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.

Shortly after the White House announcement of the President's stopover in Liberia on his way home from the Casablanca conferences, an official communique from Rio de Janeiro disclosed that the President had also stopped in Natal for a conference with President Vargas of Brazil. The visit to Liberia was made to pay respects to President Edwin Barclay, to review a large detachment of American Negro troops, and to inspect the large Firestone rubber plantation. The conference at Natal brought together the presidents of the two largest American republics, the United States and Brazil.

Although, according to White House Secretary Early, the story of the Casablanca conferences is complete, "so far as it can be told at the present time," subsequent chapters undoubtedly will be written as events unfold. Secretary of State Hull told reporters that even the State Department has not yet learned all the details on what was said about the political situation in North Africa.

Lend-Lease

Testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Lend-Lease Administrator Stettinius reaffirmed the lend-lease principle—"the principle of total cooperation among nations in the waging of war"—as the only one on which a war of alliance can successfully be waged. The question, he said, is not whether we should continue to send supplies to our Allies, but why have we not sent more. Lend-lease supplies to China, for example, are getting through in pitifully small amounts in terms of what China needs not nearly all that we would have liked to have supplied.

"Lend-lease," Mr. Stettinius said, "is not a loan of money. Nor has it ever been an act of charity. The lend-lease program of providing goods and services to nations resisting the Axis aggressors was undertaken for the defense of this country and has been carried out in the interests of the people of the United States." The cumulative value of U. S. lend-lease aid from March 11, 1941 (date of its inception) to December 31, 1942, was $8,253,000,000—79 percent of this for goods, 21 percent for services. And about 90 percent of the goods—valued at almost $6,000,000,000—has been shipped.,

One of the greatest achievements of lend-lease has been its help in making the British Isles an impregnable base for offensive operations. A large part of the North African campaign was launched from Britain and so were the campaigns in the Middle East, Italian Africa, Syria, Madagascar.

A few facts on reciprocal lend-lease: the United Kingdom from May to November supplied U. S. forces in the United Kingdom with materials (other than construction materials) which would have taken 1,200,000 ship tons if shipped from this country; Australia and New Zealand, under reciprocal lend-lease, are supplying practically all of the food consumed by our men in the South Pacific area, including more than 100,000,000 pounds of food, and are providing camps, airfields, repair depots, and numerous other items; the British Navy furnished two-thirds of the warships which convoyed the expedition to North Africa; also for North Africa, the British supplied such substantial quantities of military equipment as four 1,000-bed field hospitals, 168 Spitfires, 600 ambulances, artillery, airfield runways, bombs ammunition.

Since the inception of the Soviet aid program in October 1941, we have transferred to the Soviet Union supplies, including food, costing more than $1,250,00,000. Lend-lease food shipments to Russia from now on are expected to exceed by a considerable margin lend-lease food shipments to all other parts of the world combined including shipments to the United Kingdom.

North African Drive

In the conferences recently held in North Africa—the Casablanca conference and the military conference at General Eisenhower's headquarters—th highest military authorities of the United States and Great Britian conferred on strategy for the Mediterranean theater, setting the stage for a final offensive against all Axis forces remaining in Africa. That the Axis expects a gigantic Allied push is evident from the alarms sounded by the Axis—controlled radio.

Meanwhile, things have been relatively quiet. There has been little change in the ground situation since Rommel's retreating army abondoned Tripoli and ran for the Tunisian frontier. The Middle Eastern Command on Friday, January 29, reported artillery exchanges between the British Eighth Army and the Afrika Korps, rear guard near Zuara, 64 miles west of Tripoli and 32 miles from Tunisia on the road that leads north to Gabes and Sfax, and American troops have made lightning raids in southern Tunisia and have regained positions in the Ousseltia Valley of northeastern Tunisia. But most of the activity in the battle areas has taken place in the air, and even that has been hampered by bad weather.

Secretary of War Stimson released figures on American casualties in Tunisia. Thus far, our casualties number 1,258, including 211 killed, 532 wounded and 515 missing. Of those missing 226 have been reported prisoners of the Axis.

Aircraft Losses

Mr. Stimson also released figures on plane-versus-plane losses suffered by the enemy and the U. S. Army Air Forces in all theaters of operation. According to the War Department's box score, the enemy lost 1,349 planes in 1942, destroyed or probably destroyed, and the USAAF lost 309—a ratio of approximately four to one! Even figuring only enemy "positives"—planes known to have been destroyed—the ratio is three Axis planes to one American plane.

Farm Labor

To Agriculture Secretary Wickard has been given the unified responsibility of supplying labor for war production on farms. A War Manpower Commission directive has brought together in the Agriculture Department the responsibility for recruiting and placing farm labor, the determination of needs and areas of supply, the transportation of farm workers to shortage areas, and the determination of war-essential crops. The Commission will continue to control over-all manpower policies and standards, including those affecting agriculture, and to determine Selective Service standards applying to agriculture, and will continue to be responsible for "review and apprasial of the agriuclture labor program."

In a joint press conference Mr. McNutt and Mr. Wickard said that unless 3,500,000 persons are placed on farms by the time the seasonal peak is reached this summer, agriculture in general faces a breakdown. In December 1942, 8,900,000 persons were engaged in farming. But if production goals are to be met this year, this figure must be increased to more than 12,000,000.

Pointing out that during the past two years agriculture lost an average of 1,500,000 workers a year, Mr. Wickard said the Agriculture Department field agencies might arrange for the closing of schools during weeks when there was a critical farm labor shortage. He stressed the need for farm families to leave subsistence farms for farms where full production can be obtained, emphasizing that the reduction in the number of units required for Selective Service deferment did not mean that the standards of production for war goals had been reduced likewise.

Federal Subsidy Program

A Federal subsidy program of approximately $100,000,000 to encourage increased production of war foods and fibers in 1943, has been announced. According to Mr. Wickard, the new payments are more a subsidy to consumers than to farmers, as they will permit farmers to increase production without immediately higher prices. To finance the fund, Congress is being asked to raise the appropriation for the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act from $400,000,000 to $500,000,000.

IT TAKES BOTH!

U. S. Treasury Department

Maryland Musings

Although the farmer's share of the consumer's food dollar is now larger than it has been in recent years, the retail cost of food now represents the smallest share of the industrial worker's income on record, according to Secretary of Agriculture, Claude R. Wickard.

—M M—

All town and suburban home owners who have enough open, sunny space and fertile ground should produce as much as possible of the family's vegetable supply for the year, especially green and leafy vegetables, tomatos and yellow vegetables.

—M M—

Provide at least one quart of water for every 40 chickens during the first two weeks, one quart for every 20 chickens from three to eight weeks, and one quart for every 10 chickens after eight weeks.

—M M—

If we could market 80 percent of all the pigs born instead of 60 percent average, pork production would jump one-third. Every pig possible is vitally needed.

—M M—

Regulated areas in Maryland were extended under the amended Japanese beetle quarantine regulations announced by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, effective January 14, 1943. The entire state of Maryland is now within the regulated area, the announcement states, except the southernmost section of the WesternShore and small areas in the westernmost counties. The part of the regulated area from which the movement of fruits and vegetables by motor truck or refrigerator car is under regulation—the more heavily infested area—has been extended to include sections of th Eastern Shore of Maryland previously excluded from this area.

—M M—

Those who plan and start Victory Gardens should be prepared to take care of them faithfully through the spring and summer, and where climate permits, right through fall and winter, as well. We cannot afford to waste seed, fertilizer, insecticides and effort this year.

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