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## WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS

**Farm Implement Quota Boosted by 30%; Hitler's Disasters Mount as Russians Speed Up Caucasus-Ukraine Offensive; Tripoli's Fall Spurs Tunisia Drive**

(EDITOR'S NOTE: When opinions are expressed in these columns, they are those of Western Newspaper Union's news analysts and not necessarily of this newspaper.)  
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Closer relations between the United States and Chile and a harder crackdown on Nazi espionage in South America were results expected from the recent action of the Chilean government in breaking diplomatic relations with the Axis. Shown above are Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles (left) and Senor Don Rodolfo Michels, Chilean ambassador, discussing the situation.

## FOOD PRODUCTION: Gets New Incentive

Two significant steps to spur the "Food for Victory" campaign were taken when the War Production board authorized a 30 per cent increase in production of farm machinery and Secretary of Agriculture Wickard announced a program of federal credit designed to extend from \$200,000,000 to \$250,000,000 to farmers for stepping up essential food production.

The WPB increased the steel allotment for farm machinery from 137,000 tons to 187,000 tons for the first quarter of 1943. This new tonnage was in addition to an increase previously authorized for the production of repair parts for farm implements.

Mr. Wickard said loans needed mostly by small and medium-sized farmers would be extended through the Regional Agricultural Credit corporation. Size of loans will be limited only by the amount needed to do the production job. The loans will be of short-term duration at 5 per cent interest.

## NORTH AFRICA: Death of Empire

Tripoli's fall had various meanings for various interpreters. To historians it wrote finale to Mussolini's grandiose dreams of empire, for it was here the Duce had begun his disastrous expansion policy. To military observers it meant that the Allies could now concentrate closer attention on cleaning up the last Axis strongholds in Tunisia.

It had been apparent to observers that Marshal Rommel's retreat through Tripolitania had had Tunisia and not Tripoli as its goal. Rear-guard efforts to protect the main body of his retreat had constituted the only action in and around Tripoli.

Allied airmen had not only strafed doomed Tripoli, but General Montgomery's British eighth army and General LeClerc's Fighting French had constantly harried the retreating Afrika Korps.

In Tunisia the Axis had made strenuous efforts to cover Rommel's withdrawal by launching offensive thrusts against French positions southwest of Fond-du-Fahs.

While junction of Rommel's army with those of Nazi Col. Gen. Von Arnim would strengthen Axis forces in Tunisia, the Allies would similarly be strengthened by the addition of British and Fighting French troops to Gen. Dwight Eisenhower's legions.

## PRICE RISE: Predicted by Brown

As additional rationing and price regulations were promulgated, the American public learned that Price Administrator Prentiss M. Brown's direction of the OPA would be less dramatic but no less firm than that of his predecessor Leon Henderson.

Mr. and Mrs. Average Citizen were assured by the new administrator, however, that the OPA would be operated solely for the protection of the American people. Frankly acknowledging that price rises were inevitable, Mr. Brown promised that such rises would be "slow and well-ordered."

## HARD COAL: Miners Bow to FDR

Dangers of a crippling hard coal shortage were averted and a face-saving maneuver for labor executed when 12,000 Pennsylvania miners returned to work after a three-week old unauthorized walkout following a curt ultimatum from President Roosevelt.

The President had served notice that unless the miners ceased their wildcat strike within 48 hours, he would take "necessary steps" to safeguard the war effort.

A tangled skein of labor politics had complicated the eastern hard coal situation. Efforts of John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers, and the War Labor board to get the strikers back on the job had failed. Strike leaders said the miners had walked out in protest against a UMW dues increase of 50 cents a month. The strikers, however, had also demanded a \$2 a day wage increase.

## AXIS TRUMP: Subs Still Potent

Hurled back on all world fronts by the ever-increasing ferocity of United Nations attacks, the Axis still controlled one ace offensive weapon—German submarines.

Hitler was said by British Admiral Sir Percy Noble to be maintaining 200 U-boats of his fleet of 500 at sea all the time in an effort to keep the tremendous output of Allied war factories from the battlefields. Unofficial British estimates placed Nazi submarine construction at 15 to 20 a month—faster than naval experts believe the Allies are sinking them.

Elmer Davis, director of the Office of War Information, reported that German submarines had sunk more Allied shipping in January than in December.

A brighter side of the picture emerged, however, when the Lend-Lease administration announced that the United States and Britain had sent Russia 5,800 tanks and 4,600 airplanes up to January 1 and promised that aid to the Soviet "will grow still more in 1943." Regardless of submarine wolfpacks, convoys were getting through.

## RUBBER: Jeffers vs. RFC

With his synthetic rubber program facing further curtailment so that more convoy escort vessels can be built and more high octane gasoline produced for fighting fliers, Rubber Conservation Director William M. Jeffers assumed control of all rubber import programs formerly exercised by the Board of Economic Warfare through the Rubber Re-



WILLIAM M. JEFFERS

serve company, a Reconstruction Finance corporation subsidiary.

This action meant that henceforth Jesse Jones, as head of the RFC's Rubber Reserve company, which supplies the money for operations, would take orders from Mr. Jeffers instead of from the BEW on rubber imports. It meant, moreover, that Jeffers hoped to bolster lagging synthetic rubber production by imports as a means of keeping civilians supplied with automobile tires.

## NAZI AIR RAIDS: RAF Welcomes Reprisals

Tragic as was the death of scores of school children in German bombing raids on London, aviation authorities hailed the renewal of Nazi attacks as a further opportunity to weaken the Axis in the air.

Every raid means a further thinning of Hitler's already over-extended air forces, these authorities pointed out. In the biggest daylight air assault on London since the 1940 battle of Britain, the Nazis lost 13 planes while the British lost two. Because of improved anti-aircraft defense, destruction and loss of civilian life were held to minimum levels.

The German raids have been in reprisal for gutting attacks on Berlin by large flights of RAF bombers raining down four-ton "block busters" on the Nazi capital, and spewing incendiary bombs that caused untold damage. British losses on these raids were comparatively light, officials revealed.

## Tree Farming on Mined-Out Land Answer to Coal Industry Problem

### Stripped Acreage Being Turned Into Recreation Centers by Foresters.

Forest operators have been called on by coal mine operators to provide the answer to one of the most annoying problems which beset the coal industry—what to do with mined-out land.

Tree-farming is proving to be the answer. The forest operators knew what it should be, because to a lesser degree they had a somewhat related problem, which new crops of trees have helped solve.

Coal miners call the devastated areas of land surface left by strip mining, "spoils." No word could be more fitting than "spoil" in the way the coal miners use it. After the strippers have finished, the earth surface looks to the public eye as if it had been plowed by blasts from hell.

The appearance of the stripped acreage to the public eye does not happen to be agriculturally true. The fact is that the strip miners' steam shovels have turned up virgin soil which otherwise could never have been touched by a plow nor have nourished a seed; aerated it by the shovels' action; enriched the tumbled earth by mixing through it broken-up limestone; and provided new surface contours which hold runoff water and raise the water level for the entire surrounding area.

Trees can turn these "spoils" into sections of recreational paradise, but until the foresters have done their work, the public remains blissfully ignorant of this.

The "spoils" can support vegetation, but the only plants passers-by see growing before the tree-farmers go to work are jimson weed and an occasional volunteer brush. The shoveled-up earth is full of rocks that would defeat or break the strongest plow, and the ridges and depressions left by the shovels' turnover would exhaust livestock pastured there if acreage could be put to grass. Trees are an answer to this situation.

### Strip Mining.

Strip mining is practiced in 21 states. Mine operators prefer to call it "open cut" mining. By whatever name, it is the oldest mining method. Aboriginal man doubtless first found "black stone" would burn when he happened to light a fire on an outcrop. Then with his rude tools he forced the surface earth back to



Planting young pine trees on stripped acreage.

uncover more of the hot and lasting fuel. The only difference between him and modern strip miners is that with steam shovels we can go deeper after the coal—60 feet down if necessary. Instead of bringing the coal to the surface, this method of mining carries the surface down to the coal.

Surface earth is piled up in steep-banked hills with intervening valleys. The valley at the end usually becomes, in the course of nature, a lake storing run-off water.

Public Does Not Understand. The public fails to grasp the possibilities of such land. It sees a big mud-bordered pond surrounded by devastation. John Q. does not recall, if he ever heard, the statement of the U. S. Bureau of Mines that "strip mining is a means of preventing waste of natural resources that can never be replaced."

John Q. is no geologist, no engineer. He does not know that most of the strip-mined coal veins are less than three feet thick, so there would not be room for men to burrow through them if they could go underground; and that they can't go underground



Giant shovels set aside the overburden and expose the coal.

because the ceilings of slate over these veins are so thin and crumbly that no mine timbering could support them.

### Submarginal Land.

Most of the ground which bears coal close enough to the surface to be strip mined is submarginal which government agricultural experts have been urging for years be taken from ordinary agriculture and put back into woodland. In Indiana its value before mining averaged only \$20 an acre in the nine southern counties where there is "open cut" mining. The college of agriculture of the University of Illinois rates grazing land on a score of from 1 to 10. "One" is tops; 10 is impossible. Before the strippers went to work, the land they shoveled in that state was rated 5.63—barely par. When they got through it was rated 7.49—good enough to grow trees. The strippers' shovels damaged surface fertility, but did not destroy it.

Stripping shovels do destroy earth top humus. The deep fresh earth they bring up to replace it lacks nitrogen. If humus and nitrogen can be returned, the new soil, because it is virgin, will be better than it was before. It has not been worked out by improper farming or bleached of its minerals by uncontrolled water. It has been enriched by minerals mixed in from below. Formerly below average on the raters' scale, the land is now well above.

Trees are regenerating this land and making parks out of waste. In Illinois alone, only one of the 21 strip-mining states, 7,250 acres of strip-mined land in 12 counties have been planted with 7,000,000 trees since 1930, and the rate of forestation is increasing so that 2,000,000 trees



have already been planted this year. Favorite species for the "spoils" reforesters are black locusts and the evergreen conifers. Black locust for three reasons:

(a) It is a legume, a tree bean.

(b) It is a fairly fast-growing hardwood tree, even in poor soil, and sheds each autumn a large fall of big leaves.

(c) From the time that it has reached a diameter of four inches it has commercial value; first as fence posts; later as mine timbers and ties.

The first of these reasons is most important to the "spoil" reforester because the peculiar function of the legumes, in the book of the soil chemists, is that bean-growing plants put nitrogen into the soil—the critical chemical lack of "spoiled" earth.

### Humus.

Humus is plant food—decayed vegetation. Its chief source is fallen leaves. The broad leaves of hardwood trees are its most prolific provider. The "spoil" reforester is faced with the problem of getting as much humus on the surface of

the tumbled-up earth as possible, as quickly as possible.

If it were not for the need of layering humus on the soil the reforester might plant, except for black locust, no hardwood trees at all. He would concentrate on the evergreens. For the conifers, members of the great pine family, will grow on land too poor to support any other kind of trees. Out of the first 5,000,000 trees planted by the "Open Cut Mining Industry of Illinois," 1,761,900 were black locusts, and 1,462,000 conifers. The needle-like leaves of these evergreens drop only every three or four years, but it is a continuous process. Their "duff" does not make as much humus as broad hardwood leaves, but it is good humus.

Favorite conifers for strip "spoil" planting are those which are native to poor soils—such hard-scrapple evergreens as the Scotch pine, Norway spruce, and the red pine which struggles a gallant living out of the thin earth which veils the rocks of northeast Canada and the bleached hillsides of abandoned-farm New England and coal-country Pennsylvania.

Such species are grateful for the mineral food the strip miners' shovels have brought up from underground. They grow much more luxuriantly and rapidly on the "spoils" than they do on the untumbled land nearby, and far better than they ever did at home. A large proportion of the conifers included in the 6,000,000 trees planted on Indiana "spoils" during the 1930s are now 10 or 12 feet high, covering the steep-pitched banks of the lakes created by the shoveled-up contours. At least one observer is reminded by this reforested land of the Irish Hills of Michigan and the forest-bordered lakes of the Adirondacks.

### Forests Replaceable.

The forest products industries are able to give the open-cut mine operators constructive aid and advice because they formerly faced a problem which, while not so grave, was similar. Early loggers looked on forests as if they were mines. Both timber and coal are natural resources; the prime difference is that once coal has been mined it is gone, while forests are replaceable. Long ago loggers were faced by a triple economic problem:

First, land had to be cleared before it could be farmed. Woodcutters were the first pioneers, proud of their accomplishment when their axes "let light into the swamp" the life-giving sunlight without which corn could not grow.

Second, the country was in urgent need of harvested wood for construction lumber, for fencing, and for fuel. In 300 years it took seven trillion two hundred billion board feet of lumber to build this country.

And third, the pioneers were faced with seemingly endless mature forests. Only swift harvesting of some of them could save them from the deterioration of old age. As a matter of silvicultural fact, this is still true of thousands of thousands of square miles of forestland in America. Harvesting virgin ponderosa pine has in some sections resolved itself into a race against the beetle, plague of these aged trees. Harvesting some stands of virgin Douglas fir is a race against internal tree decay. If we are to continue to have forests in those sections many old trees need to be removed so that a new young tree crop can grow.

Enough farm land was finally cleared. In some sections of the country, too much. Some harvested forestland proved unfit to farm. Trees were the natural and only useful crop these acres would grow.

New England and southern loggers found themselves harvesting second and even third-growth trees. The evidence was inescapable. These trees were volunteer crops.

**WHO'S NEWS This Week**  
By Lemuel F. Parson  
Consolidated Features.—WNU Release.

NEW YORK.—The swelling army of these embattled United States travels triumphantly on a stomach filled—stuffed—by Gen. Edmund B. Gregory. It is his guarantee, as quartermaster general, that army groceries will put six pounds at least on any soldier who eats them regularly for six months.

The general put on his own six pounds long ago. For years, in fact, he would have been happier with a few off. No luck! Sixtyish now he is broad of face and broad of beam. And for all that a few congressional critics growl in his direction, he is generally reputed to be a broad-gauged executive. His degree from West Point is only a lesser qualification for his present job of having plenty piping hot when four odd million American soldiers jam into mess halls all over the globe. He did a tour of post-graduate duty at the Harvard Business school besides a swing through the war college. This last attests to his I.Q. You have to be bright before the army lets you go there.

General Gregory was born in Iowa and it could be that boyhood struggles through Iowa's mud fit him peculiarly now for the job of moving goods regardless. His fleet of trucks would make Genghis Khan's biggest train of pony carts look like something out of Lilliput. He has to figure on 250,000 vehicles for every 1,250,000 soldiers. He is one swivel chair general whose shiny pants-seat is the result of hard work. And if ever his wife of 31 years gives him wide front a look and says, "Edmund, you really ought to diet a little," he can fairly answer that he has to keep on eating to keep up his strength.

SOME people grow surer every day that the wings of peace will take all America into the air. Polish off this war, they say, and aerial flivvers will become so handy that wings of peace will use them to run down to the grocery. Whole families will go vacationing deep into South America and whatever is left of Europe. It will be push-button travel. A button for elevation. A button for distance. A button for correct for drift. A safety button to fend off other craft.

If this miracle ever comes to pass Mac Short will certainly have had something to do with the planes that make it possible. He has been leveling toward some such result ever since he tested home-made gliders and his own skeletal structure off the ridge of his father's barn in Kansas. That was more than 25 years ago. Now he is the new president of the Society of Automotive Engineers, an earthbound name that only hints at the aero-dynamics with which many members, the new president included, busy themselves.

Short was in the army air service at 19, a flying lieutenant when the last World war ended, a graduate mechanical engineer in 1922 and he has been an airplane engineer and designer ever since. He formed the Vega Aircraft corporation in California in 1937 and for three years has spent all his time taking the bugs out of that company's ships. Forty-five now, he is married and has two daughters and a son.

JAMES L. FLY, chairman of the Federal Communications commission, squares off and gives the radio industry the eye. Radio gives it right back. If Congressman Luce could find a couple of women as opposite she'd have them in each other's hair before you could say frequency modulation. The commissioner and the industry have been that way about one another ever since the commissioner took over in 1939. He was re-appointed last year so there is every likelihood that they will continue.

Mr. Fly now draws blood with an announcement that recent vulgarity on radio programs has brought more complaints than usual, and that the FCC is investigating.