

Quality of Missile Discussion Said Becoming 'Curiouser and Curiouser'

By LYLE C. WILSON
United Press Correspondent

Washington — There is an Alice in Wonderland quality about the missile discussion, at least to the extent that it becomes curiouser and curiouser.

Dr. Werhner Von Braun, for example, revealed under congressional questioning that orders to proceed with a major missile project had not been followed up with an allotment of money with



Lyle C. Wilson

which to get going. The proceed order came about a fortnight ago and was widely publicized. What purpose the order and the attending publicity might have had is not evident, unless it was intended to quiet the voters' anxiety about the missile program and national security.

Interesting, too, was a sequence of statements made by William M. Holaday, the Pentagon missile chief. A bit more than a week ago Holaday told a New York audience that the United States could put satellites into orbit, like a Sputnik, "whenever we want to."

New Interpretation
Came last Friday and Holaday appeared before the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee. Under questioning Holaday put his own interpretation on "whenever we want to." The United States couldn't put a satellite in orbit tomorrow, for example. The missile chief said it would take time to assemble the component parts of the launching missile.

It developed that the only substance behind Holaday's brave statement in New York was that there do exist at Cape Canaveral, Fla., rockets capable of putting a satellite into orbit. Holaday's testimony seemed a bit optimistic to the questioning senators.

Like the order to proceed given to Dr. Von Braun, Holaday's New York speech was part sugar pill and there is some congressional clamor now to replace him in the missile job. Whatever may have been the motive behind the foregoing incidents, very few if any persons would believe or suggest that there was anything other than the utmost sincerity in President Eisenhower's best-publicized pronouncement on the missile-satellite issue.

Apprehension Not Raised
He made it on Oct. 9, five days after the Soviet Union launched Sputnik the first. To a news conference question, the President responded that the successful launching of a Communist satellite did not raise his apprehensions "one iota" about national security.

That became the administration party line, precisely followed by White House spokesmen thereafter until Oct. 16, when Vice President Richard M. Nixon warned in a San Francisco speech against a brush-off of the importance to the United States of the Sputniks.

"A grim and timely reminder" of the great magnitude of the Soviet Union's scientific and industrial capacity, Nixon called the Sputniks. Since wars are won

or lost now largely on the measure of scientific and industrial capacity, Nixon's warning seemed to possess a grave bearing on national security.

Last week Lt. Gen. James M. Gavin chief of Army research, gave the senators a professional soldier's judgment. He said the launching of Sputnik I was "perhaps the most significant military thing in our time."

The voters will suck no sugar off of that one. They may, even, be tiring of sweets.

NOISY THING
New York — Fred Clark of Xenia, Ohio, heard an alarming buzzing sound coming from his suitcase today and called police. Bomb squad detectives rushed to the Roosevelt hotel where Clark was staying and took the suitcase to the roof. Inside they found a battery-operated, vibrating clothes brush humming away.

SANTA EXONERATED
Sterling, Ill. — Santa Claus, blamed at first for causing a \$100,000 fire in Kline's Department store, didn't start it after all, the fire department said Tuesday. Fire Chief Richard Nicol said faulty lighting, not a mechanical St. Nick, was responsible for the fire.

Military Leave
During World War II, Stephen

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The position involves responsibility on a state-wide basis for all operational aspects of existing highways such as transportation permits, communication and maintenance. Stephenson will direct and coordinate the activities of several division chiefs in charge of various engineering sections. The largest of these is the maintenance division consisting of 1,700 employees.

Stephenson is a registered professional engineer and a graduate in civil engineering from Oregon State college. He first went to work for the department in 1919 as a structural inspector and successively held the positions of resident bridge engineer, bridge construction engineer, assistant bridge engineer and bridge engineer, which position he held prior to his recent appointment.

Following the war, Stephenson was transferred by the assistant secretary of war to join a select group of engineers surveying the rehabilitation needs of the Philippines' highway system. He returned to the highway department following the completion of this project.

W. W. Stiffler, present assistant state highway engineer, is retiring on a voluntary basis on Dec. 31, completing 36 years with the highway department. Approximately 350 highway employees from various points in the state are expected to attend a farewell banquet honoring Stiffler Dec. 19 in Salem.

UNMENTIONABLES SOUGHT
Somerville, N. J. — Police began a "discreet" search Tuesday for two vital items. Mrs. Edith Erickson reported her 19-year-old daughter's girdle and panties had been stolen from the clothesline in back of her home.

FIVE FLEE SMOG
Santa Cruz, Calif. — Five teenagers who ran away from their homes in Southern California, explained to sheriff's deputies when apprehended Tuesday that they left home because they couldn't stand the smog any more.

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