

# The Washington Merry-Go-Round

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## WINTER PLANS

As far as can be ascertained, the most important point under discussion between Hitler and Mussolini during their recent visit to the Russian battle lines was a plan by which Italian troops would hold down a sizeable portion of the German front during the Russian winter stalemate.

Naturally, no one outside the Fascist-Nazi high command really knows the details of what happened. However, Mussolini squawked so loudly over Hitler's demands, that their general nature leaked out in Rome—where a lot of army leaders are none too friendly to the Axis.

Hitler's theory, bluntly put, was that the Italians were no good as fighters; so during the winter months when there was no fighting to be done, they could move into the trenches and protect the German lines.

Then Hitler could ship his troops down to Africa, and could clean up the whole of North Africa before spring and good fighting weather returned to Russia. Hitler figured that during the winter he could take over all of French North Africa, Egypt and the Suez canal, then penetrate to Dakar—from which he would have a base against South America.

It has long been known that Hitler realizes he has to move fast in Africa and the South Atlantic, or the United States will be strong enough to block him.

Mussolini's reaction to this plan was anything but enthusiastic. Aside from the ignominy of withdrawing from Italy's proposed field of conquest—Africa—Il Duce argued that Italian troops could not stand Russian winters. They would die of pneumonia in such a rigorous climate.

Whether Mussolini finally agreed is not known.

Note: The Nazi plan apparently is to put 250,000 Hungarian troops in the Russian trenches during the winter; plus 200,000 Rumanians; plus about 50,000 Slovaks and about 500,000 Italians. The German army during the winter would be reduced to a mere skeleton of about 100,000 men.

## NEW IMPRESSIONS

Washington newsmen, after seeing Roosevelt twice a week for eight years, have only dull impressions when they walk into a press conference. A fresh impression comes from Jack Moffitt, ace Hollywood reporter, who saw the President the other day for the first time.

"There was charm in the setting," Moffitt said. "The mementoes on his desk indicate a man of imagination who can extract pleasant memories from past experiences. . . . He costumes well. Hoover's choker collar became a symbol of Tory America. Coolidge dressed like a small town banker. Roosevelt avoids the foppish, but hits a certain suburban ease in his dress which sells quickly to the public.

"He was impressive in handling himself. There was ease and frankness, and a quickness in response to questions. He was at all times master of the interview.

"I was struck by his paleness and the lines in his face, contradicting the smirk I've seen in a thousand cartoons. If I were a casting director, looking for an actor for this part, I'd cast him as a man who is working hard under great strain."

## UNDER WAR SECRETARY

Newsmen sat three deep around a long polished table in the new war department building. They fired questions at the man with a sun-tanned face sitting at the head of the table. He was the under secretary of war.

What's a T-6 tank like? . . . Are M-3 tanks available for the maneuvers? . . . Did the French find the 75 mm. tank gun effective? . . . What is the altitude range of the 90 mm. anti-aircraft gun? . . . Is the army in Iceland? . . . What do you think about the Russian resistance?

He ducked the last two questions, but answered all the technical questions with the assurance of a soldier trained all his life in ordnance.

But he isn't a life-long soldier. He is a lawyer, an ex-circuit court judge, who scarcely a year ago was concerned with such non-military subjects as the reorganization of the New York subway.

This was a press conference with the under secretary of war, Robert P. Patterson. A judge in 1940, he is a soldier in 1941, with a complete grasp of the technical information of his job.

## MERRY-GO-ROUND

The President is wearing a black four-in-hand tie these days, as well as the black armband.

Latest addition to Roosevelt's trinket-laden desk is a white porcelain figure of Churchill with a cigar in his mouth.

OPM has a defense job waiting for movie star Marlene Dietrich as soon as her broken ankle is mended. They want to use her glamorous gams (legs) to publicize cotton stockings for women, made necessary by the shutting off of Japanese silk.



## WHO'S NEWS THIS WEEK

By LEMUEL F. PARTON  
(Consolidated Features—WNU Service.)

NEW YORK.—Although the answers to the famous inquiry of Pontius Pilate aren't all in yet, we assign a man to discover and tell us what is truth.

Dr. James P. Baxter III, president of Williams college, takes on this office. for Col. William J. Donovan, co-ordinator of defense information. His job will be to screen out from the mine-run of world information the dubious, tricky or deceptive items of propaganda or distortion and deliver to the President and the state department the chemically pure raw material for policy-making. This "fact-filter" appears to be news in world statecraft.

In the midst of a long address which Dr. Baxter delivered in 1938 was the following pertinent utterance, foreshadowing his new undertaking:

"The first element of defense is truth. Inculcation of the zeal to get at the truth, no matter what the cost of time and effort, characterizes real education."

Is it possible that this led Colonel Donovan to his truth-seeker? In the above address and on several later occasions, Dr. Baxter denounced "defeatism," and has been a spirited advocate of a "militant democratic faith," which would not wait until it was enslaved before fighting back.

After his graduation from Williams college in 1914, Dr. Baxter tried Wall Street for two years, with the Industrial Finance corporation, and then returned to Williams and Harvard for master's and doctor's degrees. He taught history at Colorado college and Harvard and became president of Williams in 1937. With him on the new truth-filtering board are six other professors, all skilled researchers in the entomology of the propaganda bug. They have as an unofficial precedent the extensive researches of the Institute for Propaganda Analysis.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT would have approved highly of his fellow townsman of Oyster Bay, Col. Van Santfoord Merle-Smith, just now arriving at Sydney, Australia, as the newly appointed naval attache. He is tall, handsome and physically impressive, always looking for action.

Always Somethin' Stirrin' Wherever Merle-Smith Goes

At Princeton, young Merle-Smith "hit the line hard," as a backfield football star; he was a hell-for-leather cavalry officer on the Mexican border, and in the World war, he mixed in the fighting wherever he could find an opening, was wounded three times and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross; he had a fling at statecraft, at The Hague and in our state department; he engaged in the rough-and-tumble of Wall Street, winning every bout, and as a yachtsman could make more out of a hat full of wind than anybody on the Long Island shore.

All in all, his career would make T. R. flash a couple of octaves of teeth and yell "Bully!"

He is the son of the late Dr. Wilton Merle-Smith, who was pastor of the Brick Church of New York, and has long been active as one of the leading Presbyterian laymen. After his graduation from Princeton in 1911, he took his law degree at Harvard in 1914. He was a member of the American secretariat at the Paris peace conference, and in 1920 was appointed third assistant secretary of state.

For several years after 1935, his yacht, Seven Seas, was showing her heels to competing craft, but more recently Colonel Merle-Smith has been shore-bound by ill health.

He practiced law with a distinguished New York firm, in the immediate post-war years, and entered the investment banking field about a decade ago. He is now a member of the advisory committee of the New York Trust company.

Colonel Merle-Smith in all probability will find action even in the Australian navy.

GEN. JORGE UBICO is named by a "constitutional congress" for his tenth consecutive term as president of Guatemala, his incumbency to continue until 1949.

He was first elected for a one-year term, survived two revolutions, and then set aside the constitutional limitation against more than one term. He is hard-boiled and diligent, brilliantly educated and strongly pro-United States. He is startlingly like Napoleon in appearance, with a haircut like the little corporal's, understudying Napoleon in attitudes, dress,



## THE VEGETABLE SEDAN

Henry Ford has just turned out a car with a plastic body made largely from vegetables. It is part salad and part automobile.



It marks the triumph of the vegetable over the steel industry.

Henry has been experimenting with the idea for years. He is a man who always looks ahead. And wipes his own windshield.

A farm boy, Hank always nourished the notion that the "Man With the Hoe" could do anything that could be done by the "Vice President With the Blueprint." And after all there was nothing so fanciful in the idea of making an auto out of vegetables. Henry had been making spinach out of automobiles all his life.

Henry's first problem was to find out which vegetables would go best in automobiles. He could dismiss the cucumber at the start. Too many people won't have anything to do with cucumbers.

He then considered onions, but dropped them quickly. After all, he was making a car, not a hamburger.

Lettuce and tomatoes were suggested, but vetoed after the opening debate. Mr. Ford did not want the public to get his car confused with a reducing diet.

The soybean had begun to poke its noggin up and attract attention for some time. Of all vegetables, none has gotten ahead in life like the soybean.

The jelly bean, the string bean and the Lima bean were better known, but never got anywhere industrially. (Once in October, 1928, a string bean did succeed in getting into the reception room of Mr. Ford's offices, but it was kept waiting so long that when the word finally came, "Mr. Ford will see you now," it had gone stale.—Ed note.)

But it was soon found that almost anything from a harmonica to a trailer could be made from the soybean, and Henry always liked a bean that was ambitious and full of get-up and go.

In 1932 somebody suggested that automobiles could be made from hay, but word came from Detroit that Mr. Ford was satisfied to keep on making hay from automobiles.

Anyhow, Henry has succeeded in his experiments, and in the priorities crisis has found a way to make a flivver almost entirely from the vegetable garden. The plastic material has 10 times the strength of steel in resisting a blow. It's the iron in the vegetables.

Of course, the government can throw a monkey wrench into Mr. Ford's car by putting the soybean and other vegetables on a priorities list. Anyhow, good luck to the idea. But we hope we don't get another one of those tire jacks made out of mashed potatoes.

## THE CALL

("OPM wants Marlene Dietrich's legs for use in drive to popularize stockings made from silk substitutes.")—News item.)

Hark, Marlene!

The OPM's Calling for Those famous tums

Listen, kid— Your country begs For the right To use those legs.

All must make Some sacrifice; Give those legs! They will suffice.

Ankles such As yours, Marlene, In a war A lot may mean.

Forward, then, With calf and knee— In the cause Of victory!

## LAMENT

Baby fingerprints to poets Are sweet and quite a thrill; Methinks they've never washed 'em off A grimy windowsill. —Beatrice Gittleman.

The Chrysler company is turning out scores of tanks per week. Of course it had the advantage of still retaining the designs for that model it turned out about 10 years ago with both ends alike.

## Fire Razes Whiting (Ind.) Gasoline Tanks



With the roar of a bombardment, terrific blasts rocked Whiting, Ind., as fire, raging through the Standard Oil company's gasoline refinery—largest in the world—exploded tank after tank. Loss was estimated at about \$100,000. One man was killed and more than a score injured. This picture, made from a plane, shows the fire at its height.

## As National League Pennant Is Clinched



This soundphoto shows the Brooklyn Dodgers en masse, as they arrived at their dressing room after defeating the Boston Braves 6 to 0 at Boston. By so doing they clinched the National league pennant. It was a nip and tuck race with the St. Louis Cardinals, but the boys nosed the St. Louis team out—and are they pleased!

## American Legion Parade in Milwaukee



About 100,000 veterans of World War I marched before a cheering throng estimated at a million, in Milwaukee, Wis., in parade attending their twenty-third annual convention. Tens of thousands of people had poured into the city to view the spectacular demonstration. Above scene was taken as the parade passed the city hall.

## Inaugurating 'Retailers for Defense Week'



Inaugurating the drive of the nation's retail merchants to push the sale of defense bonds, Mrs. Roosevelt purchased a bond from Donald M. Nelson, executive director of supply priorities and allocations board. Left to right, Donald M. Nelson; Mrs. Roosevelt; Maj. Benjamin Namm, chairman, treasury retailers advisory committee.

## Vacationing in U. S.



On a six-week vacation to the United States and Canada, the duke and duchess of Windsor, partners in a romance that rocked the world, are pictured at the British embassy, in Washington, where they had breakfast. They were received briefly at the White House by the President. The duke is governor of the Bahamas, where the U. S. is building a defense base.

## To Fly for R. A. F.



Peter G. Lehman, 24, son of Gov. Herbert Lehman of New York, who enlisted as pilot in the Canadian R.A.F. Peter volunteered with the full approval of his parents.

## Spurs Farm Output



Some 400 representatives of 12 agricultural states assembled in Chicago to hear Claude R. Wickard (top), secretary of agriculture, launch the largest food production drive in American history to assist the democracies opposing Hitler. Among his hearers are, (l. to r.) S. H. Sabin, Commodore Credit, M. Pottemger, Ohio Land Use, and Otto Croy, Ohio State university.

## On Eastern Front



Adm. Nicholas Horthy, regent of Hungary, with Adolf Hitler at the Nazi warlord's headquarters on eastern front. Horthy was awarded the iron cross before returning.