

Washington Digest

National Topics Interpreted
by William Bruckart
National Press Building Washington, D. C.

Scenes and Persons in the Current News

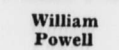
STAR DUST

Movie • Radio
By VIRGINIA VALE

JOE E. BROWN has been having a grand time for himself lately. With his latest picture, "Earthworm Tractor," welcomed by the public as one of the funniest he's ever made, he started off on a vacation.

Being a rabid baseball fan, he took in a few games when he reached the East enroute to Europe. In New York he went to a double-header between the Yankees and the St. Louis Browns, and presented to that sensational new Yankee outfielder, Joe DiMaggio, the award for being the most valuable player in the Coast league in 1935.

William Powell has sold his ornate home with the gold door knobs and is living in simpler quarters. Those rumors of a romance between him and Jean Harlow still persist—but apparently everybody who's unattached wants to marry him nowadays, and that includes girls who've never even seen him, except on the screen. Incidentally, Powell is regarded by actors everywhere as one of the most skillful and talented members of the profession—a tribute which is justly deserved.



Apparently nobody's happy any more until they've seen Hollywood. Young John Jacob Astor and his wife are the latest recruits of note; they are on their way to the film metropolis in a private car.

Bob Burns (don't tell me you haven't heard him and his bazooka on the Bing Crosby broadcasts!) is having honors heaped upon him. He worked in "Rhythm on the Range" with Bing, so the picture's premiere was staged in Little Rock, Ark., because Bob hails from the Ozarks.

Once upon a time The Revelers were the most popular quartette on the air. From time to time one of the sweet singers would drop out and make a name for himself all alone—Jimmy Melton was one who did it, Frank Luther was another—but somebody else would step in and the result would still be swell. You don't hear so much about them as you used to, but they're still on the air, at 6:35 afternoons—and they're still one of the best.

Cowboys have for years been known as devoted fans when Western pictures are shown, a fact which puzzled one motion picture executive so much that he questioned some of them about it. He wanted to know whether they went because the pictures were so much like their own life.

"Oh, no, they ain't like our life at all," one of them explained. "We go because maybe we think that's the way other cowboys go on."

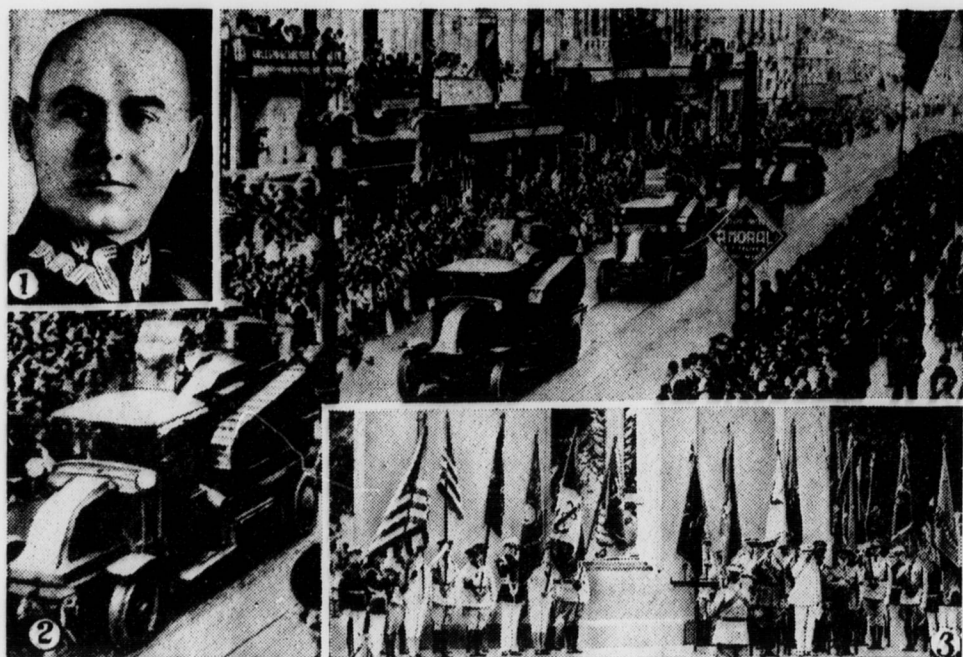
There'll be excitement on the air waves in September, when Major Bowes and his amateurs go into action at the same time as the "Showboat" broadcasts. Nobody's sure which program the great public will prefer—some say the listeners-in are getting tired of amateurs, and others claim that "Showboat" has been sailing too long.

"San Francisco" is a grand picture, and is making money everywhere it's shown, especially in San Francisco. Yet the Chamber of Commerce of that city is still trying to get Metro to take out the earthquake scenes! Very wisely, Metro is refusing—lots of people go to see the picture especially to see them. The picture has added to the popular Clark Gable's following and has demonstrated again that he has a great deal of versatility as an actor.



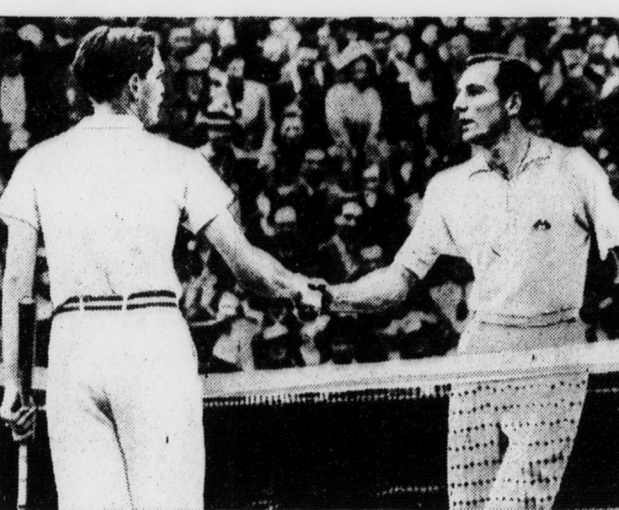
Clark Gable

ODDS AND ENDS . . . Remember "Baby Peggy"? She's a big girl now, making a screen come-back under her whole name, Margaret Montgomery, and you'll see her in a small part in "Girls Dormitory" . . . Ginger Rogers had a birthday party recently, with tiny dancing figures representing herself and Fred Astaire on top of the cake . . . When "Swing Time" is finished Fred will go to England with his wife and son for a vacation, and Ginger hopes to take a vacation in Hawaii before starting "Mother Carey's Chickens" . . . It looks as if that \$5,000,000 suit which Paramount has brought against Samuel Goldwyn for signing Gary Cooper must possibly be a publicity stunt . . . Surely Gary can sign with anybody he wants to when his present contract expires . . . The Tower of London was the scene of the pre-view of "Nine Days a Queen," an English picture based on the story of Lady Jane Grey.



1—Gen. Edward Rydz-Smigly, who has been proclaimed Poland's first citizen, a post which virtually drops him into the boots of the late Marshal Pilsudski. 2—Tanks rumble through Spain's cities, as the leftist government tries to crush the military revolt. 3—Veterans of the Second division dedicate a memorial to their fallen comrades in Washington, D. C.

Perry Is Tennis Champ for Third Time



Wimbledon, England.—Baron Gottfried von Cramm of Germany (left) congratulates Fred Perry of England, who defeated him in straight sets to win the men's singles at Wimbledon for the third successive year. The German, however, injured a thigh muscle in the first set.

FILLS FARLEY'S POST



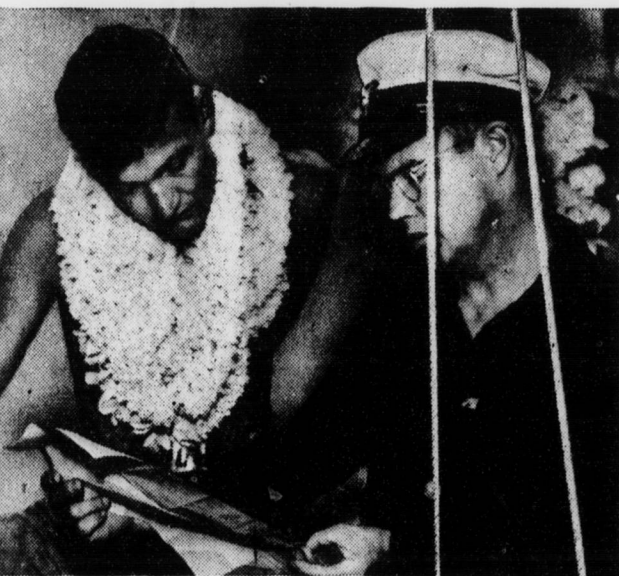
William W. Howes, who is acting postmaster general during the leave of absence of Postmaster General James A. Farley, who is directing the Democratic party's campaign to re-elect President Roosevelt. Mr. Howes' regular post is first assistant postmaster general.

GIVES ALL TO CHARITY



In a momentous decision based on "divine inspiration," Elsie Janis, one-time popular stage star and "sweetheart of the A. E. F." during the World war, has disclosed plans to dispose of her worldly possessions and to devote the proceeds and her life to local charities.

Skipper of Yawl Wins Honolulu Race



"You're first to finish!" James Wilder, judge, tells James Flood (left) owner of the 51-foot yawl Dorade, at the end of the longest yacht race in America—2,225 miles from California to Honolulu. The Dorade, of San Francisco, crossed the finish line with an elapsed time of 13 days 7 hours 46 minutes and 53 1/2 seconds. The Circe, of Seattle, was second.

Civilians and Their Dogs Parade in Gas Masks



Tokyo.—Civilians and their dogs parade through the streets of the Japanese capital wearing gas masks in a demonstration of the preparedness of the civilian population for a gas attack when and if the next war comes.

The People Must Pay

American farmers these days are threshing their wheat crop. The production is that of a reduced acreage, an acreage that was planned on theory by the Department of Agriculture. The result is that this year's American wheat crop will approximate 640,000,000 bushels. That is about 145,000,000 bushels less than the average crop during the five years from 1929 to 1933. The result is a shortage.

Department of Agriculture figures indicate that the total wheat crop in the world this year will be something like 650,000,000 bushels below the annual production. In other words, the wheat crop is short everywhere on earth and the result is obvious.

In our own case, there is normally a carry-over each year of about 125,000,000 bushels but due to the shortage of the crop this year that carry-over is insufficient to make up the needs of domestic consumption.

Consequently, we soon will see heavy importations of Canadian wheat, a wheat that can be blended in milling with our own production and a very satisfactory flour results. Yet, it must be remembered that on all importations of wheat from Canada or anywhere else, a tariff of 42 cents a bushel must be paid. It is clear, therefore, that consumers of bread must pay that tariff because the importers are going to pass that item of expense along as part of the cost of the flour. In addition to the shortage in the United States, Canadian wheat production is reported to be something like 100,000,000 bushels under normal. There is sufficient production in Canada to permit of export, of course, but the shortage is bound to be reflected in the prices.

And mention of the price brings us back to the individual effect of the combination of acreage, reduced by government edict, plus the act of nature in visiting a drought upon us. Scarcity always results in higher prices. It is the operation of the law of supply and demand. The Roosevelt farm policy has been predicated on the theory that scarcity would produce higher prices and thereby add to the farm income. But drought and other production hazards cannot be predicted and, therefore, the American people find themselves in a position where the unpredictable has happened and the farmers are not getting the benefit of higher prices on a natural and normal production.

There seems to be a stronger demand for wheat now than at any time during the last five or six years. It indicates a restoration of buying power on the part of the masses. In other words, industry again is opening up to some extent and employing workers although the increase in employment has been small thus far.

In consequence of this combination of circumstances, there is now a seller's market in wheat instead of a buyer's market in wheat. To say it another way, there are more people seeking to buy wheat than there are seeking to sell it and the consumers of flour will pay the bill. By way of contrast with present conditions, it may be pointed out that world wheat consumption has exceeded world wheat production in every year except one since 1929. In the 1932 crop year there was slightly more wheat produced in the world than was consumed. The result of the steady growth in consumption over production in the last few years has been to wipe out all of the carry-over—wheat stored in bins and elevators throughout the world—and in every country users of wheat are scraping the bottoms of their bins. The tragedy of it all is that, because of the reduced acreage and the drought in the United States, American farmers are not in a position to take advantage of the higher prices thus established by the sale of surplus wheat which may have been accumulated if the acreage had been normal.

Instead of the United States really controlling the market for wheat, we are in a position where a good many other countries may be encouraged to grow more wheat. The natural and obvious results of this will be to further curtail the outlet for American wheat which so long has been relied on by many foreign nations that are non-producers of wheat.

I do not know how far the New Deal intends to go in revising its basic economic policy regarding crop controlling. I can be sure of only one thing in regard to the New Deal plans: The visitation of the drought in two years in which the political planners of the New Deal attempted to upset natural

laws has proved the inability of man to alter the course of nature and by the same token these conditions have proved the inability of government to change human nature. I do not know whether others will agree with my conclusion or not but I am of the opinion that the American farmers are paying dearly for the crop control checks they received in the past two years. Even with a crop shortened by drought, if there had been the normal acreage of wheat, American farmers would have reaped the reward to which they are so justly entitled.

Bar Offers New Plan

A year or two ago, a committee of the American Bar association made a report definitely critical of the New Deal administration for having created so many agencies to which had been given functions almost like the courts. That report pointed out how such units as the now dead NRA and the equally dead AAA could issue rules and regulations that were enforceable as law. They called attention to the further fact that countless of these rules and regulations carried strict and severe penalties, even to the extent of a jail term for an individual violator.

Lately, another committee of the American Bar association has published another report, again calling attention to the un-American principles established in such bureaucratic control. It offers a constructive proposal for the elimination of bureaucratic management of individual affairs from Washington. It proposes the establishment of an administration court which would have power to enforce these rules and regulations but would be equipped with the judicial right of determination so that the thousands upon thousands of regulations, with their various penalties would not be enforced upon an individual accused of their violation without giving that alleged violator the right of a hearing. The committee proposal, in other words, would put an end to determination of violations by one bureaucrat.

Ultimately, the proposed court would take over the judicial work of all of the administrative agencies in Washington now numbering something like 75. The initial operation of the court would be limited until it could bring something like uniformity out of the chaos now existing for it is well known that in many cases two governmental agencies will have rules on the same point and those rules will not be the same. In some aggravated situations, it has been found that one agency will prescribe a penalty against an individual business for doing one thing while another agency will have no penalty for the same act. Another instance is known where two agencies have virtually the same regulations but the penalties in the two rules are different.

Too Many Bureaus

I suppose the condition can be explained by the fact that dozens of new bureaus have been set up under the scores of New Deal laws and that in the haste to get them into operation, no co-ordination was had between the various groups, but it is my belief that private citizens cannot be blamed for this condition. Since they cannot be blamed for failure of government to function properly, they ought not be compelled to answer for the silly differences in law which bureaucrats have written under authority of congress to draft necessary regulations.

After all, congress is really to blame for this condition. It rushed through laws which President Roosevelt demanded and it did not take time to debate the provisions nor did it examine the sections to know fully what results would flow from them. In many cases, too many statements of general legislative policy were not clear and congress abdicated its duties to the extent that it wrote into those laws provisions saying that the agency which was to enforce the particular law was given authority to write whatever rules and regulations were found to be necessary. Some authority of this kind always has been given in order to make the national laws flexible but they never have been given to such an extent as they have in the last three years.

Insufficient time has elapsed since the American Bar association committee came forth with its administrative court proposal for an analysis to be made of its potentialities. It may, and probably does, have weaknesses. It does, however, have a strong point in the general idea that a judicial body should determine whether an individual citizen has violated a bureaucrat's law and what the penalty should be rather than have that bureaucrat sit as prosecutor, judge and jury in telling the individual citizen what his crime has been.