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Will Cargo Planes Prove a Success?

There is nothing basically new in the idea of using cargo airplanes to supplant waterborne transport. It has long been urged by such authorities on the strength and the adaptability of airpower as Major de Seversky. And Hitler himself has made excellent use of the cargo plane In the Crete campaign, for instance, the British had superiority in seapower. But the Germans took to the air and used their air freighters to bring in men, materials and and supplies. The result was that British sea superio rity proved to be of almost no importance. The British men-of-war dominated the sea lanes—but they could do nothing to the Nazi air transports which flew safely by overhead.

What is new is the magnitude of the plan recently proposed by Henry J. Kaiser, and supported by a number o fthe principal builders ofaircraft. The German planes so far used have been relatively small—Mr. Kaiser envisages air freighters of 200 to 500 tons. The German planes, due to the Reich geographical position, have not had to have any great range—Mr. Kaiser envisages freighters which can cross the seas and still have capacity for tremendous amounts of cargo. The German planes, it is believed, were and are being produced slowly and in relatively small numbers—Mr. Kaiser talks of building planes of vast size under a mass-production system which will turn them out almost as quic kly as Detroit assembly lines used to turn out motor cars.

No one can deny that the cargo plane idea, if it is workable, will prove at least a partial solution to the most difficult problem the United Nations face. So far as production for war is concerned, this country has generally realized the "arsenal of democracy" goal laid down by the President. But getting that production to he far-flung batlefronts of this global war is a very different matter. The hard truth is that the Axis is sinking more ships than the United Nations can replace —and it is sinking with them an enormous amount of vital supplies. The Navy has not been able to solve the problem. And some authorities are convinced that it is basically insoluble—that ter rible losses will continue and perhaps mount, unless and until the freighters leave the water and take to the skies.

Even the biggest cargo planes so far built cannot carry a great deal in one trip But, over a period of time, their speed will makeup for that lack. It is said, for instance, that 40 flying boats of the 70 ton size are equal to a 10,800-ton Liberty ship in carrying capacity. An ordinary freighter can make only three round trips to and from Australia in th course of a year—and a cargo plane can make 26. A cargo plane might make 70 or more round trips carrying freight and troops to England.

Skeptics have said that Mr. Kaiser's plan is impractical and visionary—that it is impossible to build cargo planes on a mass production basis in shipyards. But Mr. Kaiser and other builders have confounded skeptics be fore this on many occasions. According to him, both his own yards and others of a similar type are adequately equipped to build the planes He has said also that a plant ply necessary materials with could be built quickly to supout detracting from other effort. These planes would essential phases of the war require, by comparison with ships, a fairly small amount of steel—and steel is one of the major bottlenecks of the present time. The steel mills have done a fine job in stepping up capacity to the utmost—but they simply have not been able to turn out enough.

So far as the practicality of the planes themselves is concerned, there seems to be little question. The gigantic flying boat "Mars", built as an experiment by the Glenn Martin Company, has proved completely successful in its trials. The Army's B-19, largest land plane ever built has also proved its worth. are now on the drawing And far bigger planes still boards of the designers.

The advocates of cargo planes also say that they would be extremely difficult to intercept and destroy. Their range and speed would be so great that they could constantly change their routes. When aapproaching their destinations, Allied fighters could be sent out to screen them and bring them in. Due to the time element closely follow certain definite and prescribed routes—alone, merchant ships must and they must, at the end of their journeys, converge on ports which are known to the enemy. The planes, in brief, would be infinitely flexible.

Steps are being taken to get the Kaiser program star ted. The skeptics are waiting and watching with their fingers crossed—while the plan's backers seem to have no doubts at all. Inside a year, the country should know which side is right.

NOT TOO HOT — NOT TOO COLD

Sailors' Hats and Squawkers

All of us find gas rationing a greater or lesser inconvenience, but most of us understand the reasons for it and accept it in good spirit. There are, however, squawkers.

To squawkers' attention is commended the remark of an American admiral in charge of convoying supplies to and from the East coast of the United States and Europe. On this most recent trip home, said, this admiral:

"If I could show the squawkers the sailors' hats floating in the debris on the Atlantic, maybe they wouldn't be so anxious to waste gas."

The next time you're tempted to grouse about gas rationing, remember those hats.

Write Letters to Our Boys in Service

The public has contributed millions for the USO and innumerable people who live near army camps and other military establishments devote much time to entertaining men in service, to keep up their morale. These contributions and activities help inestimably. But a soldier or sailor may play games in a service club or dance with a "local girl" and at the same time have a heavy heart because of a letter he carries in his pocket—a letter from home which is so full of "sympathy" that it has made him pity himself, and contains so much of fault-finding, doubt and fear that it unfits him for the job he is doing and for the bigger job that lies ahead.

For instance: A stalwart soldier suddenly come upon in a woods near a camp, weeping—and giving as the cause a letter from home which had nothing in it but pity and complaining; reading the letter, at the corporal's request, we boiled with indignation that anyone should write so to a man away at war. A soldier who told of a buddy in his barracks, waking him long after midnight with his cursing, and explaining, on being questioned, that a letter he had got that day from his dad "would make any soldier swear."—A captain who said that several of his men had told him of, and in some cases shown him, discouraging letters they had received.—A lieutenant who said that "it's bad enough for a soldier not to get any letters, but it's even worse to get such letters as some of them do."

Solving the Rubber Problem

"The tightest, grimmest war shortage facing the U. S. is rubber," says Time. "It need not have been. For five months after Pearl Harbor the U. S. Government did practically nothing to get synthetic rubber industry to fill the gap by Japan's conquests. That failure is the worst scandal in the U. S. war effort."

There has been an enormous waste of time in coming to grips with the rubber problem. There has been endless confusion, and excessive division of responsibility. At last, however, it looks as if something definite and constructive is about to be done.

On July 17, Donald Nelson announced that he had assumed personal direction of the government's rubber program. On the same day, the 4th Corps Area Quartermaster Headquarters, said that tires made of buna, a petroleum derivative, will be used as replacements on all army vehicles throughout the nation. And on July 15, President W. S. Fairish of the the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, gave a House subcommittee some exceedingly interesting information on the progress that is being made.

New and faster processes, said Mr. Farish, will produce, before the end of 1943, 34,000,000 more automobile tires than were expected. Further, synthetic rubber will be better on the whole than natural rubber, and its cost will not be materially greater.

This does not mean that any motorist can afford to "burn up" his rubber, on the theory that replacements will soon be available. Military needs will absorb most and perhaps all the synthetic rubber produced for a long time to come. Rigid conservation of rubber, as a result, remains an absolute necessity. Private industry is doing everything in its power to produce an ade quate supply of synthetic rubber in the shortest possible time. There are, at last, grounds for believing that government rubber red-tape is cut, and that there can be action, not continued political talk, in dealing with rubber problem.

Extravagance Helps Hitler

"Extravagance in any form, by citizens or by government, imperils the effort," wrote Dr. Henry M. Wris ton, president of Brown University, recently. "Individuals are asked to reverse their habits of spending if inflation is not to destroy their substance. The same obligation rests upon the government. . . .

"If we proceed without waste, if we increase our productive power, if we decrease our expenditures for non-essentials, we cannot only survive but survive without bankruptcy. This can be done only if considerations of political advantage are put aside, only if government curtails its own activities as it expects citizens to curtail theirs, only if the government make its policies consistent with each other."

At the present time, government is taking strenous steps to reduce consumer purchasing power, in order to prevent inflation. That, as well as the production of needed revenue for the Treasury, is one reason for unprecedented taxation and for ever-increasing sales of War Bonds and Stamps. It is forecast in some circles that a system of enforced savings will be eventually adopted. Yet government spends "as usual." Government will now swallow the medicine it prescribed for the people.

Every dispassionate survey indicates that Federal expense can be reduced billions a year without imperiling the war effort. The cuts could be made entirely in non-war expenditures. But that will never be done until the people demand it—and kick out every public official who refuses to cooperate.

40 Mile Per Hour Speed Limit is Planned

A bill to reduce the maximum speed of all automobiles to forty miles an hour will be introduced at the next session of the General Assembly with the santion of the administration, it was said yesterday.

Governor O'Conor already has warned operators of commercial vehicles to observe the forty-mile speed limit or "be dealt with severely."

President Roosevelt already has made an appeal to the nation's motor-vehicle drivers to observe a forty-mile-an-hour limit to save tires, and Governor O'Conor several months ago issued a proclamation calling for the reduction of passenger-vehicle speed to a forty-mile maximum.

Governor O'Conor didn't have to issue such a proclamation concerning commercial vehicles because that is the legal speed limit for such vehicles.

However, the Governor has reques ted the Maryland Traffic Safety Commission to notify trucking interests and State enforcement bodies that the limit would be enforced.

Such an order was given, the Governor said, because the Office of Price Administration said their field force has complained that violations are "rampant all over the State."

"I am hopeful," the Governor said, "that this warning will be heeded, because anyone not observing the law will be dealt with severely. I am sure that truck operators will cooperate patriotically rather than be forced to do so by application of the law."

The Governor said that "some time ago he had requested all truck companies to arrange their schedules to conform with the forty-mile speed limit, but there were many who did not heed the warning."

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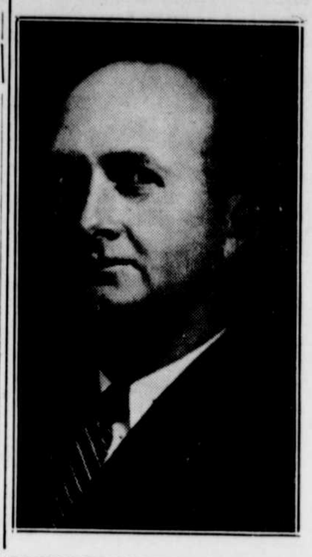

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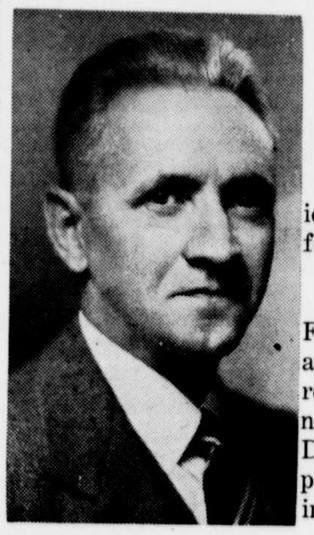

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