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SATURDAY, JULY 25, 1942

### Relapse No. 2 Steel Shortage Slows Down Turn of Industry's Wheel

During the bloody summer months when the war has advanced its course without waiting for our men and our arms to check it, American industry should be ready for the gigantic production that alone will be able to conquer the enemy. Industry, however, is not ready. After months of raw optimism and reports that the war is being done we have bogged down in a mysterious shortage of steel.

The United States produces half the world's steel, and in the past year eighty-five million tons have already been allocated for varied purposes. Where that steel went, and how, there is no reasonable accounting for them. But, while Washington stews in its own fat and the war machine huddles along on an ill-defined road, industry suffers.

Shortage of steel, unsuspected until the events of last week, has thrown the ship order held by Andy Jackson Higgins of New Orleans, wasted ten million dollars. It cut Lead-Leste aluminum in half. It slowed down production in the nation's biggest shipyards; crippled production in Detroit on tanks, ordinance and parts. The one man on the warline capable of making miracles of production was slowing down.

Because war had driven Washington production-minded, big percentages of steel had been cobbled up in construction of Army camps. Too much steel was tied up in warships of the stretch-out years from now. For that, the service's steel needed in the next two years will not be produced. Because the program still lacks a boss big enough and tough enough to handle the empire of detail we are falling.

Every one has found America, and all other nations for that matter, bogging along in apparent inefficiency toward a too-high goal. Eventually, American power of production will overcome all obstacles, including the steel shortage which is not actually a shortage, but a mis-allocation problem. Meaning, however, the best-working civilian population, beginning to feel sacrifice on many fronts, is feeling unwell, seeing danger ahead.

The men and women in factories and homes, riding buses or walking, changing their little habits of life, could remember the words of the President:

"But there is one front and one battle everywhere in the United States—every man, woman, and child—in a nation, and will be engaged in the same action throughout the life. That front is right here at home. In our daily lives and in our daily tasks there are many ways in which we can aid the nation. One will have the privilege of making whatever self-denial is necessary, not only to supply the needs of the country, but to keep the economic structure of our country fortified and secure during the war and after it."

This will require the abandonment not only of luxuries but of many other creative comforts.

They could remember, then, look at the news of the bog-down in Washington and its effect on the whole army program, and wonder someone, they had a right in surprise, had been betraying a trust, all this year.

### Double, Double

**Carolina Gas Rationing Hits Peak of Confusion**

If there are seventeen little causes of peak-a-boog going on in the gas-rationed Eastern states, and we suppose that to be true, the section may never recover from North Carolinians, at least, are they from watching the crazy bumper of the station bulb. The week Raleigh's Buonomi Theodore S. Johnson has put in full time with his slight of hand.

Making in confusion, the Raleigh office was a huge success. One day, there was to be no supplemental gas for Acad night. Next morning, in being sure, to be sure, supplements for anyone willing to enter a car-sharing pool. There was a statement, not all clear, to the effect that pooling drivers would each receive additional gas. A day later, that was modified, but nothing in the pool as a whole received the extra gas to be spread over the necessary mileage.

By now, if citizens, drivers and casually-interested onlookers haven't given up, they know every crook and turn of the red-tape road, but nothing at all about the new rationing program. Somewhere, on the line between Washington and Raleigh, or between Raleigh and Charlotte, there was a daily short circuit. The week was a prime example of officialdom talking to the public.

without knowing where it spoke.

The latest communication, subject to the same sort of changes in effect in Berlin, indicates that drivers who share their cars in pools will get additional gas if it is available in keeping with a rationing order and from work but no more in proportion than is allotted to the lone driver.

There is, still, no clarification of the traveling salesman's precarious position. If, when that comes, it follows the pattern of this week, there'll be no riding on the road this Fall. It takes all of a man's time to keep up with his status these days.

### Eastern Peril

**Conquest of Rostov Means Ebbing of Red Strength**

The German announcement that Rostov had been stormed, whether or not it was premature, quaffed as the blackest news from the Eastern front since the days in the snow before Moscow. In the United States, following a low of production as old as the war, the loss of the key town of the Caucasus, pipeline terminus and manufacturing center would be written off as a loss, but not a grave loss.

Russia's great news, indeed, have been in the loss of Rostov, and the fact our people have come to accept any Russian defeat with calm, assuming that the Red Army has only to retreat and retreat into the Soviet vastness, pick up new industries behind it, and fight on as effectively as before. There will be, for months ahead, tremendous unquietured anxiety in Russia regardless of German success, and the conquest of any one or several key towns will not defeat Stalin's armies.

The hopeful millions at home should not be taught that Russia faces disaster in the loss of Rostov, and the threat to Stalingrad, the Soviet stands to lose an entire section, with its oil, its farms, its industry. That brings us ruin, but marks the beginning of a new decline in Russia's striking power. With its behind-the-lines strength being eroded away, the Red Army is certain to become a less-powerful force. If the process goes far enough, Hitler, even without the complete victory he first visualized, will have neutralized Russia and made ready for new fields of conquest.

Russia, we believe, will remain in the war fighting to its end; but if she is in the end of British-American aid now, how much more desperate will be her need with the loss of her Southern territories? This danger is a real one, not to be forgotten in view of the huge territorial gains. In that way, at least, the best of Rostov may be felt in every American city.

### Missing Men

**How Many Man-Hours Are Lost By Lack of Manpower Policy?**

Labor spokesmen, who do not always since a true national time, are banging faith in full chorus upon the blind use of American manpower and, thus far, they haven't missed a note. Through the Bureau of Labor-Industrial Relations comes a call for deserved attention. The song:

"In New York City 400,000 workers are unemployed, more than half of them skilled men and women who might be better fitted Army and Navy orders for uniformed, industry's parameters. But of all those workers, only 200 are working on war orders. The Army, meanwhile, looked to the South for its clothing and knitted equipment, because it came cheaper there."

Swarthy contractors, in many instances, have landed orders, gotten priority orders for building new factories, pumped them down in areas devoid of skilled workers, wasted time and money. Examples: New trawler plants being erected in Doris, minus experienced labor in the midst of a housing shortage in Waverly, Tenn., a company founded in May of this year is making wooden ships and trailers for the Army. In New York, skilled workers are losing their jobs.

In Michigan, the harvesting of important sugar beet crops has become a serious problem. There is a complete lack of manpower there, and operators, instead of tapping a great reserve of labor available in the Appalachian-Quebec region are, for workers to be brought up from Mexico.

This, then, it cannot be denied, Labor sings a convincing tune. We would that it might become a hit tune in certain quarters.

### All The Comforts Of Home Our Fighting Men Happy On Auld Sod

By Ernie Pyle

They can buy American cigarettes and chocolate bars at the post exchange. Cigarettes are six cents a pack. They are rationed at a carton and a half a week, but that is plenty.

It's the civilian Americans over here, such as myself, who take it on the nose as far as shortages are concerned. It's a real treat to be put up at an Army or Navy camp for a few days. We get plenty of sugar, real American coffee, an egg for breakfast, and we get our pockets loaded with American cigarettes.

The sailors over here work regular hours, with very little shift, because they are nearly all technicians. They are up around 6, have breakfast, clean their hats and stand formation. Then they are taken in buses to the big repair shops. They work for the various shops from 8 to 12, then go back to camp in buses for lunch. They return to work at 1 and off for the evening.

There are always some who go to town on an evening to dance at all around in the pubs or walk the streets.

One of my friends here is older. Shipfitter Elmer Nicholson, from North Carolina, the lives in a hut with five other petty officers. Their hut, he says, is about typical of the whole camp. Three of his men go to town almost every night. The other three hardly ever go. They spend their evenings in camp, writing letters, listening to the radio, going to the movies, or chatting around at the petty officers' club. There is a movie in the recreation building every night except Saturday, when there is a dance instead.

### "Impractical! Wait Till Hitler Builds Them First"

By Herblock



### Stepchildren Of Mars

### Naval Airmen Need Help

WASHINGTON

Naval aviators certainly have done much more than their share of fighting in sea battles, in which United States forces have engaged, but from all other standpoints these fliers still are the stepchildren of the American armed forces.

In marked contrast with the Army, where all officers have moved up to an approximate equality of command with land officers, events of this war so far have brought an appreciably lesser promotion of the Naval Air branch, influence or command of the Navy Air branch.

A recent incident emphasizing this situation was the cancellation of a reorganization plan, one feature of which was to have been the appointment of Rear Admiral John H. Towers, chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, as assistant chief of Naval operations with the rank of vice admiral.

Had this plan come through it would not only have lifted a full fledged Naval air officer for the first time above the rank of major, but it would have given the officer, sent next to the command in chief, Admiral Ernest J. King, in conferences dealing with both strategy and personnel. But for some impractical reason this proposal was dropped.

The biggest ranking naval aviator still is only a rear admiral in comparison the Army has several million, the British general, including Henry H. Arnold, chief of the air force, George H. Brett, deputy commander in chief of land, sea and air forces in the southern Pacific, Frank M. Andrews and Delos C. Emmons, supreme Army commanders respectively in the Caribbean region and Hawaii. The Army deputy chief of staff, Major General W. C. Miller, is an air officer. There are two other aviator assistant chiefs of staff, both general officers, and the general staff as a whole is divided equally between land and air officers.

No naval aviator has been placed in command of important combined air and sea forces, excepting Admiral King, who learned to fly before he carried the weight of a major general's rating. Admiral King's service, however, has been predominantly in surface ships and submarines. And whatever may have been his qualifications in favor of the aeronautical branch, he has been either unwilling or unable to make good material duty in the system of promotions and assignments to command, which are completely dominated by non-fliers.

The aircraft carrier task force, air personnel of which carried the weight of major general and suffered practically all of the losses in both the Coral Sea and Midway battles, neither were commanded by a highly qualified air officer.

Equally important, aviation spokesmen say, is the fact that air officers hardly get to do anything at all heavily outanked by their naval and Army

The camp also has a brand-new library receiving a whole lot. Books have just arrived, thousands of them, and all over it makes my mouth water to look over the shelves.

The library opened only a few days before I came, yet already hundreds of books had been taken out.

There are two clubs in Nixen built—one for the men, one for the petty officers. They have table tennis, checkers and a radio. They serve American canned beer—each man being limited to two cans a day. They also serve gilled sandwiches, fresh cream and Coca-Cola. In fact it's easier to get Coca-Cola here in this camp than it is back home.

They make ice cream from a powdered mix sent over in cans from the States.

There is a dentist's office, and a large sick-bay camp at the main main hospital several miles away. You would never recognize it as a hospital for it has all Nixen huts and it looks exactly like the main living camp. You are right on it before you know it, for it is well hidden under trees.

Night men mostly of the hospital's patients are British sailors. There is plenty of equipment for a sudden epidemic in case of a bliz.

Those sailors who go to town in the evening have to be back at 11:30. At this time of year it's still daylight when they return, as soon as darkness begins to come about of the regular lights-out time, all huts will be equipped for blackout.

All in all, as long as we have to be in a war, the boys over here in the Deery base haven't much to grumble about.

**Poor Example**

**The Rubber Mess**

By Paul Mallon

WASHINGTON

If promises were tires, the nation would ride, but as it is, the rubber problem is sinking deeper and deeper into the mire of business competition and politics. No one seems able or willing to take hold of various difficult phases of the problem and hammer out a satisfactory policy.

To take a typical example, the five big rubber manufacturers (leopold into town with an exhibit of rubber processes, designed to show that 60 per cent of civilian needs and all military requirements could be satisfied without much trouble. The exhibit was set up in a hotel parlor and Government officials were invited in to see it a week before it was opened.

Before most officials got around to it, they read some advanced stories in one local newspaper suggesting that the Government should take a little more than the industry claimed, and it made the Government officials angry and critical in advance.

Few seemed to take the trouble to arrange for the industry man that they were not responsible for the publicity. WPH Director Donald Nelson then came in, made a few notes and went on his way.

The oil industry took a march of five days on the rubber manufacturers, when W. S. Parish, president of Standard Oil of New York, announced that his company will produce 200,000 tons of synthetic rubber by the end of next year.

However, Franklyn Waltham, former publicity director of the Republican National Committee, succeeded in persuading Mr. Parish to have a conference here, a conference here, and to express interest in the House process of one of his new clients, which apparently is backed by competitors of Mr. Parish, namely, the Sun Oil Co. and the Standard Oil of New York and California.

It goes on in an active competitive business battle to produce synthetic tires for the nation, while Government officials look on suspiciously. They naturally want to justify their policy, continuing following. They find numerous serious, serious questions, concerning for instance that there is nothing "new" in the rubber show, that the other processes will not produce good tires or will need too much steel for plant construction, or cannot produce in time, etc.

Meanwhile, Mr. Donald Nelson has thrown the powerful weight of his position against the Glitche Hill to Congress proposing to create a single rubber authority, not Mr. Nelson, and to manufacture more rubber from alcohol than Mr. Nelson wants to manufacture. He has urged Congress that if he had it in his power, he might allow more synthetic production from alcohol but that the change now would hurt his calculations.

As a result of this, or other Congressional dissatisfaction with Mr. Nelson's failure in this one line of production, the Cabinet dockyards are filled with rumors that he may stay in London on his forthcoming trip, or that he will otherwise be retired. (Not confirmed by any executive authority.)

Such an exercise of authority seems to lead into the same dead-end street upon which the rubber problem has been running from the beginning. No one, not even Mr. Roosevelt, seems to have been entirely willing to deal with it.

In circulation in Congressional quarters is a pamphlet from the New York Times of Feb. 25, 1941, containing the following account of a Presidential press conference of the previous day:

"The President expressed his belief that the United States was in no danger of running short of rubber, much of which comes from The Netherlands Indies. Much raw rubber has been bought by this country and there is a good stock supply on hand, he said. He expressed his belief that it is necessary to produce synthetic rubber to be obtained from old tires and used rubber in keeping going until synthetic rubber plants could be put up."

The failure of the Government under its mandate was economic to provide either sufficient tires or Eastern gasoline for overseas ships, is practically the exclusive subject of civilian conversation in the East where the tireless gas rationing (four gallons a week) went into effect Wednesday.

The state of public opinion in the Mid-West is generally accepted by Congress as the reason for continued postponement of national gas rationing.

Today it is generally believed here that this project has been shelved definitely until after the election. Thus, the political complexion is being confined to the East for the present at least.

**Side Glances**

