

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

DREW PEARSON

WALLGREN AND LUMBER

WASHINGTON. — Lumber price ceilings topped the agenda of the President's conference the other day with his old friend Gov. Mon Wallgren at Washington.

However, Wallgren also took occasion to invite Truman to spend a vacation this summer in the northwest aboard the presidential yacht.

"The people of my state would be delighted to have you as a guest, and you can also take a trip up to Alaska on the Williamsburg," Wallgren told him.

Truman accepted tentatively, saying he would go if he could possibly make it.

Wallgren's main business, however, was to strongly urge an increase in the price ceilings on lumber. He maintained that this was necessary in order to increase lumber output for the housing program.

"We are facing a serious job crisis in our lumber mills, Harry," said the Washington governor. "We have a model unemployment compensation law in my state, but many unemployed workmen are swiftly using up the 26 weeks they are entitled to draw as compensation. Both from the labor standpoint and the housing shortage, inventories in our mills must be built up as quickly as possible."

IDLE WAR PLANTS

Governor Wallgren also urged the sale of government-owned light metal plants, now idle in his area, to private operators as another means of increasing employment. Two idle plants in question are the Aluminum Rolling mill and the Aluminum Ingot companies at Spokane, operated by Alcoa during the war. Henry Kaiser wants to buy the former for the production of aluminum-built automobiles and prefabricated housing.

Wallgren told Truman that the lumber situation has been aggravated by a neat little device of certain big timber outfits, including the Weyerhaeuser interests, which, calculatedly or otherwise, has been stifling competition. Under the Washington constitution, the state government must sell timber to the highest bidder, but some big outfits have been bidding over the price ceilings. This causes all bids to be thrown out.

The President said he would talk to the RFC about the plants, but suggested that Wallgren thrash out his lumber price problems with price control boss Chester Bowles.

BUTTER BLACK MARKET

The office of international trade, now under the commerce department, is planning to ask U. S. customs officials to investigate some strange shenanigans in the re-sale of butter this country has been exporting to Mexico.

Despite the serious butter shortage, which has caused the American housewife to turn to substitutes and jam for her table, we sent 5,500 pounds of butter to Mexico in the last quarter of 1945.

Some of this is now winding up at Tijuana, the Mexican resort town across the border from San Diego, where the butter is being sold to American tourists for the fabulous price of \$1.25 a pound.

Under export price ceilings, enforced by the OPA and the department of commerce, this same butter was sold to Mexican dealers at from 47 to 49 cents a pound. The price varies a couple of cents a pound, depending on the type of packaging.

In other words, we are now buying back American-made butter from Mexico for triple the price Mexican dairy dealers are paying us for it. Commerce department officials can only guess how much smuggled butter may be involved in this cross-border black market, but the customs office will be asked to make a thorough probe.

NOTE—Mexico is also one of our biggest purchasers of exported nylon stockings. Out of a total of 9,110 dozen pairs of nylons exported in November—the last monthly figures available—Mexico bought 5,010 dozen pairs. Cuba received 2,603 dozen pairs.

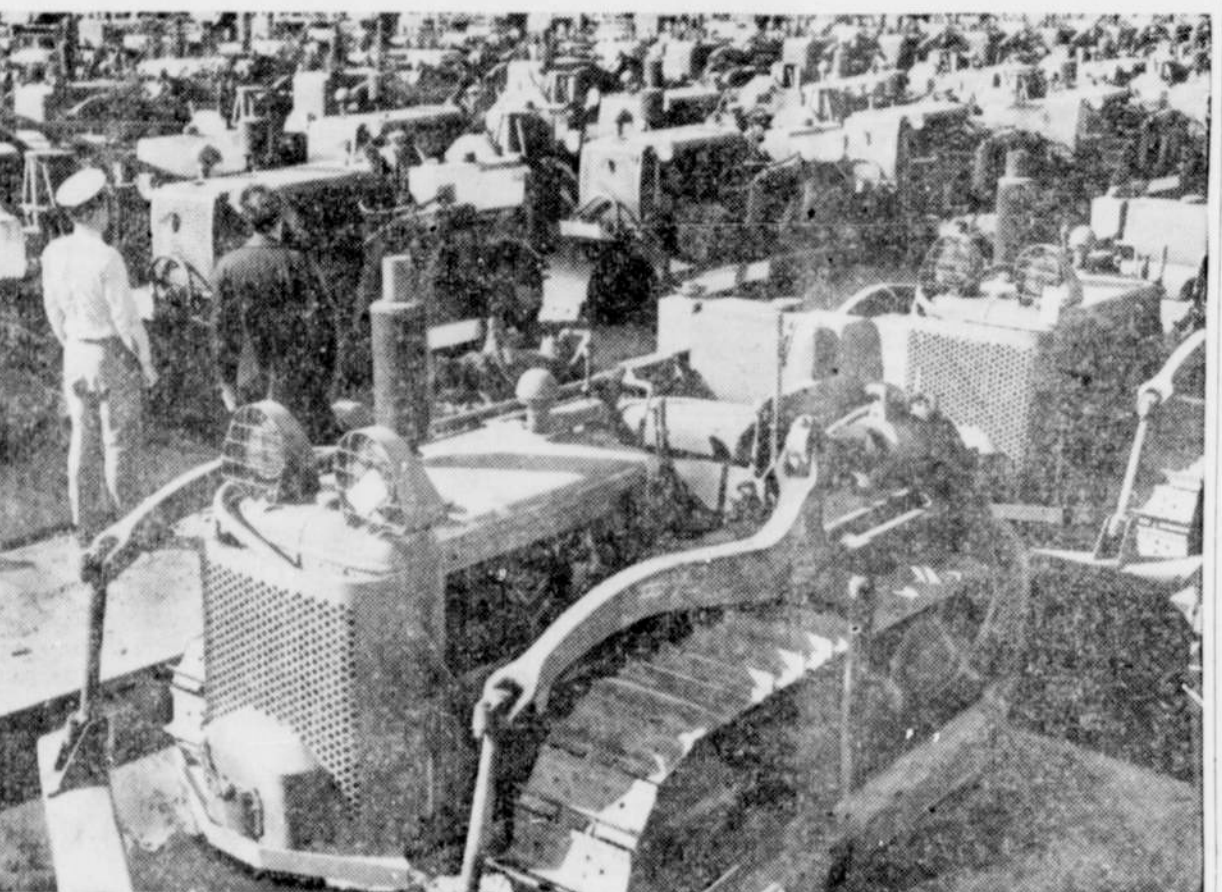
CAPITAL CHAFF

One reason for the current international food shortage is that Leo Crowley, when FEA boss, refused to heed the warning of Secretary of Agriculture Anderson last summer, when Anderson argued that FEA should help increase plantings of winter wheat, cereals and proteins in South America. The South American crop was hit by drouth, or it might have been larger.

Sen. Tommy Hart, the only admiral on the senate military affairs committee, recently asked committee members if there were a dictaphone in the walls. He complained that the Washington Merry-Go-Round had quoted him all too accurately when, at a secret session, he defended the war department regarding demobilization. Rep. Clare Hoffman of Michigan, who considers himself an expert at anti-labor legislation, was misled because he was not consulted in the writing of the harsh Case bill passed by the house recently.



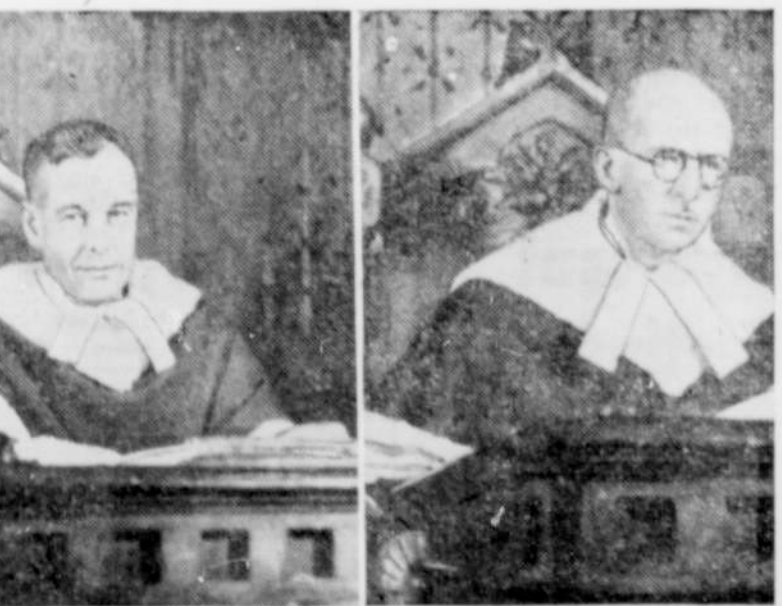
UNITED STATES DELEGATES TO UNO RETURN . . . Arriving at LaGuardia field, New York, the American delegation to the United Nations organization expressed high hopes for the organization when it next meets in the United States. Left to right as they leave the UNO Clipper are Sen. Arthur Vandenberg, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Edward Stettinius, head of the delegation, John F. Dulles, New York international financial advisor, and Sen. John Townsend. They all seem encouraged by progress made at the first meeting.



NATION'S BIGGEST SURPLUS GOODS SALE . . . Square miles of surplus war goods, ranging from spools of thread to giant road scrapers and derricks, are being readied at the Port Hueneme navy depot, California, for what will probably be the biggest surplus goods sale in the nation. Shown in photograph are some of the tractors which will be sold to the civilian market. Only one kind of goods will be offered for sale in one day.



JAPANESE SILK TO THE RESCUE . . . The drastic nylon hose shortage in the U. S. may soon be remedied, in part, by the shipment of silk or silk hose from Japan. Photograph shows plant, by Mimata village, as manager checks the stacks of "books" of raw silk awaiting shipment.



INVESTIGATE ESPIONAGE . . . Justice R. Taschereau, left, and Justice R. L. Kellock, right, members of the Supreme court of Canada, who have been appointed by the dominion government to act as members of a commission to hear evidence on the espionage ring that disclosed wartime secrets to a foreign mission in Ottawa. United States officials have stated that material information on the atomic bomb could not have been revealed.



LONESOME G.I. . . . As the first snowfall of the year hits the dismal city of Tokyo, this U. S. soldier, far from home, with no knowledge of the language, looks like he would rather be some other place.



CHINA'S BEST FRIEND . . . Often referred to as China's best friend, Lt. Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer has been active as chief of staff to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, and factor in industrial development of China.

Veterans' SERVICE BUREAU

EDITOR'S NOTE: This newspaper, through special arrangement with the Washington Bureau of Western Newspaper Union at 1616 Eye Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., is able to bring readers this weekly column on problems of the veteran and serviceman and his family. Questions may be addressed to the above Bureau and they will be answered in a subsequent column. No replies can be made direct by mail, but only in the column which will appear in this newspaper regularly.

Widows' War Pensions

There have been so many inquiries concerning pensions for widows of veterans of both World Wars I and II that we are giving here the general provisions for the various types of pensions:

Pensions for widows, children and dependent parents of veterans whose death resulted from service in both World Wars I and II: widow, but no child, \$50; widow with one child \$65 and \$13 for each additional child; no widow, but one child, \$25; no widow, but two children, \$38 equally divided, and \$10 for each additional child; dependent father or mother, \$45, or both \$25 each.

A widow means she must have been married to the veteran prior to December 14, 1944, lived continuously with him until date of death, except where there was a separation due to misconduct of or procured by the veteran, without fault of the widow—and must not have remarried.

Pensions for widows and children of World War I for death not connected with service: widow, but no child, \$35; widow and one child, \$45 and \$5 for each additional child; no widow, but one child, \$18; no widow but two children, \$27 equally divided; no widow but three children, \$36, and \$4 for each additional child. The same definition of widow applies as above. This pension is not payable to any widow without child, or to a child, whose annual income exceeds \$1,000, or to a widow with child or children where annual income exceeds \$2,500.

There is no provision for pensions to widows of World War II for death not connected with service.

Questions and Answers

Q. What type of dependents must a hospitalized veteran who is rated 100 per cent or more disabled have in order to draw more than the \$20 monthly institutional award? — E. G. R., Milwaukee, Wis.

A. The Veterans' administration says that if you have one dependent, you may draw a pension of \$115 per month or more, depending on nature of your disability, if you are 100 per cent disabled. The amount in excess of your \$20 may be sent to the dependent.

Q. I have been trying to get readjustment compensation of \$20 per week, but have been unable to do so. I am a veteran of this war with 26 months and have a disability discharge, but have not got a pension yet. So I would like to know how to get the \$20 a week.—R. F. S., Wolf Island, Mo.

A. The fact that you have a disability discharge, or even drawing a pension should not interfere with receiving readjustment compensation under the G. I. bill. Requirements for this compensation are (1) you reside in the U. S.; (2) you are completely unemployed or if partially employed, at wages less than \$23 per week; (3) that you are registered with and reporting to a public employment office, USES; and (4) that you are able to work and available for suitable work. Have your discharge or separation papers with you when you register for employment.

Q. I was reading where they are still counting points since V-J Day. The Red Cross said they froze them V-J Day. Please answer which is correct and also how many points and how many years of service do you have to have to be discharged? —Mrs. E. D., Louisville, Ky.

A. The war department says that for the record, men in the service are still earning points for each month of service, but for the purposes of discharge, points earned as of September 2, 1945, are counted. For the army, according to General Eisenhower, men with 40 points as of September 2, except volunteers, or with two years service will be home by June 30; men with 45 points or 30 months' service will be home by April 30.

Q. To a lonely wife and mother of Vienna, Mo., and Mrs. J. C., of Carterton, Va., each of whom have three children.

A.—Your husbands are eligible to apply for discharge immediately because you each have three children. The same answer holds true for Mrs. H. R., New Boston, Texas.

Q. A few weeks ago, I began a correspondence course with a New York school at a cost of \$80 for the entire course. A down payment of \$20 was made, and five monthly payments must be made to clear up the balance. Would the government pay the entire bill, or must I, because of its low cost, pay the expense?—J. A. V., Webster, Mass.

A. If you are a veteran of this war with an honorable discharge, the government will pay tuition for correspondence courses up to \$500. Make application at your nearest Veterans' administration office.

NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS

By PAUL MALLON

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

THREATENED VETO POWER ON LABOR LEGISLATION

WASHINGTON, D. C.—WNU.—Confidential canvassers have found congress in almost total disagreement as to what will be done about strikes and the unions.

Twenty of the men, best placed to know, gave 20 differing private predictions. Many said from the first that the steel strike would be settled, then autos, then the big others; whereupon interest would die, while congress argued without a decision until after their election next November.

Others did not believe congress could longer duck the problem and expected various union-curbing enactments. But Mr. Truman had told his leaders privately he would veto anything which might be called an anti-union law.

Surely nothing opposed by the unions could get two-thirds majority necessary to pass over such a veto. The confused and confusing predictions, in the last analysis, therefore, appeared to add up to just about the same total—nothing, or little-or-nothing.

A nice neat hole in the wall is quite evidently being dug, through which all may escape. A commentator or two started it with toothpicks, but behind them some congressmen are ready with drills.

FACT-FINDING WITHOUT POWER OR TEETH

This is a proposal to cut the Truman fact-finding bill down to fact-finding alone. It would be stripped of its power of subpoena, to which General Motors objects, and the cooling-off period of 30 days before strikes, to which the union objects. Just pass a law letting the President appoint commissions to find facts.

The only trouble about this escape is too many people can see the hole. It might be better to go brazenly out the window, or keep arguing interminably in hopes everyone will forget about the whole matter.

Such legislation simply proposes what already has been done. Without legislation Mr. Truman has established precisely that kind of fact-finding. General Motors walked out on it.

The question raised by such a permanent fact-finding law is: Would anyone ever show up for the hearings? To handle the problem that way would be like waving back a windstorm with a feather.

If congressional leaders try to push their boys through this hole there will of course be trouble. The labor committees of both houses are closely controlled by the unions. Nothing can escape them which is opposed by the unions, or nothing ever has.

On the open senate and house floors, however, their bill would be open to amendment by the attachment of every possible solution every congressman has proposed. The problem of Mr. Truman's leaders will then be to prevent any important action, and they are likely to wind up with conflicting bills from the two houses.

Certainly anyone looking for solutions from congress must wear long range glasses, and anyone looking toward consideration of the fundamentals of the problem will have to look hard. The plain fundamentals are these:

ENTIRE NATION CAN BE STRIKE BOUND

The unions have developed their strike technique to the point where they can tie up the nation any night. A simultaneous strike in telephones, telegraph and radio alone would nearly do it.

Add electrical power-house workers, and you can see what four unions could do to the country. Add not the big railroads but the teamsters who merely handle all freight in the cities, the elevator operators and bus drivers, and you have the obliterate possibilities of a general strike from only a few unions.

I have mentioned only a few of the strikes which have already been called.

In this campaign the unions, by rather clever timing of local strikes to keep pressure on the White House (first buses, then telephones without real issue in either), and by preliminary and bolstering strikes in other cities, have used their new power to get an unprecedented wage increase which will average above 18 per cent, a figure representing just about what they expected to get from their demand for 30 per cent.