

The Week In Washington

A Resume of Governmental Happenings in the National Capital

Washington, April 23—Leon Henderson, newly appointed protector of the public's pocketbook, is expected to have his hands full in preventing inflationary price rises, but the powers conferred upon him are considered sufficient to stave off any immediate price boom.

The office of price administration and civilian supply, which is the name of the office Mr. Henderson heads, is authorized to fix prices if necessary and to prevent products from being withheld from the market for speculative purposes. The chief duty of the new office is to see that we do not have a repetition of the inflation and supply problems which disrupted our economy during the last war.

The President believes that slight increases in prices are expected and not undesirable, but he wants to prevent any spiraling of prices which are out of proportion to increased purchasing power. A 10% increase in prices during the next year will probably be permitted but greater increases will be fought.

Mr. Henderson will probably use persuasion rather than give orders at first in an effort to keep price control on a voluntary basis, but his office will be prepared to take quick action if voluntary control gets out of hand.

During the last six months our national purchasing power has increased rapidly and will continue increasing each month throughout the summer. Wage increases in farm regions seem to be keeping step with wage increases in production industries. The department of agriculture states that farm wages now are higher than at any time since 1931, that they are 38 per cent above the 1910-1914 average and that the majority part of the increase has come during the past year when they have increased 24 per cent.

In many states the demand for farm workers at standard wages exceeds the supply, although the department insists that there is no dangerous shortage of farm labor. But it does mean further increases in wages.

Well aware of the trouble caused by rapidly rising prices during the last war, the government intends to see to it that these difficulties are not repeated. Not only will prices be controlled, but efforts will be made to control the spending of money by the public. This will probably be done in three ways: (1) wide advertising and promotion to get people to invest a large proportion of their increased incomes in government defense bonds; (2) heavy taxes on the middle-income group so that part of their increased income, resulting from government orders, will be returned to the government; (3) educational appeals to our patriotism to refrain from purchasing things the production of which might hamper defense production. It is possible that we may get our first taste of a sales campaign conducted for the purpose of persuading us not to buy things.

The delicacy of our short-of-war moves has been greatly increased by two actions of our government which Axis authorities argue are breaches of international law—the refusal of our government to recognize a Nazi-dictated statement from Denmark voiding the agreement placing Greenland under U. S. protection, and our seizure of Danish, German and Italian ships. Secretary Hull has sound arguments to show that he is acting within this country's rights in both of these moves and he has made it clear that he doesn't intend to do any back-watering.

In the Greenland episode he has the backing of the Danish minister at Washington who signed the agreement and refused to be recalled by his government on orders "emanating directly or indirectly from Germany." He stated that so far as this country is concerned the arrangement is clearly within the

Riding a Mine



While "Old Englanders" are no longer startled by the sight of a floating mine, this one which bobbed up near Winthrop, Mass., gave U. S. New Englanders quite a scare. It was discovered to be a "dud" from nearby Fort Banks and a soldier from that post perched atop it as it was washed ashore.

scope of our Monroe Doctrine.

The success of the Axis powers in the Balkans has made congress and the President more determined than ever to increase efforts of greater aid to Great Britain. Although we are still avoiding supplying convoys, the President authorized the transfer of 10 of our coast guard cutters to Great Britain to be used for convoy purposes and he has asked congress for the right to purchase idle foreign ships deemed necessary for defense purposes. This ship-buying plan is expected to be rushed through congress to give the President the right to purchase the foreign ships already seized.

It is the present attitude of congress that a defense production must be more rapidly speeded up to the maximum capacity. Congressmen consider the problems of getting material to England to be of a minor nature—that the all-important thing right now is to produce as much and as fast as possible.

Some congressmen feel that the lull in the strike situation after Easter might represent a lull before a storm, as strikes are threatened in some of the largest plants in the country, including U. S. Steel and General Motors. But there does seem to be a feeling that labor and employers are ready to come to quick settlements in the face of growing public sentiment against all interference with defense.

RAMSEY TO DELIVER LEES McRAE ADDRESS

Banner Elk, April 22.—According to an announcement made here by President Edgar H. Tufts, the commencement address at Lees-McRae College will be delivered by D. Hiden Ramsey, general manager of the Asheville Citizen-Times Company, on Monday, May 2.

The baccalaureate sermon, which will be given on Sunday, June 1, will be preached by Rev. Samuel H. Hay, D.D., pastor of the First Presbyterian church of Morristown, Tenn.

GERMANS FIRE UPON FLEEING ITALIAN TROOPS

German tanks opened fire on about 1,000 Italian infantrymen when the Fascist troops turned and fled from an attack on this desert stronghold under a blasting of British artillery, writes Jan Yndrich, special correspondent of the United Press, with the British forces at Tobruk, Africa.

The sun-baked Australian and British defenders of Tobruk who have stood up against a battering rain of German and Italian tanks for six days have made the axis siege of the stronghold a costly one for the enemy.

In these six days of constant struggle beneath a searing African sun the British imperial forces have destroyed 23 German and Italian tanks, some of them big monsters, taken 1,500 prisoners and piled the sands outside Tobruk's ring of defenses with dead and dying German and Italian soldiers.

The Germans and Italians launched their seventh big attack on Tobruk, only to be hurled back again after losing four German tanks, seven Italian infantry guns and 847 Italian prisoners, including 25 officers.

Furthermore at least 24 German planes have been shot out of the sky over Tobruk.

The attack began about 2 p. m. when 12 German heavy and 'cruiser' tanks broke through the wire barricades of Tobruk's outer defenses from the direction of Acroma near the spot where British tanks and Australian infantry smashed through in January to seize Tobruk from Marshal Rodolfo Graziani's Italian army.

This sector has borne the brunt of most of the axis attacks during the past six days and the Germans apparently are trying to repeat the British tactics, believing that they can cut the semi-circular perimeter defenses in two and strike through to the fortress itself.

These perimeter defenses reach in a 30-mile arc around Tobruk through the desert covering the land side while the British fleet keeps the Mediterranean clear on the sea side.

After breaking through the wire barricades the German tanks cruised about inside the wire, shooting at British defense posts and strong points.

Three of the tanks were knocked out by anti-tank fire and a fourth was stopped by an Australian who crawled up to the tank's blind side and sticking a piece of angle-iron in the caterpillar treads, brought it to a halt.

The rest of the German tanks turned back, harried by the fire of British tanks which struck out in pursuit.

Infantry following behind the German tanks had come to within 300 yards of the outer British wire but dispersed and withdrew when fired on by British artillery.

During the previous night about 1,000 Italian infantrymen had been seen moving into positions outside the wire in preparation for the attack.

The British guns went into action and threw the Italians back, whereupon the German tanks fired on the

FEDERAL PROGRAM WILL RAISE PRICE OF EGGS

A nation-wide drive to produce every possible egg from present poultry laying flocks should interest North Carolina farm people, says Dean I. O. Schaub, director of the State College extension service. The U. S. department of agriculture

retreating Italians.

At this point the patrol of about 20 Australians with three E-con gun carriers started the encircling attack and captured the 847 prisoners,

will make purchases of poultry products in connection with the defense program in such a way as to support prices of eggs at a level of 22 cents per dozen, on a Chicago basis.

"This does not mean," says Dean Schaub, "that all North Carolina farmers will receive 22 cents per dozen for their eggs. In the first place, farm prices of eggs are lower than prices quoted on the Chicago market; transportation problems enter into the picture. Also, the prices throughout the country will vary according to seasonal variations, and according to grade.

"But it does mean," the extension leader continued, "that farm prices of eggs will increase. Perhaps not immediately, but certainly by fall. For this reason, North Carolina farm people should keep their poultry houses filled to capacity where they have home-grown feed to spare."

Secretary of Agriculture Claude Wickard has launched the national egg-producing campaign, and he says the goal is to increase egg production for the whole country in the next 15 months about 10 million dozen.

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