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Advertising rates upon application. Entered at the Queenstown postoffice as Second Class matter.

Friday, November 21, 1941.

Can the Little Fellow Stand the Gaff

This country is just beginning to encounter some of the biggest and most difficult problems that a military economy makes unavoidable.

The arms program is getting into stride. Our aircraft production is at the rate of about 25,000 planes a year. Production of tanks, machine guns, army trucks and other vital necessities, is increasing fast. The two ocean navy will be completed far ahead of the original schedule. In the next two years, unless something unexpected occurs to change the picture, we should become the foremost military power on earth.

This doesn't mean that we are doing our theoretical utmost. We aren't. Labor troubles continue to mount and undermine production. Governmental red tape, delay and indecision still hamper industry. A few segments of industry have not been able to get away from the business as usual point of view. There is plenty of politics in the defense set-up, and there is too much divided responsibility which makes for passing of the buck and general disorder. Even so, the gigantic American production machine is moving forward, and it is successfully making the immense change from a peace-time to a war-time economy.

To some, this change means profits and expanded opportunity. To others, the change means possible ruin. In that sorry category fall thousands of businesses which have not been given a place in the defense picture, and which are now unable to continue their normal, peace-time ways.

These are the businesses which are caught by priorities. No one without a high priority rating can now obtain the basic metals. No one can build a home costing more than \$6,000. There are shortages of paper, cloth, rubber, chemicals, cleaning fluids—commodities which in normal period are excessively abundant. And legions of businesses, employing millions of people, depend on such commodities as these for their very life.

Pessimists believe that this defense program may mean the virtual death of little business in this nation. That may be an excessively dark forecast. But the hard fact remains that on one has yet been able to formulate a program under which he may obtain maximum military production and at the same time preserve our business system more or less intact.

Washington, of course, has given attention to this small business problem. There has been an effort to

farm out contracts, under a sub-contracting system, so that small and middle-sized concerns may obtain a fair share of the orders. So far, however, little progress has been made. The bulk of small businesses haven't the equipment or the personnel which are needed. When you want a tremendous job done, you naturally turn to the great mass-production industries which are geared to make the largest possible quantities of goods in the shortest possible period of time. The dollar-a-yer men in the defense bureaus are taken from big industries. And so small business finds it more and more difficult to obtain the supplies it must have.

If this trend continues, it is apparent that a revolutionary change will take place in the American economy. Whether that change will be for the better or worse is a matter of argument. In the meantime, it is an ironical fact that hundreds of thousands of men are being thrown out of jobs during a time when there is a shortage of suitable labor—and thousands of businesses are in danger of being shut down during a time when consumer demand and consumer purchasing power for all manner of commodities, is extremely high. The figures indicate that there simply isn't sufficient supply of many basic materials to meet the war demand and the normal demand at the same time. And the smaller enterprises of the country, which aren't able to produce the tools of war, are taking the beating.

Not Too Hot Not Too Cold



By JOHN EMBERT

Our Best Course

The American people almost unanimously wanted to avoid war. On that we can all agree. But whether we were duped into it, as the isolationists say, or whether it was forced upon us, as most contend, war has come to us. It exists. Under the circumstances, we think Roosevelt is on the right track. We will keep turning out the tools of war at our top capacity, keep on making sure that they get across to the fighting front, keep on getting as strong as we can against all possible contingencies, and keep our eyes open. That seems our best course at present.

World's Toughest Job

All the effort and thinking that the great men of history—Napoleon Charlemagne, and the rest—have put into their jobs can apparently be matched by a contemporary American.

He is Franklin D. Roosevelt. No matter whether we agree with him or not—and, incidentally, that is one of the things that makes a tough job tougher—not one of us can help but sympathize with and admire the great man in the White House, who is steering so kindly and resolutely the course that he believes best for America and the world.

Like a great captain on the bridge of a mighty liner, he is looking far ahead into the distance and he is steering the course alone and unafraid.

We have to accord such a man the highest admiration, whether we agree with his ideas or not. And he may rest assured that when a final irrevocable decision is reached, the blood and brawn of the country will be with him.

No Cause For Worry

Price Administrator Leon Henderson has requested manufacturers and retailers dealing in commodities subject to the new Federal excise taxes, to increase their prices to consumers only by the amount of the new taxes. In other words, he opposes a mark-up system which would pyramid the tax so far as the ultimate buyer is concerned.

Whether Mr. Henderson is asking the impossible, remains to be seen—it is clear that in many instances a new tax involves a cost to industry which is larger than may seem justified on superficial analysis. Whatever happens, the country may confidently expect that its retailers, in general, will continue their long-established policy of holding cost increases to the absolute minimum.

What the war economy first began there was considerable buying hysteria on the part of the public, which, if encouraged, could easily have resulted in a buyers' panic. Retailing then showed its mettle. The chains took the lead in laying down specific, voluntary rules of business conduct designed to give the consumer every possible protection. Thousands of independents promptly cooperated. The result is that day most retail stores are operating with the lowest overhead in history, and are earning the smallest unit profit in history.

As wholesalers raise prices, retailers, of course, must follow suit. There is no other course. They must earn something if they are to stay out of the bankruptcy courts. But, going by the record, it looks as if Mr. Henderson and the consumer have no need to worry about retailers, as a group, attempting to 'cash in' on the emergency.

Discarding the Weak Army Sisters

The Army is gradually weeding out incompetents among its officers. The way the wind blows was shown a high-ranking general was summarily retired after the army he commanded did badly in war games.

Between World War 1 and 2, the Army was given little attention, little money, little equipment. Officers advanced when and only when their superiors died or reached retirement age. This made for a bureaucratic sort of officer who simply bided his time, played internal politics and learned nothing.

The American Army now seems to be taking a page out of the book of the German Army. Nazi commanders are mainly young. Promotion is made on merit, not seniority. Daring and resourcefulness are rewarded. In our Army, men with the right stuff on the ball are today being jumped in rank over the heads of their elders.

General Marshall, the Chief of Staff, has little use for sterile traditions. Under him is a group of Lieutenant Generals who demand

results. So many an officer is going involuntarily into retirement or to an unimportant post because he doesn't have the capacities which modern war demands.

DEFENSE

"Cracker" in the Federalsburg Times, is strong in telling his readers in prose, the things that are to their interest: Here's the way he put it in last week's issue:

The cold wind is blowing the leaves are falling fast, the days are shorter growing the harvest time is past. The frost has got the pumpkin if it wasn't carried in and you'd better keep on jumpin' and get those corn ears skinned. Cold weather's coming sure enough and this is not surmising, and soon it may be bad and rough and it is tantalizing, to have to prow out in the bleak, and so we are advising to get your corn and fodder snug and wood pile close and handy then the fireside you can hug when the Arctic force has landed. Yes Winter time is close at hand and soon 'twill be blitzkriegering the Northern winds will sweep the land and at your vitals digging, so now dig in and fortify, improve each pleasant day, your genius and your skill apply, prepare for the blockade. Then when the snow piles 'round your door and the tempest howls and whines within your wigwam you can snore until the Spring sun shines.

Miss Frances W. Goldsborough

Funeral services for Miss Frances W. Goldsborough, a member of one of Queen Anne's county's oldest families, were conducted Sunday at St. Paul's P. E. Church, Centreville, by Rev. Thomas Donaldson, the pastor.

Miss Goldsborough who had reached the advanced age of 75 years, died at her home in Centreville, Friday evening. She was born on her father's farm, the late J. Lockerman Goldsborough, adjoining Cheston-on-Wye, in Wye Neck. After the appointment of her father as Justice of the Peace for Queenstown, the family removed to town and after the death of her father, removed to Centreville. She with the rest of the family were staunch members of St. Luke's P. E. Church, Queenstown.

The deceased is survived by two sisters, Mrs. Elwood Strong, who lived on the old homestead farm in Wye Neck, and Mrs. Carroll Tilghman of Baltimore, and a nephew, Dr. Richard Carmichael Tilghman of Baltimore.

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