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WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS

Germans Strive to Check Great Russian Break-Through in East; Congress Ponders Labor Draft

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Evidencing cooperation given Yank forces in Philippines, native volunteers information of enemy activity on Mindoro island.

PACIFIC:

Advance Inland

Moving deeper inland down the great central Luzon plain to Manila, with elements probing into the mountains on either side to secure their flanks, Americans of the 6th army under Gen. Walter Krueger proceeded with caution as the Japs held back on committing their major forces to the battle.

At the same time, U. S. carrier planes ranged far to the west to strike at enemy sources of supply and reinforcements along the south China coast, and U. S. army airmen swept up and down Luzon hammering at communications lines and airbases harboring the remnants of the Japs' air force.

Strongest opposition to the U. S. drive was encountered in the mountainous terrain on the east flank, where the Japs fought back hard from caves and entrenchments in an effort to hold open the country to the north of them.

NATION'S CUPBOARD:

Well Stocked

With larger supplies in some foods offsetting smaller stocks in others, civilians should eat as much during the first three months of 1945 as during the preceding three months, the War Food administration said. In comparison, the WFA said, more milk, eggs, cheese and citrus fruits will be available for civilians,

Reflecting prospects for a longer European war than anticipated, last fall, farm production goals for 1945 were upped upon the War Food administration's recommendation for more milk, hogs and beef, and dry beans, potatoes, tobacco, flaxseed, sugar beets and clover seeds.

but less meat, chicken, fats, oils, butter, canned fruits and vegetables, potatoes, sugar and dry beans.

For 1945 as a whole, the WFA declared, civilian supplies will be smaller than 1944, but slightly larger than the 1935-'39 average. More milk, eggs, meat, chicken, fresh vegetables and fruits, lard, margarine, syrups, honey and cereal products will be available than before the war, but less butter, sugar, dry beans, canned fruits and juices, evaporated milk and canned fish.

LABOR DRAFT:

Push Bill

Spurred on by the President's insistence, congress gave increased attention to Rep. Andrew May's modified labor draft bill, prohibiting men between 18 and 45 from leaving essential work without their local Selective Service board's permission, or compelling them to accept jobs designated by such boards.

With the army calling for younger men for replacements, War Mobilizer Byrnes outlined procedure for the induction of registrants in the 26 to 29 group, with less important employees in essential and so-called critical war industries to be called up before key men. Probably half of the present 365,000 deferred farm workers between 18 and 25 now being examined prior to review of their cases can expect to be inducted, Draft Director Hefsbey said.

While the President said some sort of national service act was necessary to channel workers into necessary jobs, representatives of both labor and industry told congress that the present comparatively small manpower shortage could be best met by voluntary recruiting.

EUROPE:

'Greatest Offensive'

Their lines shattered and their border lands imperilled by what was described as the greatest offensive in history, Germany's armies of the east fell back for a feverish reorganization in an effort to stem the Russian tide that threatened to roll right on to Berlin.

Although the Russians plunged forward all along the sprawling Polish plains, the drive of their First Ukrainian army under Marshal Konev on the rich industrial province of Silesia to the southwest constituted the greatest immediate danger to the Germans, with the enemy frankly admitting its loss would seriously impair their ability to continue the war. In an effort to shore up the Russian advance there, Heinrich Himmler's home army was called into action under a hail of aerial and artillery bombardment.

To the north of this sector below Warsaw, the First White Russian army of Marshal Zhukov speared westward toward Pomerania, and also threw one wing southward in a move designed to hook up with the First Ukrainian force and trap Ger-



Leaders in the great Russian offensive include (left to right) Marshals Zhukov, Konev and Rokossovsky.

man units in a huge pocket. As these two drives developed, Marshal Rokossovsky's Second and General Cherniakovsky's Third White Russian armies squeezed East Prussia from the north and south.

Nazis Outnumbered

Frankly admitting the gravity of their situation, the Germans reported the withdrawal of their forces to the west, and the husbanding of their reserves for counter-action if the rapidity of the Russian advance should result in the spreading of their strength. Because of the numerical superiority of the Russians, it was said, it was impossible to stop the Reds' advance by attempting frontal resistance on the open plains along the whole line.

Yanks Regain Initiative

As the Russian fighting developed, the Nazis looked with apprehension to the west, where they feared another all-out thrust against the Rhineland.

Regaining their balance after the German break-through of a month ago, Allied forces were back knocking against the Nazi frontier, with the British Second army punching toward the Roer river along a broad front, and the U. S. First and Third armies whittling down the remains of the big bulge.

As the First and Third armies hacked off the shoulders of the bulge, they encountered stubborn rear-guard action as Von Rundstedt sought to pull his prize troops back into the Siegfried line.

While British and American forces exploited their initiative to the north, the Germans maintained pressure on the lower Alsatian plains, throwing in tanks and infantry to hold the positions gained in limited offensives while main Allied power was diverted to Belgium.

LEND-LEASE:

Food Shipments

Showing a 4 billion pound drop under 1943, lend-lease food and agricultural products shipments during 1944 totalled over 7 billion pounds, with meats, dairy items and grain cereals composing the bulk of deliveries.

Of meat lend-leased, 708,627,733 pounds were cured, smoked and frozen pork products; 65,238,418 pounds of frozen pork loins; 60,762,243 pounds of lamb and mutton; 23,285,892 pounds of frozen veal, and 16,101,290 pounds of frozen beef. Of dairy products, 280,845,699 pounds of cheese were delivered, 23,886,449 pounds of butter, and 17,860,503 pounds of butter oil.

Other food and agricultural products lend-leased included 543,930,297 pounds of granulated sugar; 44,041,306 pounds of canned peas; 41,424,897 pounds of canned peaches; 28,059,988 pounds of canned green beans; 24,650,997 pounds of canned tomatoes; 21,868,310 pounds of soap, and 20,195,112 pounds of canned pineapple.

SYNTHETIC RUBBER:

1944 Production

Built up almost overnight as a result of the severance of the nation's imports of crude rubber from the far east following the Japs' early conquests, the U. S.'s 700 million dollar synthetic rubber industry produced 763,000 long tons (of 2,240 pounds) last year.

Declaring that synthetic production can be boosted to 1,000,000 tons if necessary, Secretary of Commerce Jesse Jones said that the 1944 output was equal to the nation's annual peacetime rubber needs.

Because 60 per cent of the rubber was made from alcohol instead of petroleum, Jones said, production costs of the synthetic averaged 33 cents a pound, compared with about 19 cents for the crude.

Celebrities Stricken

On the same day, in mid-month, death came to three of the nation's celebrated figures:

In Meriden, Conn., 50-year-old Francis T. Maloney (Dem.) succumbed to a heart attack. Left to support four brothers and sisters at the age of 12, Maloney worked up to the senate from newspaper reporter, mayor of Meriden and congressman.

In Washington, D. C., to attend the President's inauguration, 57-year-old George D. Crowley, vice chairman of the division of finance of the Democratic National committee, and one of the founders of the 1,000 club during the recent campaign, died of heart trouble. A prominent Chicago insurance man and financier, Crowley was the son of an assistant secretary of the treasury under President Cleveland.

Creator of the famed "Frank Merrivell" fiction character, whose amazing exploits thrilled millions of readers, 78-year-old Gilbert Patten, who wrote under the name of Burt L. Standish, passed away in San Diego, Calif. Patten, who ran away from home at 16 because he didn't like school, wrote a 20,000-word adventure novel every week for 18 years, and was estimated to have written 40,000,000 words in his lifetime.

BASEBALL:

Gets FDR's Nod

With the game having been given presidential approval provided it did not interfere with the conduct of the war, major league baseball magnates began laying plans for the 1945 season, with their chief concern being to scrape together teams from the dwindling manpower pool.

Although the clubs were expected to rely again on discharged or rejected army personnel, their plans were complicated by recent government regulations calling for re-examination of 4-Fs and work or fight orders to men under 38. Some of these men, however, intend to enter essential industry and arrange for playing ball on the outside.

Because of the need for personnel, "... kids about 17 ... will have a wonderful opportunity to play in the big leagues," said Clark Griffith, owner of the Washington Senators.

U. S. NAVY:

Greater Firepower

Its firepower increased five times since July, 1940, combatant ships, auxiliaries and coast guard vessels of the U. S. navy can now hurl 2,000 tons of steel in a 15 second firing run, the equivalent of 50 freight carloads of steel.

Packing a wallop 92 per cent greater than the pre-Pearl Harbor battleship, Texas, the modern Iowa is armed with nine six-inch guns mounted in three, twenty-five-inch double purpose guns in twos, and many smaller anti-aircraft guns.

Possessing 123 per cent more firepower than the 1930 heavy Pennsylvania, the modern Baltimore carries nine eight-inch guns in three, twelve five-inch anti-aircraft guns in pairs, and numerous smaller anti-aircraft weapons.



Lint From a Blue Serge Suit:

Mr. I. Hoffman (the New York branch of the Hollywood Reporter) recalled the most costly comma in U. S. history. . . . Many years ago a tariff bill listed articles that were to be admitted free. One item was "all foreign fruit-plants." . . . But a careless clerk replaced the hyphen with a comma. . . . It caused oranges, lemons, bananas, grapes and other imported fruits to be admitted to the U. S. free of duty. . . . It cost the government an estimated million dollars plus.

A concrete example of journalistic jiu-jitsu (being thrown for the count) was the story which said that Dick Merrill, the famed transatlantic flier, had broken another record—flying from Seattle to Washington in six hours and three minutes. . . . The story was wired from the Capital by one of the news services. . . . One night later we grabbed Dick's paw and shook it hard as we congratulated him. . . . "I don't know what it's about," he said. "I just came in from Africa. How could such a story that never happened get started?"

The terrible crash of the old China Clipper at Trinidad reminded us of the flight we made from Natal to the U. S. . . . The Boeing circled over Port of Spain for more than an hour—waiting, we learned, for the man in charge of the field lights to wake up—and turn them on. . . . The law there at the time, it appears, prohibited plane landings at night. . . . When the China Clipper crashed it was the first time Trinidad permitted planes to land at night.

The author of "Argentine Diary" (Ray Josephs) has an exciting report in Cosmopolitan. It is the first full-length article on Evita (Little Eva) Duarte, the girl "behind the Colonels' clique in Argentina." . . . We wrote about her activities here last June—the first story to appear in the U. S. about her influence in Argentina. . . . Little Eva, we said, a one-time playboys' gal-pal, worked herself up, colonel by colonel, to a top spot in the leading Fascist regime in the Americas. . . . Josephs' Cosmo piece is called "Under Cover Girl," and you'll know why when you read it. . . . His story, he tells us, was inspired by the item here about her, and that is why the editors bought it. . . . Two major movie studios are interested, too, reports the author. . . . Thus a columnist item has bloomed.

Things like this are making Sec'y of State-tinlus a very respected gent around Washington. . . . The other day he invited Sec'y of Interior Ickes and his staff to meet with the State Dep't at a private dinner. . . . Mr. Ickes was asked to make a complete criticism of the State Dep't. . . . The idea was to achieve better teamwork. . . . Ickes let them have a blistering attack, and plenty of State Dep't ears sizzled. . . . But the confab achieved its unique-purpose. . . . It put the State Dep't lads on friendly, human relations with the Ickes bunch for the first time in a dozen years.

Add fine screen playing: Mark Daniels in the "Winged Victory" hit. . . . In mid-December the col'm predicted that another strike would break out at Wright's in New Jersey. The workers there wish it emphasized that they won't strike and intend to vote for the continuation of the no-strike pledge.

A Broadway playgirl was tipped to a sure-thing four days before Tropical Park shuttered. She plunged on the horse for a \$10,000 killing. . . . But the bookie, with no future in racetrack gambling, welshed to the coast. Her boy friend happens to be one of the East's toughest sportsmen. Not a new way of committing suicide, at all.

A Gilmore hatcheck gal got a \$100 tip from a fellow, who returned two hours later and said it was a mistake, demanding it back. He gave her \$1 instead. Not a bad tip, at that. . . . Havana is "dead"—practically no tourists. But Cuba has great prosperity, wages are higher than ever. The Cuban capital is guarded by machine gunners, ditto the Presidential Palace. . . . Groaned one wealthy Cuban planter: "You people insist on giving our people milk and ice cream! They hate it!" . . . Isn't it true you are richer than ever?" he was asked. . . . "No," he said, "I used to make \$500,000 a month. Now it takes three months to make that!"

Federal Plan to Tame Missouri River After War Will Benefit 11 Million People Living in Its Basin

Dams Curb Erosion, Provide Irrigation, Electric Service

By WALTER SHEAD

WNU Washington Correspondent

Harnessing the nation's second mightiest river, the turbulent, muddy Missouri, which annually roars its flood crests along its twisting course for 2,460 miles through seven states, will become one of the major postwar projects. More than 11 million people live in this great basin of a half billion acres, comprising one-sixth of the area of the United States.

For more than 30 years feeble attempts have been made to shackle the destructive power of the Missouri. Millions of dollars have been expended in levees and dams in attempts to prevent the costly floods which annually destroy vast sums in crops and property. Damage of the 1943 floods alone was placed at \$35,000,000.

Army engineers and the bureau of reclamation of the interior department have been for some time at cross-purposes in the development of a comprehensive plan. The army approached the job from the standpoint of navigation and flood control. The reclamation engineers were interested also in irrigation, erosion control and power projects. On November 27, 1944, a reconciliation report was filed in which the two agencies were in complete accord and the congress in its flood control bill accepted the entire program and also authorized \$200,000,000 each to the army and the



TOO MUCH WATER—The rampaging Missouri river is eroding millions of tons of good soil away every year. Here the flood waters carved into the bank, washing out a road, and leaving a pillar of earth to indicate the earlier line.

bureau of reclamation to get the program underway.

President Roosevelt signed the bill on December 23, but put a hiatus in the proceedings by recommending the creation of a Missouri Valley authority to handle the project and asserting that his approval of the bill was with the distinct understanding that it would in no way jeopardize the creation of such an agency. He appealed for early consideration of the new authority by the 79th congress.

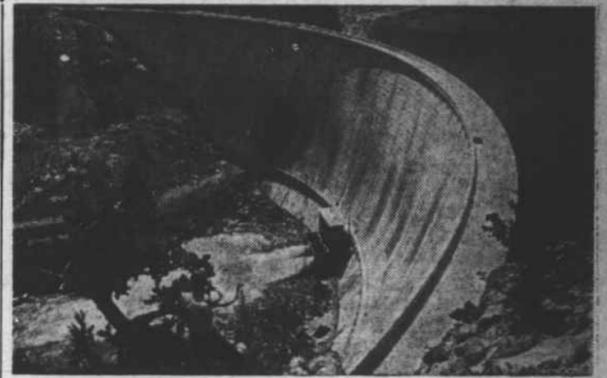
"I consider the projects authorized by the bill to be primarily for post-war construction."

Only Blue-Print Now.

Hence, the project is now merely in the blue-print stage and it is possible that a fight may develop in the new congress over whether there shall be divided responsibility as to the army and the reclamation bureau, or whether a new Missouri valley authority shall be created.

Proponents of single regional control point to the Tennessee Valley authority and its successful operation as a yardstick for future federal policy in developing and controlling all the nation's waterways. However, there are powerful interests which oppose the creation of these regional authorities, such as the power utility interests, the railroads, the national rivers and harbors congress, the Mississippi Valley association, and even divided public opinion along the waterway.

The rule of thumb, for instance, of the TVA is that regional authority will produce the largest possible benefits at the least possible costs, and "each task must be carried out in such a way as to contribute to the total result to salvage every



ONE OF MANY dams and reservoirs already constructed in the Missouri Valley basin is the Gibson dam on the Sun river in Montana. The top of the great wall is about 200 feet above the river bed. Eighty-nine more such projects are planned.

possible benefit and the ultimate goal should be the greatest procurable economic returns and human benefits for the entire region."

Arguments on Rule.

Even agricultural interests are divided on the pros and cons of regional authorities as opposed to operation by established federal agencies. For instance, in agricultural sections where there is plentiful rainfall along the lower Missouri and water resources are adequate, opposition is voiced as "subsidized competition" by the extension of irrigation. Public opinion is joined in industrial areas with the railroads in opposing the development of new competing waterways.

One basic objection to operation by the reclamation bureau has come from large land owners and ranchers of the west and northwest. Under the law governing the bureau of reclamation, this agency cannot propose irrigation for more than 160 acres of land for any one person. Another objection is that all reclamation projects must be self-liquidating over a period of approximately 40 years. In contrast, the statutes governing TVA give 60 years or more for liquidation and a regional authority likely would not be hamstrung by the limitation of acreage proviso.

In a recent pronouncement however, Harry W. Bashore, commissioner of the reclamation bureau said: "We continue to stand on the basic policy that the bureau will support the principle of relatively small family farms as one of the foundations of American agriculture and rural social life. On new land which is brought under irrigation for the first time, we shall insist that the undeveloped property be parcelled in lots of not more than 160 acres."

Forms Shrink in Size.

During the past 20 years the average size farm or ranch in the states of the Missouri basin have increased, rather than diminished in size, due largely to the decrease in population. For instance, in 1920, the average size farm in Montana was 480 acres, in Wyoming was 749 acres and in Nebraska it was 339 acres. By 1940 the farms had increased to 821 acres, 1,866 acres and 391 acres, respectively.

Dust bowls, droughts, floods have driven farmers and ranchers from the plains states during the past decade. Net loss of population in the period from 1930 to 1940 in the seven plains states was 302,314. In the Missouri-Souris area of North Dakota, a strictly rural farm area, 28.7 per cent of the population moved out, equal to 1,000 families of five each. The financial loss entailed by this shift of population in at least four of these states is reflected in abandoned farms, abandoned towns and unused properties. It is further reflected in increase of size and congestion in the three larger cities of the basin, Denver, Omaha and Kansas City.

These Benefits Expected.

The agreed plan of the reclamation bureau and the army engineers is intended to do these things:

- 1—Provide navigation and flood control on the river from its mouth to Sioux City, a distance of about 760 miles, by construction of levees and rementments to provide a channel 6 feet deep and 300 feet wide.
- 2—Construct 89 reservoirs and dams with a combined capacity of 45,700,000 acre feet of water. (An acre-foot is water a foot deep over one acre.) This is more than the annual average flow of the river at its mouth. These reservoirs are to be constructed to withhold water along the main tributaries including the Yellowstone, the Big Horn, the Belle Fourche, the Cheyenne, the North Platte, the Republican, the Smoky Hill and along the main stream.
- 3—Irrigation of 4,760,000 acres of

new land and furnishing supplemental water to 547,000 additional acres to increase crop values approximately \$130,000,000 annually on 53,000 farms of about 90 acres each.

4—To increase the population of the Basin by about 635,000 from irrigation development alone.

5—To increase the assessed valuation of properties approximately \$600,000,000.

6—To furnish adequate and safe water supply and sewage facilities for 19 cities and towns along the river.

7—To construct 17 hydroelectric plants which will provide 3,200,000,000 kilowatt hours of electricity to be sold at an annual value of \$17,141,000.

8—To create additional recreational facilities through formation of new lakes and parks and the protection of fish and wild life.

9—To introduce proper land use, soil erosion conservation, contour treatment and reforestation.

States in the Missouri Basin watershed include approximately two-thirds of Montana, from the source of the Missouri in the southwest corner of the state; North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, including roughly the northeast half from a line bisecting the state from the northwest to the southeast corner; approximately the northeast quarter of Colorado; the north half of Kansas; a tip of the southwest corner of Minnesota; a strip along the west boundary of Iowa and the northern part of Missouri from a line reaching from the Ozarks in the southwest in a northeasterly direction to St. Louis.

Needs of the people in these widely scattered areas of long distances are divergent. Those living along the lower river want flood protection at one season, and supplemental water for navigation at others. In the western and northwestern section the people want protection from local floods, water for irrigation, water for sanitary and domestic uses and power for various purposes. The comprehensive plan which has been agreed upon is intended to store water to prevent floods and water the land in time of drought. The great river will be made to serve the people to live within its basin and thus decrease its destructive power.

Will Pay for Itself.

Construction cost of the plan is estimated at approximately \$1,325,000,000 which is to be self-liquidating from the sale of water and power over a period to be determined. Only \$400,000,000 of this cost has been authorized.

The entire nation has a stake in maintaining the agricultural productivity of the plains states, for even in the drought period of 1930-1939 these seven states—Montana, the Dakotas, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska, produced 41.5 per cent of the nation's wheat; 43.4 per cent of the rye; 43.6 per cent of our barley; 15.3 per cent of our oats and 10 per cent of our corn.

Droughts, the dustbowls and the lowering of the ground water level by the rampaging river has permitted wheat yields to reach 20 bushels to the acre only 5 times—1879, 1882, 1883, 1895 and not again until 1942. In many of those intervening years the yield has been below 10 bushels to the acre, and thousands of acres of seeded land have been abandoned year in and year out.

But at last the government has developed a comprehensive plan aimed at the relief of this agricultural arsenal of the nation. From Cut Bank, Mont., in the northwest to St. Louis in the southeast; from Denver in the southwest to Devils Lake, N. D., in the northeast—the harnessed Missouri will extend its benefits—but not until after the war.