

Ramp Mates!

Many people these days are worried about the restrictions on the use of their automobiles. The use of their cars, the shortage of gasoline, the lack of tires, the price it takes for mechanical repairs, the plight of the buses. But up here in the Ivory Tower, where visibility and perspective are so good that sometimes we can see the sun coming up in the east for tomorrow before it has gone down in the west for yesterday, we have started worrying about the time when there will be too many cars going too fast in places.

We tell you, it looks like a mess. The automobile in that future when the streets and highways will teem with them again, is going to be a great convenience. Also, a great nuisance and a greater hazard.

For one thing, there will be more of them than ever before. Whole new classes of automobile-owners will have been a by-product of war earnings and savings. Many persons of the slowest reactions and dimmest imaginations, wholly lacking in the feel of driving, will be turned loose, and the least fearful result will be traffic jams and gentle collisions. The most fearful will be a crash—and sudden death.

The way we see it now, looking from the Tower towards tomorrow, either local and State authorities had better be busying themselves about strict post-war traffic control, strict policing of the highways, and strict licensing of new drivers before letting them take the wheel. For the rest of us had best be practicing quick turns and agility.

The Gauntlet

Henry Wallace faces a stiff fight in the Senate, before being nominated as Secretary of Commerce. He may get through, after the opposition has been and his vast lending powers safely tucked away. But it should be a hot fight, even then. It's not the first one over a Cabinet post, by any means—but if Henry loses it will make history of a sort.

The Senate has defeated only one proposed cabinet for the Cabinet in the past 75 years (that in 1926 when Coolidge proposed Charles Besscher Warren as Attorney General). In all its life it has refused to confirm only six men for the Cabinet. There is a traditional feeling in Congress that whatever the stripe of man nominated, a President is entitled to line up his Cabinet as he sees fit.

As a matter of fact, the predecessor of Jesse Jones as Secretary of Commerce, one Harry Hopkins, got by in 1933 after a protracted fight. He, too, was assailed on the ground that he had little business or financial experience, and like Wallace he was known to hold economic and social views which disturbed many Senators. He got by a vote of 58-27, with only five Democrats voting against him (one of those was George of Georgia, now leading the fight against Wallace).

And it is likely that Wallace will face more opposition than did Hopkins. For he is, after all, a CIO favorite, and that doesn't make for political harmony in some sections of the country. Further, there are fifteen more Republicans sitting in the Senate today than there were six years ago. Jesse's going to make it pretty tough for Henry.

There is one more item. American business men are generally set against Wallace (at least that is our assumption), and their feeling is certain to be reflected in the Senate. There is the argument that, if the Secretary of Labor is chosen only if he or she is acceptable to Labor, and the Secretary of Agriculture only if acceptable to the farm groups, then the Secretary of Commerce should be a man acceptable to business. In any event, there'll be a gay old time, and a good deal of hilarious by-play.

Plugging A Gap

The action of OPA in setting up new controls over clothing and clothing prices will be greeted by pronounced cheering from housewives who have been struggling to keep their budgets in bounds. For of all essential commodities, only clothing has been continuing the dread spiral upward during the war. Up until this week, there was little or no control. And while the cost of living index has been held within bounds in the past thirteen months (Administra-

tor Chester Bowles says it's risen just one per cent, but the real cost has gone up over eleven per cent.

American women don't have to be told that, nor the ways and means of price increases. They have seen manufacturers shifting to higher price lines, and the disappearance of low cost clothing from stores. It was not news to them that, whereas 70 per cent of women's dresses sold for less than \$7.95 two years ago, 70 per cent now sell above that price. They know that prices themselves have actually increased, and that a sharp deterioration in wartime garments has brought on a further price increase which can't be measured.

Women know these things, we say. But it's important that they think about them. For the new controls on clothing are simply for their own protection. These new steps were taken primarily to protect the millions of white collar workers and their families whose incomes are frozen in a time of plenty, and families of servicemen living on small allowances.

To that end, the OPA program is aimed at accomplishing these objectives: Channeling textiles into low-priced apparel; cutting manufacturers back to the average price level of two years ago, bettering quality, tagging garments with OPA ceilings, firmer price control, wholesale and retail.

These steps won't increase the supply of civilian clothing, but will place new emphasis upon lower-priced clothing and deflate the market for more expensive clothing. Mr. Bowles expects the program to cut prices six or seven per cent within a few months, and forestall another possible rise of fifteen per cent during the year. It's more hold-the-line business.

Dora can hardly wait till the Army gets out its first Montgomery Ward catalogue, as she wishes to order a nice first Lieutenant.

The Stretchout

We're a little bit down in the mouth about Spring and all that it means. Our admiring public must know by now that we maintain a lively interest in the weather and the turning of the seasons. There's a special crew to take care of that subject, and it's due in our tender hearts. We've been lunched in a vital spot.

Here we've been, for the past two-three weeks, busy as beavers looking for the first signs of coming Spring. We were going to score a scoop in mid-Winter—and were just about ready to fit. We'd taken notes of the swollen buds of Winter Jasmine and Forsythia, and anxiously watched over an incandescent little Spirea bush which has been flowering since early November. We have carefully made daily checks on a whole tribe of over-zealous Narcissus which have long since flaunted their emerald blades in the chill air.

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We were getting ready: those notes and many more were in the book. But this was a dream-world. We should have known. The winter ruined it all.

In the department store district we chanced upon a lady of our acquaintance, and in course of conversation it developed that she was engaged in shoe-buying expedition. She'd combed the town, she said, but no Spring shoes were to be had. All gone. Long since gone. And Summer shoes would be in early in February. She'd have to hurry to get them.

We presume that she and her millions of American sisters will be wearing the Fall stuff by April—and that by the time we're getting set to whip up an essay on Mother Earth's leisurely ways in the Autumn, the ladies will be well into 1946. How are we gonna keep up with our nature-writing, that far behind? And what woman cares a fig for nature in the raw, anyhow? What's it to her, if she can't somehow embellish it? We're thinking of closing out this department.

For a struggle that was to be over in '42, '43 and '44, respectively, the war runs on longer than a technicolor costume drama.

Train Whistles

It is something about a train whistle. It is one of the links that bind a great sprawling nation together. In these days of graphs, plots and things like that, it is hard to find many things that bind the earth, that no statistician has figured out how many train whistles a day there are on our approximately 231,000 miles of railroad tracks.

Men and women now dwelling in teeming cities, whose cars are rattling in the rumbling roar of city traffic, who have never known the impatient blare of electrically motivated whistles, remember the train whistles when they find in a more peaceful environment. It may have been on the broad, black-soil meadows of the Midwest when the flat cars rumbled across the farmland toward the distant metropolis. Many a farm lad has halted the plow when the whistles of the train and way to the westward. It has been on the almost level sandy prairie, or in the sandy-soiled, hilly regions of the South.

NORTH CAROLINA wages are about the lowest in the country. On the average, the far west wage-earning states paid 40 per cent more last year than North Carolina. These low wages, in turn, mean that unemployment compensation in the State is very low, and the very lowest in the country.

Ordinarily, North Carolina stands in or about third in an index of industrial cost factors. But this has led us to address her, not without affection, as "Old 42."

There are 561,000 North Carolina workers covered by unemployment insurance. The few who are new unemployed can draw a maximum of \$15 weekly for a maximum period of sixteen weeks—and the average weekly check \$10. That means that in case of a prolonged depression, when thousands of North Carolinians might be out of work, the average worker can draw only \$100 a year from enough to support him during a trying time.

The State Unemployment Compensation Commission, however, has tremendous reserves on hand—about \$90,000,000. This fund is large enough to pay the average unemployed worker during a period of widespread unemployment. And at first glance this huge reserve seems large enough to take care of any possible need. At any rate, 20 is by all odds the largest state reserve in the South:

Georgia, 60 million; Virginia, 22 million; South Carolina, 20 million. Even so, expert opinion is almost unanimous in the belief that North Carolina must revise its compensation laws, that it must get off the bottom of the national ladder, and prepare itself for a period of possible post-war unemployment. Under present conditions, our unemployed draw smaller checks than workers of any other state. Just for example, a North Carolina worker eligible for a weekly benefit of \$12, would draw \$18 with the same wage credits, if he happened to live in Louisiana.

It is significant that states with ample or excessive reserves (and North Carolina is one of those) are also the states which have been most reluctant to make any similar reserves tend to offer the largest benefits. In short, if we hadn't been so busy piling up so much reserve, we could have been paying decent benefits to workers.

The General Assembly is expected to amend our compensation laws. The DCC, at least, is pressing for changes which are important.

Inclusion of firms employing fewer than eight people in unemployment coverage; returning veterans to be paid benefits before the allowances provided by the GI Bill of Rights; liberalization of benefits, working toward a 24-week maximum, and weekly maximum payment of \$15; other states have done inclusion of domestic compensation.

It is the Commission's feeling that our big reserve is sufficient to maintain unemployment for the war without jeopardizing its solvency in the post-war period. And two things are certain: Present benefit rates are too small to protect workers during a period of time and the fund must be utilized more fully if it is to provide a check against a deflationary drop in purchasing power.

In theory, the employers and employees of the state have poured these 90 millions into their fund for the protection of the entire state economy. As things stand now our funds could not provide that protection, and for all practical purposes the great effort is all but wasted. That is not all. If North Carolina does not take some steps to bring its compensation laws up to date, the Federal Government may step in and, following the present trend, work our program into a vast national enterprise, with equal benefits for all citizens everywhere. North Carolina doesn't want it that way. She'd sooner say grace over her own problem.

Standing Of The States

State	Max. weekly benefit	Avg. weekly check	Max. weeks benefit	State	Max. weekly benefit	Avg. weekly check	Max. weeks benefit
California	\$20	\$13-24	24	Kentucky	16	12	20
Maryland	20	18	23	414	16	12	240
Michigan	20	18-24	20	380	15	11	18
Illit	20	18-24	20	370	15	14-12	232
Wisconsin	20	17-20	20	350	15	14-12	222
Connecticut	20	17-20	20	342	15	14-12	224
Massachusetts	18	17	20	340	15	14	10
Illinois	20	17	20	340	15	14	224
Rhode Island	18	16-19	20	340	15	14-12	216
New York	18	16	20	320	15	13	10
Delaware	18	16	20	320	15	13	208
Louisiana	18	16	20	320	15	13	208
Alabama	15	14-12	18	297	15	14-12	208
Wyoming	18	15	19	290	15	14-12	200
New Jersey	18	15	19	270	15	12	192
Ohio	16	15	19	270	15	12	192
Missouri	18	14-12	18	270	15	12	192
New York	18	14-12	18	270	15	12	192
Pennsylvania	18	16	16	261	15	12	192
Indiana	18	15	17	250	15	12	192
Idaho	18	15	17	250	15	12	192
West Virginia	18	14-12	18	243	15	11	165
New Hampshire	18	15	16	248	15	11-9	144
Georgia	18	15	16	240	15	10	160



"Both of my children have colds, too—I think their teacher must let them run out at recess without seeing that they're properly dressed."

The Eve Of Victory

By Dorothy Thompson

When this column is written (Monday) Russian troops are approaching Thorn and Posen, and if they overrun this fortress triangle northeastern Germany becomes, in my opinion, indefensible.

The southeastern German defense depends upon the maintenance of the line Breslau-Berlin, including the Ruhr. The east German offensive, last we suffer the same (1) if the Russian front advances, we did regarding our own offensive in France.

Yet I believe the next week or so will determine whether the war against Germany is to be over in a matter of weeks or months. At any rate the Russian drive, and ours in France, is not analogous. The Normandy front was defended by a relatively small part of the German Army whereas on the Eastern front the bulk has been concentrated.

On the Eastern front, however, the bulk of the German Army has suffered its most disastrous defeat in the war and is retreating back, leaving its heavy equipment on the battlefield. There are no adequate reserves in Germany to make a defensive line of such enormous length. All the German reserves in reserves in their newly created Volksturm or German front, and that accounted for our swift advance. The Germans had reserves to make a last stand in the most highly fortified lines in Europe—the Siegfried and Maginot lines.

The remarkable thing is that you and I as American citizens are not convinced as to the truth of this. The Germans are cocky on a hitherto unknown hysteria. Although the factories and coal mines are being bombed, and the conduct of the war, German workers are being mobilized out of the country to work in the United States and are being told their lives or deaths are at stake. For the Russians intend to deport them in masses to Siberia.

Among us there are champions of the "stab-in-the-back" theory, and others who counsel moderation. The same is true in Britain. As far as the official spokesmen in America we are equally at sea. The contradictory prognosis in the western countries are especially in Russia by its unpopularity between Ilya Ehrenburg's articles, which seem to promise unlimited revenge, and the Polish "corridor"—Thomas Posen-Graudenz. At the moment

The World By Air

By Marquis Childs

ON ROUTE TO EUROPE. WHILE President and prime ministers debate the form of the war tomorrow, the airplane has altered it entirely, and that's something you ought to understand of that.

But what is novel and exciting to my generation is that today—even though most of us in our thinking are back in another era—there is a new something for politicians to remember: We are living in an air age now—today—even though most of us in our thinking are back in another era.

It would be but a slight exaggeration to say that Johnny Wagner, our crew on the Atlantic crossing, was typical of the generation flying and fighting this war. He is tops at his job, and he has good luck which has taken him farther than most. Yet in many respects he is typical.

When Wagner enlisted in the air force from South Bend, Ind., he had never been out of the country. He had actually been out of the country for four years ago, and he has well over 2,500 hours on his record as a navigator which means that he is an observant pilot. He has flown something like half a million miles.

Not once in all that has been in combat. Wagner is part of the system of global airways set up by the military and the Navy. He is literally in every corner of the earth during the course of the war. The attack at Pearl Harbor

found Johnny and his crew and plane in the Par Pacific. During January and February of 1942 they made a number of flights from Java to Australia, evacuating personnel and supplies to the United States and the Netherlands Indies. When their plane had a slight accident in Australia, they were in Paris for a few days. Johnny and the rest of his crew hitched a ride home in a Navy flying boat.

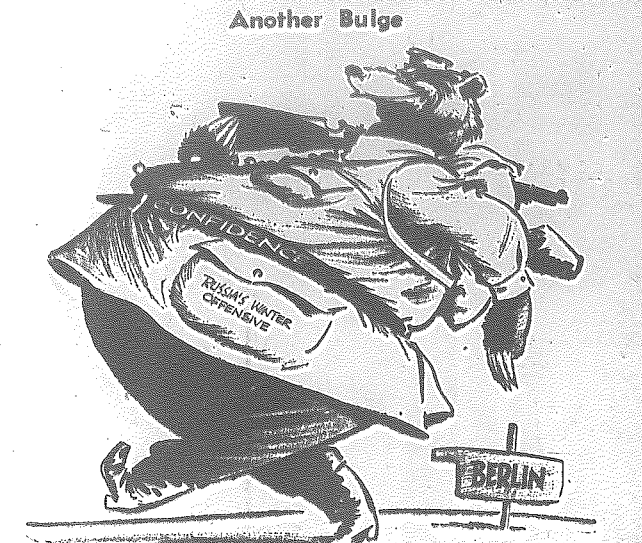
He's been on the go almost ever since. He was the navigator in the crew that flew Wendell Willkie and his party around the world, chosen for that assignment by Col. Kite, pilot of Willkie's plane. Again Kite, requested Wagner, a captain now, as navigator for the trip that took Henry Wallace to Siberia and China.

The navigator's desk is just back of the pilot's cockpit. It is a small space. There are many instruments. Wagner works with complete absorption. His desk is cluttered with charts that run in series over the route he is covering. He does elaborate computations on his own computing devices.

This is a routine job for him. He is slipping through a long and a fairly easy flight over the air force base on Greenland. It is a narrow ribbon for our big plane, between wild, snow-covered mountains.

Yap would hardly expect what he is doing. He is flying over the future after the war. He has been in four and a half years. He is thirty-two. He has been in maybe for four years more. So he thinks he will stay in the air force as the best career open to him.

Someone who must learn the meaning of the new world of the air, which is so familiar to us, Johnny Wagner, who has helped to expand it, is in here, and no amount of writing will bring back the world of yesterday.



The Merry-Go-Round

By Drew Pearson

WASHINGTON. WHEN Gen. Marshall delivered his private report on the war to President Roosevelt and Congress last week he disclosed the Berlin Winter forced thousands of American soldiers into hospitals—not because of wounds, but from pneumonia, flu and trench foot.

These ailments, resulting from over-exposure and feet in mud and water for days at a time, perhaps have taken more men out of the front line than bullets. The situation also has resulted in complaints that the Army has failed to supply adequate clothing. Actually, records of the Quartermaster Corps indicate that plenty of clothing has been sent to France. However, many soldiers discard surplus clothing during the war, and get it later. Also, men in advance positions sometimes get cut off and left in rain and snowstorms where they suffer severely no matter how much clothing they have on.

It is admitted the standard Government issue shoe probably is not adequate for the inclement, never-ending mud of the Western Front, and can't compare with the water-proof, full-blind, heavy leather boot the Russians have developed for Winter fighting. These warm boots have been one reason why the Russian Army always has been able to out-march the German Army in the Winter.

Suggestion to lend-lease outfitry, why not get a million Russian boots on reverse lend-lease from the Soviet Government in exchange for airplanes, tanks, and guns we have been sending them?

Elephant Memory

Though the President made his obligation to Henry Wallace the official pretext for requesting Jesse Jones' resignation, the inside fact is that Jones was out anyway.

To close friends, FDR has never made any secret of this ever since the Texas Democratic Convention where Jesse Jones' nephew, George Butler, in the Austin State House as Governor of Texas, Lt. Gov. John Lee Smith was to give way to the ticket to Butler, and Butler was named to resign, permitting Butler to become Governor.

It is, however, the Jones-Butler move had been defeated and Smith's telegram, addressed to O. LeRoy Wallace Hawkins, was never made public. When Wallace asked for FDR's help, he was a long-up of Democratic Deputies on his desk, but he has an elephant's memory. As early as last Summer he determined that Jesse Jones would power all in his fourth term Cabinet. When Wallace asked for the Commerce Department, he knew the job was open.

Wallace never breathed a word of it, but he knew weeks ago he was to become Secretary of Commerce. The tip-off to outsiders came several weeks ago when a messenger entered the office of Wallace's party assistant, Harold Young, loaded with copies of the Commerce Department's annual reports.

Young heartily stirred the Commerce reports into a corner, and brought them out only when one was around. The attack at Pearl Harbor

Stetler Dinner

Most famous dinner of the election campaign was that given by the Teachers Union at the Stetler Hotel in honor of the President, following which two rival officers in the Stetler lobby engaged in a brawl with dinner guests who wore Roosevelt buttons.

It didn't make a news headline, but another dinner took place in the latter recently, also attended by President Roosevelt, this one given by the Radio Broadcasters. This time, Jack Benny, and Dan Tobin, was present, not in the hotel lobby but at the dinner table.