The Nation At War ★

A complete coverage of the week's news on the all-out effort of the United Nation's fight for freedom.

An estimated 660,000 essential war workers in the Detroit area have been held at their jobs by an agreement announced by Montague A. Clark, Michigan Director of the War Manpower Commission. The agreement—intended to prevent labor pirating and dislocations caused by shifting of workers to higher-paying jobs—lists 34 categories in which employees may not leave their jobs without specific Governmental authorization. President Roosevelt's Executive Order setting up the new War Manpower Commission under the Chairmanship of Paul V. McNutt had provided that, when the effective prosecution of the war required it, all war workers be hired, rehired and recruited through the U. S. Employment Service, and had prohibited employers from retaining workers more urgently needed in a more essential occupation. Mr. McNutt said the new program embraces the allocation of manpower to the armed forces, war industries, agriculture, and other essential civilian activities, the efficient use of labor for war industries, the mobilization of the country's labor reserves, the transfer of workers from less essential activities to more essential activities, and the providing of labor needed for essential agriculture. He announced the establishment of a Bureau of Selective Service—to include the Selective Service System and to be headed by Selective Service Director Hershey—within the new WMC, and said that by the end of 1943 one out of every five men in the civilian labor force, instead of one out of every nine, as now, would be in the armed forces.

The WMC and the Selective Service System are helping the country's war plants draw up manning table forms to enable the employer to plan for his future labor needs and give the Government information upon which to base the orderly withdrawal of workers who must be released to the armed services. Secretary of Labor Perkins reported 3,200,000 women employed as factory wage earners in mid-October as compared with 2,700,000 in October 1941, and said that in the same period total factory wage workers increased from 11,400,000 to 12,700.000. Under Secretary of War Patterson said the average work week should be raised in all wage and non-war industries from the present averagework week should be rasised in all wage and non-war industries from the present average of 42.8 hours to an overall average of 48 hours.

Agriculture

An Executive Order of December 7 gave full control over the nation's food program to Secretary of Agriculture Wickard. Mr. Wickard is to control all phases of the food program—requirements, production, distribution, priorities and allocations, purchase and procurement. To permit effective use of these controls, the Order provided for the procurement from WPB of farm machinery, supplies and equipment necessary to carry out the program, the power to order civilian rationing of foods through OPA, the determination of policies and procedures for the feeding of people in foreign countries, the issuance of directives relating to the importation of food, and the issuance of priority schedules for domestic transportation of food.

The functions, personnel, and property of certain agricultural bureaus and divisions concerned primarily with the production of food will be consolidated into a Food Production Administration, with Herbert W. Parisius, Associate Director of the Office of Agricultural War Relations, as Director, and the functions, personnel, and property of certain agricultural bureaus concerned primarily with the distribution of food will be consolidated into a Food Distribution Administration, with Roy Hendrickson, present AMA Administrator, as Director.

Secretary Wickard said prospects are good for meeting 1943 food requirements, but in order to meet those requirements the U. S. must use fully and economically its production facilities and distribution system and exert economy in the consumption of foods. Some foods may be scarce, he said, but "no one will need to go hungry." The Executive Order will enable the Agriculture Department to set up a national "assembly line," in the production and distribution of food vitally needed to win the war and the peace.

Lend-Lease deliveries of American foodstuffs for shipment to other United Nations, as reported by t he Department, increased 93,000,000 pounds during October, bringing the month's deliveries to 645,000,000 pounds and the total since the program was started to nearly 8,000,000,000 pounds. The AMA delivery report showed increased deliveries of eggs, dairy products, meats, grains, and other products.

The War Front

President Roosevelt told Congress that American forces overseas will number more than 1,000,000 by the end of this month, and said "the Axis powers have, temporarily at least, lost the initiative." The OWI reported that from December 7, 1941, to December 7, 1942, the U. S. armed forces suffered 58,307 casualties—37,678 in the Army and 22,629 in the Navy. Major Gen. A. A. Vandergrift, Marine Commander, stated that in the 4-months campaign on Guadalcanal 7,000 Japanese troops have been killed and 450 Japanese planes destroyed, with enemy losses exceeding U. S. losses by 10 to 1. During the first year of war (December 7 to December 7), U. S. communiques have announced the sinking in the Pacific and Far East of 306 Japanese ships and 85 U. S. ships.

The Navy announced the 22,000-ton U. S. liner President Coolidge, transporting approximately 4,000 Army troops, struck a mine in the South Pacific and sank with a loss of only four men, and also reported the loss through enemy action of the USS Alchiba, an auxiliary cargo ship.

Gen. MacArthur's headquarters announced the complete occupation of the Gona area in New Guinea, with Allied forces advancing against the remaining Japanese forces in the Buna-Sanananda area. According to communiques, at least 95 Japanese have been killed and 4 captured in attempts to escape from their surrounded positions. On December 6 and 7 U. S. planes destroyed 21 Japanese aircraft, 18 of them in the Buna-Gona area.

Lt. Gen. Henry H. Arnold, Commanding General of the Army Air Forces, said that in the air struggle over Tunisia American planes and personnel are for the first time in this war going up against first-class air power, engaging the best planes the Germans possess. If the U. S. can continue to destroy the enemy plane for plane, we will come out ahead, he stated as U. S. production is at least twice that of the Axis.

Production

WPB Chairman Nelson described October arms output as "disappointing as it was up only 3 percent over September, the smallest monthly increase this year. He gave the October box score for major categories of war production; airplanes were down 5 percent, mainly due to special factors affecting deliveries; merchant vessels were down 10 percent but still ahead of schedule; ordnance was up 3 percent; Army and Navy vessels were up 4 percent; other munitions were up 9 percent; and machine tools were up 8.3 percent—a new high for machine tool production.

Because of the conflicting essentiality of many phases of the war production program, said President Roosevelt, the final decision as to what is most needed remains with the Army and Navy.

Lend-Lease

In the three months ended December 11 Lend-Lease assistance to the nation's Allies totaled $2,367,000,000, the President told Congress. This represents an increase of more than 1-3 over the previous quarter and more than four times the Lend-Lease total for the quarter immediately preceding Pearl Harbor.

Civilian Supply

Civilian goods will dimish steadily in 1943 and every effort must be made to insure continued production of civilian supplies through the concentration of output in a few plants, said Joseph L. Weiner, new Director of the Office of Civilian Supply.

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Maryland Musings

Farm production in 1943 will be marked by important regional shifts in production, it is stated by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Increased production of poultry and eggs and of vegetables, is sought in all states. A shift is expected in commercial vegetable areas from crops of low nutritive value to crops of high nutritive value.

A forester is one whose training and experience comprise study and practice in the management of wild land for the coordinated production of timber and tree products, water, forage, and browse, and a setting for recreation.

Good feeding and management is one of the most efficient ways to increase the supply of pork that is so urgently needed without over-investing in breeding stock and equipment.

Where poor hay is fed, dairy cows will not eat so much and it will be necessary to feed more heavily of grain. Fortunately, there is an ample supply of high protein oil meal feeds.

Price trends during the remainder of the war will be determined more by governmental action than by the usual demand-supply relationships.

Supplies of several insecticides and fungicides will be tight, but with careful handling essential needs probably can be met.

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A GOOD BOOK TO READ

FRIENDS OF MINE by Gustav Eckstein, Readers Club, $1.50.

(Reviewed by Naomi Russell, senior and president of the Science Club, Washington College, Chestertown, Maryland.)

"Friends of Mine" is a different book.

Dr. Eckstein writes about canaries, rats, pigeons, turtles, parrots, and cats with simplicity, warmth of affection, and gentle humor. His humor and terse, direct style make his animal friends almost human. The book somehow makes the reader concerned with the daily successes of these creatures in their life struggle.

Though professionally Dr. Eckstein is a science teacher, he does not approach his subject pedantically or objectively, in the scientific sense. He is a friend and host; these many animals live in his laboratory free to go their own rosy way, and he is a sympathetic companion to them.

The first portion of the book is devoted to two rats who live in the doctor's desk. Their activities, emotional responses,- love-making, homemaking, and decline are intimately followed. The account is written with such high seriousness that it fully amuses the reader.

Canaries, however, are the subject of the greater part of the book. The fascination of the canary mind is illustrated by a canary caught watching a man's eye. In a canary sense she seemed to be trying to understand him.

The author believes that canaries, like human beings in many respects, also possess the power of reasoning. For instance, when Billie fell and broke her wing, she began to climb up sticks to the table and later used the same method to get to the top of a ladder. Not being able to fly, she had reasoned and used a substitute action.

Dr. Eckstein claims that one can distinctly tell individual birds apart, if in no other way, then, "by their tails you shall know them," and he believes every action has some definite meaning. He has a long list of possible reasons why a bird sings.

A very interesting account is given of the reception of a radio broadcast of Toscanini's directing the Beethoven Ninth Symphony. All of the male canaries and one female burst into song and continued their song until the very end of the program.

To illustrate Dr. Eckstein's unique style, I quote a short playlet as he writes it:

"In a minute the first shadow edged sidewise up to the second. The second drew away. The first pursued. The second shrank and fluttered. Too late. The two became one. The shadow that did not flutter, the confident shadow, was Puck."

(Any book reviewed in this column will be sent to you postpaid by the Washington College Bookstore, Chestertown, Md., upon receipt of order accompanied by check or money order.)

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Hanging Lakes

Alaska has many picturesque "hanging lakes" carved out by glaciers, but many of them can be seen only from an airplane.

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