly friend.

Veteran New Dealer Leon Henderson, defense price regulator, rates OPM Production Chief John Biggers, one of the country's biggest glass manufacturers, and Priorities Chief Edward R. Stettinius, former U. S. Steel executive, as two of the fairest and most enlightened big business men in the defense organization.

To Wall Street the No. 1 "nasty man" in Washington currently is hard-hitting Joe Winer, head of the SEC's utility division, who is doing something about enforcing the holding company act.

Walter Winchell

Notes of an Innocent Bystander:

The Front Pages: The Jap-Bolo toast to love each other to pieces, the story of the year for The Daily Worker, caught that Commy sheet with its tongue tied. It offered no lowdown on the pact on the day when the yarn broke. Next day (maybe on a tip from the Kremlin) it decided the treaty was an instrument of peace. The sheet claimed Russia remains a "staunch friend" of the Chinese. Of course, the pact gives the Japs the green light to exterminate these "staunch friends," but the Bolos feel that anybody who points this out is a dirty counter-revolutionary capitalist. . . . Also and Kintner don't agree with The Worker's rose-tinted picture. They canvassed the State Dep't and couldn't get anybody to deny that Stalin signed on the dotted line because Hitler cracked the whip. . . . Gen. Robert C. Richardson makes a good start as boss of public relations for the army. "Don't try to conceal information from the newspapers," he advised his helpers. "They will only get it anyway—from unofficial sources." . . . "Communist's Wife Accused as Killer," headlines The Post. Say, we know people who think being a columnist's wife is a sure-fire defense for murder.

The Wireless: The radio is one of the busiest Nazi weapons in the Balkans. Their prize flash was the lie about the British quitting Greece, but they landed some important minor falsehoods on the local networks. One newscaster is a pushover for their slams. His late-at-night defeatism never holds up in the morning, but it helps Goebbels a lot by adding to the worries of Americans. A dope at the mike is just as useful to the Nazis as a spy. . . . Gen'l Johnson took a belt at some of the war "predicters," meaning air commentators. The Gen'l is an odd one to object to forecasters. Consider all those uneaten guesses of his left over from the November elections. . . . It was strictly knock-down-and-drag-out when Col. Breckinridge and Sen. Tobey clashed on a forum. They junked the issue and grabbed at each other's throats. This ringsider scored a win for the Colonel.

Typewriter Ribbons: Masaryk's: Dictators always look good until the last five minutes. . . . F. Scott Fitzgerald's: He had begun to hate that harassed and aghast feeling of those who live always on the edge of solvency. . . . Emerson's: Every hero becomes a bore at last. Emma Squire's: Waves leaped against the bow like rowdy dogs eager to play. . . . H. W. Beecher's: Poverty is very good in poems, but very bad in the house. . . . J. Graham's: Remember that when you're in the right you can afford to keep your temper and that when you are in the wrong you can't afford to lose it.

Notes of a New Yorker:

Bob Considine, Arch MacDonald and others were talking shop and about Damon Runyon's genius. . . . "I remember once," said Considine, "at a World's Series first game—all of us in the press-box ran out of fingernails trying to dream up a snazzy lead paragraph. And all of us kept tearing the paper out of the typewriter and starting over and over again striving to be clever. Except Runyon. He began his story: 'Yanks, 2; Reds, 1.'"

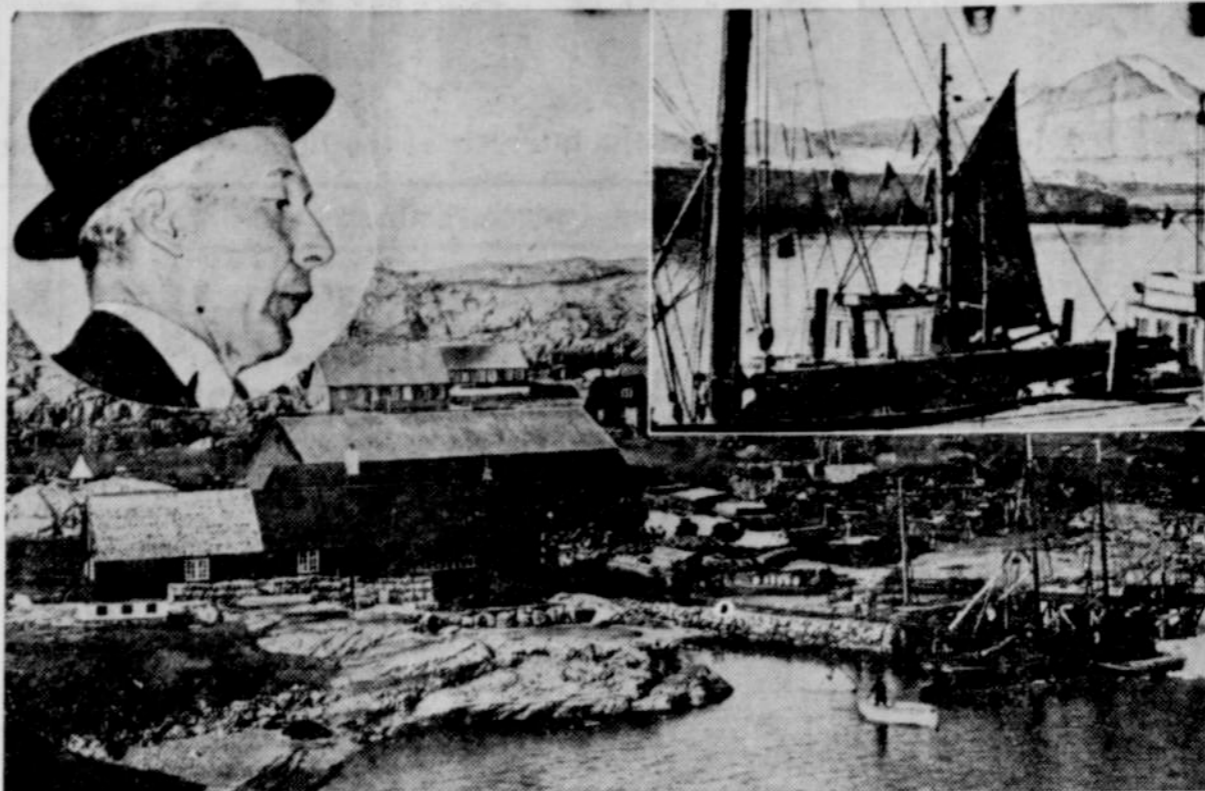
The three most distinguished Americans to visit England in the past year were Welles, Willkie and Winant. One alert lad suggests that there is a symbolic connotation in the first syllables of their names, to wit: Welles WILL-kie WIN-ant.

Max Miller, author of "I Cover the Waterfront," "Reno," and other books, lives in La Jolla, Calif., in a home right in the edge of the Pacific. The excessive winter rains, aided by faulty drainage, shoved several tons of the beach sand and dirt into his basement and furnace room. . . . Angry, he filed suit against the city for damages. All he got was a lot of horse laughs and a newspaper headline which taunted: "Max Miller Used to Cover the Waterfront and Now the Waterfront Covers Max Miller."

Several books about Winston Churchill have come out suddenly. One contains the story of the lady who harped on British war aims. She wanted to know what Britain was fighting for. To which he grimly told her: "If we left off fighting you would soon find out."

Heywood Brown's best coliums (collected by his son) belong on the required reading lists. (Oh, how he is missed!) . . . A beautiful humane philosophy is summed up in these words by Brown: "It is not fair that I should thwart and crush great eagerness for existence for the sake of the extremely mild diversion which I get from fishing. They told me that the fish cared very little and that they were cold-blooded and felt no pain. But they were not the fish who told me." . . . By all means, read the book.

Under the Wing of the American Eagle



Greenland came under U. S. protection when the government signed an agreement with Danish officials. Thus the Monroe Doctrine spreads northward in scope. Photos show the fishing colony at Umanak (below) and fishing boats at Scoresbysund (upper right). Circle: Hendrick De Kauffmann, Danish minister to the U. S., recalled by the German-controlled Copenhagen government, for his role in the negotiations.

Cherry Blossom Time in Washington



This photo shows how people walked or rode to view the splendor of the hundreds of Japanese cherry trees as they burst in full bloom around the Tidal Basin in the nation's capital. Inset: Nancy Alden Strong is crowned Queen of the Cherry Blossoms. With her is Sen. John Overton of Louisiana. About a quarter of a million people attended the coronation.

Three Generations of Tears in Greece



As the Nazi air blitz shifts from nation to nation only faces in the familiar pictures of ruined homes are changed. Censors are quick to realize that photos like the one above, taken in Greece, do much to invite sympathy of neutrals. Here three generations of Greek peasantry weep amid ruins of their "blitzed" home.

'Slight' Loss in Compensation



William McChesney Martin, 34-year-old head of the New York Stock exchange, signing his induction papers at local draft board No. 15, in New York. He is giving up a \$48,000-a-year job to become a \$21-per-month selectee. Behind him are members of the board and other draftees.

To Watch Air War



Maj. Gen. H. H. Arnold, chief of the U. S. army air corps, shown as he boarded a clipper plane in New York for flight to Europe. General Arnold will go to London to act as an official observer for the war department.

Cultural Envoy



Douglas Fairbanks Jr., appointed cultural envoy to South America to strengthen inter-American understanding through the theatrical arts, tracing their route with his wife.

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Restaurateur Believed Himself Well Supplied

The couple had enjoyed a meal in the restaurant. When the bill was presented the husband was horrified to discover he had come out without money.

Calling the proprietor, he explained the situation, ending up with:

"It won't take me long to slip home, and my wife will remain here as security."

"Pardon me," said the proprietor, "haven't you anything else?"

"Sir," snapped the customer angrily, "are you insinuating that my wife is not worth the \$1.50?"

"Not at all," the proprietor protested, "but I already have a wife!"

Neighborly Duty

One person I have to make good; myself. But my duty to my neighbor is much more nearly expressed by saying that I have to make him happy—if I may.—Robert Louis Stevenson.

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Unfortunate One
There is no one more unfortunate than the man who has never been unfortunate, for it has never been in his power to try himself.—Seneca.

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