GENERAL HUGH S. JOHNSON Says:

United Features — WNU Service

Washington, D. C.

FARM EXPORT PROBLEM

It is belatedly gratifying to learn that the department of agriculture is now considering the "two-price" system of disposing of farmer's crops—both as to domestic and foreign consumption.

For export trade it will buy up the surplus which no home market consumes and sell it abroad for the best price it will bring. To increase domestic consumption, it will extend the food-stamp plan for surplus products, which is also a two-price" system giving lower prices to the poor to insure an adequate diet to all our people and to remove the American reproach of "starvation in the midst of plenty."

As I understand it, although the details are not yet plain, the public, all of us, will pay for the discount below market prices on the food stamp sale of butter, eggs, citrus and other fruits, meats and fresh vegetables—and even cotton—for the poor. I can't see much the matter with that, much as I dislike the growing cost of government. This column began boosting the food-stamp plan long before it was announced and as soon as Henry Wallace told me about it. My only regret was that I had not thought of it first.

I believe George Peek and I did think first of the "two-price" system on export surplus—way back in 1921. It is almost a necessary corollary of our tariff system. We have maintained here partly by the tariff, a structure of prices far above that of the rest of the world. No tariff and no purely domestic device can keep on that high level the prices of surplus crops—wheat, cotton and animal fats. This is because the price of the surplus fixes the price of the whole crop whether sold abroad or at home—and nothing that can be done at home can prevent that dire result.

The net effect is that, while all the rest of our people enjoy the higher American standards, the farmer producing the export crops is thrust outside our tariff walls. In equity there is no argument against his having a "parity price" (one for what he sells on the domestic market on the same high level charged for what he buys) but there is no good argument for his receiving such a high price for what he produces in excess of domestic requirements which must be sold in export.

There are only two alternatives, and one of them is abortive. The sensible one is that now suggested, to insure an American price for the part of the crop consumed at home and to sell the surplus for what it will bring. The other is what has been attempted for the past eight years—to jimmy up the American price for the whole crop by loans, by restriction on acreage, by storing unmanageable surplus, and other inventions.

It kept up precariously the American price, but it constantly threatened the American markets by accumulating an unmanageable surplus. It priced American farm products out of world markets they had enjoyed for a century.

* * *

WILLKIE'S 'BLITZ'

Mr. Willkie was asked, on landing, for comment on my statement that he had only been permitted to see what British authorities wanted him to see. His reply was that I didn't know what I was talking about.

Of course, I never said anything remotely resembling that. I said that he had been completely advised by the voice of hard-bitten experience how to make effective the kind of pilgrimage on which he was embarked.

He was advised (as we all know now) that Winston Churchill is the most adroit advocate of our time, and perfectly and properly. He was advised to listen to him respectfully and then say, if familiarities had progressed so far: "Well, Winnie our hearts are all with you but you are a Briton—praise God, half American—and I want to go home as all-American and make a realistic report to the American people.

I only criticized Mr. Willkie for not doing that, but exposing himself to every emotional impulse—not for seeing only what the British government wanted him to see. I believe that they would have withheld nothing from him. He elected the emotional, spectacular and blitz-publicity role. He took what he was told from Mr. Churchill. He contented himself with an exploration of British fortitude, which we of British birth took for granted.

He did it a time when one of the most serious pieces of legislation ever presented to our people was before our congress. He became a part of a British effort to bums-rush that legislation—Lord Halifax's astounding visit to our congressional committee demanding a "time-table," Mr. Churchill's glorious and masterful speech (the interior texture of which reveals much careful effort to appease or allay American opinion on this bill) and, finally, Mr. Willkie's appearance advocating exactly what Mr. Churchill would like, further giving away of the navy.

WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS — By Edward C. Wayne

Britain Mines Singapore Sea Lanes As Tension Is Increased in Far East; Turkish-Bulgarian Nonaggression Pact Adds to Puzzling Line-Up in Balkans

(EDITOR'S NOTE—When opinions are expressed in these columns, they are those of the news analyst and not necessarily of this newspaper.)

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

This map shows where the lightning is expected to strike in the Far East. All indications point to an early attempt by Japan to extend her "New Order" in Asia to the south. Britain reports that she has mined approaches to her great naval base, Singapore, which is the main obstacle in the path of Japanese expansion. Biggest question marks now are: (1) Can Japan successfully attack Singapore? (2) Can the U. S. stand by while the Japanese spread south?

FAR EAST:

Pressure

Japan, under terrific pressure from the Axis, moved her fleet down toward the South Pacific and made strong demands for privileges of exploitation of territory on the Dutch East Indies.

Four powers, Australia, Britain, The Netherlands and the United States, simultaneously put the pressure on Japan, and there was little indication which way the "cat would jump" whether Japan would be propelled into open war on the Axis side or would back down precipitately.

Britain warned Japan that her moves against the Dutch East Indies would be considered in the light of a warlike act.

Australia echoed this, and held a special secret cabinet meeting to discuss defensive action against Japan.

The Netherlands government, in London, ordered all ships in East Indian waters or neighborhoods to put at once into neutral ports, a usual prelude to warfare.

The United States issued to all Americans in China and Japan a third and peremptory warning to leave immediately.

Quick was the response from Japan, but once again the response showed the nation is divided, and there were reports that there were so many Axis agents in positions of power in Tokyo that the Japanese government was in reality little more than a puppet.

The first evidence that the pressure from the four powers was taking effect came from official Japanese sources, in the form of a statement that the fleet movements had only been to keep order in Thailand-Indo-Chinese territory, and that no warlike measures against the South Pacific were intended.

But the very next day, after President Roosevelt had had a long, personal and serious talk with Ambassador Nomura, the only announcement from which was that he had stressed the necessity of friendly relations, one Japanese newspaper printed an editorial comment that Nomura was "confronted with an impossible task."

On this fire the Italian and German papers heaped oil, one Rome dispatch saying that American activities in the Pacific were definitely threatening to Japan and could only result in war.

The "activities" referred to were contracts awarded for the fortification of Pacific bases, more than $4,700,000 alone to be spent at Guam, a base at which the Japansese have been looking sideways for a long time.

But if these "activities" were threatening, the Axis powers had something new to get excited about when Great Britain announced that she had mined the sea lanes in the vicinity of Singapore, her important oriental naval base. While the brief government notice to mariners giving the boundaries of the mined areas gave no explanation as to why the move was made, it was generally believed that the British feared a Japanese thrust in Asia so timed as to create diversion while Italy and Germany harassed Great Britain with some new activity elsewhere.

HEADLINES
. . . in the news

Rome—All newspaper men representing foreign papers are now forbidden to leave Rome.

St. John's, N. F.—Old Glory now flies over the soil of Newfoundland for the first time in history. The flag has been raised at Argentia, on the defense base leased to the U. S. while the garrison stood at salute.

WAR:

Balkan Crisis

Moving of 400,000 to 600,000 Nazi troops into Rumania and according to uncomfirmable reports, many thousands into Bulgaria brought matters in the Balkans to a terrific pressure crisis.

Little Bulgaria was merely a pawn in the war game, not one authority believing for a moment that she could or would make any substantial effort to halt what looked like an obvious move on the part of Germany to send an overpowering blow against Greece.

That the British success in Africa and the Greek success in Albania was to receive an answer from Hitler seemed certain. That answer began not only to take form but to assume critical proportions.

Britons Move Out

First definite action-move was the removal of all British diplomats from Rumania. This was closely followed by a statement from official British quarters that Rumanian trade would be barred.

This seemed a last forerunner to a bombing of Rumanian oil fields and Germany's troops and communications, in other words, to the entry into the war terrain of Rumanian lands, although the country and government were technically out.

The next definite steps were taken by Russia and Turkey. The Soviet, which had been viewing askance the movements by the Nazi hordes into Rumania and toward the mouth of the Danube, moved its fleet into waters from which action in that quarter might be taken, either as an ally or an enemy of Turkey.

Turkey Takes Stand

Meanwhile the Turks took their stand, concentrating what military power they had as near the Bulgarian frontier as possible. In the same movement they announced their intention not to sit "passively by" and let Germany move troops into Bulgaria and thence against Salonika.

But then came an announcement that a Bulgarian-Turkish non-aggression pact had been signed which would indicate that the Turks were avoiding any chance of breaking the peace with the Axis powers.

The Greeks were holding the Italians either at a standstill or were moving them backward steadily as this series of startling and critical events took place.

The British at the same time were not idle, but boldly sailed their naval vessels into action in the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas, shelled northwestern Italian ports, and dropped parachutists (the first they had used in the war) into southern Italy for the purpose of cutting water supplies and communications.

With regard to the success or failure of this effort, only the conflicting reports coming from Italy could tell, as the British were silent. The first Italian report was that all the parachutists had been captured before they could do serious damage.

Later, however, an unexplained dispatch stated that Italy had halted all rail traffic to and from the affected area. This was taken in some quarters to mean that some of the British air soldiers had succeeded in cutting the railway lines.

Treated as Soldiers

Italian sources said that as the British parachute-men were clad in regular uniforms, they would be treated as prisoners of war and not as spies.

British sources, though they admitted the raid had been made, declined any details. Speculative dispatches from London, however, recalled that Germany and Soviet Russia had pioneered in this type of attack, and hinted that the British airmen sought to break the 152-mile long Apulian aqueduct.

'1776' in 1941

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Elderly women, members of the "Mothers' Crusade Against the Lease-Lend Bill" are pictured above in one of their activities in connection with their drive against the adoption of the Aid-to-Britain measure. Recently a number of them were ejected for creating a disturbance in the senate chambers.

BATTLE OF BRITAIN:

West Front

Whether the British believed that Germany was "feinting" in the Middle East and the Balkans or not, no stone was being left unturned by the RAF to attempt to assume mastery of the air on the western front.

A long succession of raids was carried out on channel or "invasion" ports, growing in intensity, while the Nazi raids were becoming less and less intense, leading to a conviction in England that Hitler's men were resting for what might be the decisive attack by air of the war.

In one raid the British airmen dropped bombs and incendiaries from Ostend to Boulogne hour after hour, working in waves, until watchers on the Kentish coast reported miles and miles of the opposing coastline to be in flames.

The weather was clear and the thousands standing on the British cliff-tops had a fine view of the attack, which, though it took place at night, was brilliantly illuminated by German searchlights, by bomb-flares and by the resulting fires.

As the airmen went over the heads of the watchers and came back from the scene of action, ferrying their loads of death and destruction over the channel, enormous cheers rose from the watching throngs.

The anti-aircraft barrage all along the coast seemed to the witnesses more powerful than any seen before, giving rise to the belief that perhaps this would be the main center of Nazi activity in the spring, not in the Balkans.

AFRICA:

Record Drive

The history-making sweep of the British armies, together with what aid has been offered by African forces, guerrila bands of natives and the Free French under DeGaulle, continued apace and seemed about to make history as the greatest single advance of armed forces in the history of human warfare.

The British forces were moving rapidly into Tripolitania on the one hand, and down on the Indian ocean and the shores of the Red sea they were making advances into Eritrea in a pincers movement in which army, navy and air force were cooperating.

The breakup of the Italian armed force in northern Africa was apparently complete, and the populace of Cyrenaica in Libya was settling down under British rule and some semblance of orderly government was returning.

The British were shooting looters, and while there were some few murders of Italian settlers by native blacks, these were infrequent, as most of the Italians had either fled or had sought protection under the British rule.

The armies under Wavell, generally called the Middle East command, were in a most anomalous position, however, for while they were rapidly occupying the whole of Mussolini's African empire, their supremacy depended entirely on their command of the Mediterranean sea and airways.

MISCELLANY:

Vichy—Marshal Henri Phillippe Petain, head of the French government, got a taste of red tape when he ordered a pair of shoes. He was forced, as are other citizens, to exhibit the amount of wear on two other pairs he owns. Finally his application came back, stamped "approved."

Madrid — Spain has managed to muster 74 ships, which will be started off to the Argentine to attempt to carry wheat cargoes back to Spain. If nothing happens to delay the shipments, 120,000 tons a month can be carried.

Washington—Thomas G. Corcoran, called "Tommy the Cork" by capital columnists, and presidential adviser, failed to get the post as assistant secretary of the navy he was reported to have had his eye on. The job went to Ralph A. Bard of Chicago, on the recommendation of Secretary Knox.

The Washington MERRY-GO-ROUND

DREW PEARSON & ROBERT ALLEN

Washington, D. C.

MOBILE HOUSING

Harried by the national criticism of failure to provide housing for defense workers, Defense Housing Coordinator Charles F. Palmer finally has proposed to Roosevelt that the government buy fleets of trailers and rush them to the most congested industrial spots as temporary living quarters.

In submitting his plan, Palmer carefully avoided the term "trailers" and has cautioned his staff to refer to them as "mobile units." But never mind the fancy terminology. Plain, ordinary auto trailers are what he proposes to use.

Palmer contemplates the purchase of thousands of these homes on wheels, but where he is going to get them remains to be seen. A check of trailer manufacturers disclosed two interesting facts:

First, available at present are not more than 2,000 trailers, a drop in the bucket compared to the tens of thousands of housing units needed. Second, the plants are working day and night on urgent orders for the army, and unless they suspend such operations, can't make trailers.

Meanwhile, with a vast army of migrated workers jammed into makeshift quarters, the defense housing problem daily becomes more alarming. Public health authorities are scared stiff over the danger of epidemics.

* * *

ALIENS IN CONGRESS

Amid all the breast-thumping on Capitol Hill about aliens, it is interesting to note that 20 members of the new congress are foreign-born.

Three are veteran senators—Robert F. Wagner, New York New Dealer, author of the Labor Relations and Social Security acts, born in Germany; James J. Davis, Pennsylvania Republican, former secretary of labor, born in Wales; and James E. Murray, Montana Democrat, born in Canada.

The 17 in the house came from all parts of the world and some of them still have strong foreign accents.

B. J. Gehrmann of Wisconsin and Leonard W. Schuetz of Illinois were born in Germany. Karl Stefan of Nebraska and Rudolph Tenerowicz of Michigan were born in Austria. Incidentally, when Stefan gives a radio talk for the folks back home, he says good-by in four different languages, including German.

Two were born in Russia—Samuel Dickstein of New York and Herman Kopplemann of Connecticut. Rep. Samuel Weiss of Pennsylvania was born in Poland, and Adolph Sabath of Illinois, the genial, popular dean of the house, in Czechoslovakia.

There are two Canadian-born members of the house—Charles Eaton of New Jersey, and Albert Rutherford of Pennsylvania. William Barry of New York was born in Ireland; and Frank Crowther of New York and Robert Ramsay of West Virginia in England.

Robert Crosser of Ohio and George Gillie of Indiana were born in Scotland; Noah Mason of Illinois in Wales, and Pehr Holmes of Massachusetts in Sweden.

Outside of congress a number of high placed officials are foreign born, prominent among them Defense Commissioners Knudsen and Hillman. But the delegate from Alaska, Anthony J. Dimond, was born in New York!

* * *

FINGER-PRINTERS

Most sought-after jobs in the government recently are finger-printers in the Federal Bureau of Investigation. One reason for this is that finger-printers often are promoted to G-men.

There was an inundation of applications for these jobs after enactment of the Alien Registration law, many from young lawyers. The starting pay is $1,440, and being a finger-printer is no sinecure.

For one thing, it is hard on the eyes. Finger-printers are required to classify an average of 90 prints a day, and after a time the optical strain becomes serious. The average "life span" of a finger-printer is four years, and most of them seek promotions or transfers to other positions, the ablest becoming G-men.

G-men have a new method of taking finger-prints. The old ink pad, with smears, is out. Instead, they use a nice clean pad saturated with an invisible iron salt solution.

The fingers are pressed on the pad, then the imprint is made on a card which is sensitized with another chemical responsive to the iron solution. This produces a perfect impression of the finger's loops and whorls without soiling the skin.

* * *

MERRY-GO-ROUND

According to the congressional anti-monopoly committee, there are 5,800,000 uninhabitable homes now being occupied by tenants in the U. S.

For its ultra-modern army, the quartermaster corps actually is buying tomahawks. This is the proper catalogue term for a certain type of small hatchet used in the army.

Wendell Willkie is signed up to write a book on the campaign and his British experiences. Bobbs-Merrill has the publishing contract.

* * *

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Falling Shrapnel

Shell fragments from anti-aircraft fire fall like hail over the areas from which the shells are fired. This is one of the reasons for air-raid alarms—to clear the streets and surrounding zones of people who might otherwise be injured by the falling fragments. According to the U. S. bureau of standards, the average anti-aircraft shell is blown into approximately 2,500 fragments, many of them small and relatively harmless. Occasionally, however, large fragments fall with velocity enough to damage buildings and cause serious or even fatal injury.

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