

THE PILOT

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GAS SHORTAGE NOW CATCHES UP WITH US

There were a lot of scoffers last fall when colorful, and widely disliked, Harold Ickes proclaimed a threatened gasoline shortage and requested autoists along the eastern seaboard to conserve their use of the fuel.

There were a lot of scoffers who continued to use gasoline and who said there was plenty of it and that there was nothing to worry about. And because they felt like that, and expressed themselves widely, just about everybody continued to use all the gasoline they wanted.

There were a few interested folks who looked into the matter, however, and at that time, they said, in effect, this:

"It's true that right now there is no gasoline shortage. But it's also true that deliveries are being curtailed. Soon, the reserve pool along the coast will be used up and then there'll have to be strict rationing, because little more fuel will be coming in."

And now we're faced with exactly what was threatened—the rationing of gasoline, and many of us are also faced with doing an about-face concerning Mr. Petroleum Coordinator Ickes. Had we followed his advice about conserving gasoline, and had a few others been as farsighted as he in conservation of other essential materials, such as tires, we might not now have to be subjected so completely to the rationing system.

One other lesson might be learned from this, also. Because Harold Ickes is outspoken, fearless, and doesn't hesitate to tread heavily on toes which stick into governmental machinery, he has been distinctly unpopular in many places. Perhaps we may learn not to judge a man's wisdom by our personal likings.

COOLIES BECOME SOLDIERS

Chinese coolies, they were known as, rather contemptuously, for many years; now they are soldiers battling for freedom—ours and theirs.

The appearance in the Sandhills during the past week of Mrs. George Fitch, and her excellent talks on the part China is playing in the present war did much to add to our knowledge of Chinese soldiers and their fight. More of this is needed.

A recent issue of the London Economist made this clear when it commented upon the unwillingness of British officials in the Far East to arm Chinese in Singapore, Burmese in Burma or Indians in India. "It does not seem easy for some Britons in Malaya to regard Chinese or Malays as allies instead of coolies," the publication commented.

But British officialdom is now ready to dicker with India on the matter of that sub-continent's independence, and has sent one of its leading progressives, Sir Stafford Cripps, to handle the matter.

It is not pleasant to remember that at almost any time since 1937, it would have been comparatively simple for the U. S. and Britain to smash Japanese imperial aggression by stopping shipments of oil, iron, copper, cotton and rubber to Japan and by supplying the Chinese armies with war equipment.

The British strongholds in China and Thailand have fallen—through lack of cooperation with the Chinese. Recently the Burmese prime minister made a trip to Britain, asking for dominion status for Burma, and he was scoffed at and charged with being pro-Japanese. Nowadays, the press is reporting that the Burmese are cooperating with Japan.

India contains manpower and

natural resources needed by Britain; yet, until recently, the British have shown little signs of extending any pledge of freedom to India or of equipping an efficient, native Indian army.

We hope that it won't take many more Thailand surrenders, Singapore defeats and Burmese defections to convince us all that the humble Asiatic coolie of yesterday is a potential soldier of freedom today and that the hope of defeating the Japanese imperialists rests largely on the willingness of "coolies" to fight for their liberation from all exploitation.

TIME TO LOOK OUT!

Evidence that the Axis powers are preparing to launch an all-out offensive against the United Nations continues to accumulate. The latest indication that we should be prepared for the worst, right now, can be derived from the differently worded, but suspiciously alike, reports from each of the major Axis powers that they are now "on the defensive" and that the United Nations have taken the offensive.

That is too obviously a piece of misleading propaganda. Except in Russia, there has been no indication of the United Nations taking the offensive. It is true that we now have hopes of General MacArthur in Australia; but it is also true that the United Nations have rapidly retreated from the continent of Asia, across the stepping stones to Australia with the Japs hard at their heels. The steadfast defense of our small Philippine force, while heroic, can scarcely be called an "offensive action."

Thus far, in our experience with dirty, double-dealing dictators, we've learned that there is no trust to be put in any statement they may inspire. The cleverness of their propaganda, of course, is in that they diabolically blend the true with the false in such a mixture it is difficult to determine lies from half-lies and half-lies from truths.

We should not certainly take these "on the defensive" admissions of the Axis at their face value; on the other hand, it may be just as serious a mistake to assume that the complete opposite of defensive is planned. Perhaps the confusion which these unprecedented admissions are causing is exactly the effect desired.

If we take them seriously, we may tend to relax our efforts. If we accept their opposite meaning, we may be inclined to strengthen our defense, rather than launch an offense.

Now is the time to look out. Now, also, would be a time to strike out and make their statements come true.

THESE \$-A-YEAR MEN

The resignation of Robert R. Guthrie as chief of the War Production Board's textile, clothing and leather goods branch raises again the issue of \$-a-year men in responsible governmental positions—\$-a-year men who receive their real compensation from private interests.

Behind the so-called "personal conflicts" which led to the demotion of Guthrie and his subsequent resignation are a series of facts which have not been widely aired, and these seem to point to decided opposition on the part of \$-a-year men to Guthrie's attempts to convert needed materials strictly to war industry.

Previously, Guthrie had been deputy chief of the industries branch with jurisdiction over durable consumers' goods. In this role, he succeeded in getting an order closing down refrigerator and radio industries at the end of April, despite "fierce opposition." One of the "personal conflicts" referred to by Nelson was between Guthrie and Philip Reed, chairman of the Board of General Electric and also \$-a-year man in charge of the industries branch dealing with durable consumers' goods. Guthrie had proposed an order shutting down the refrigerator industry so that scarce materials and machinery could be devoted to war purposes. Reed and Thomas Evans, a refrigerator trade association executive, attempted to put off this order until June later. (Evans subsequently

Book Review

By MRS. E. V. HUGHES

Through the experiences of Peter Lamiter Achilles, a New England teacher in Shawei, Preston Schover gives us a substantially new version of the Chinese conflict in his novel, "The Foreigners." Mr. Schover lived these experiences himself, so the background is autobiographical. He knows the foreigners of whom he writes and he draws sharp contrasts between them. He portrays accurately those who went to China to serve it, become a part of it and make friends with its people. He does equally well with those who lived comfortably in China but ignored it and claimed that it was cursed with madness. These let the natives make little Gods of them and then saved themselves. But China changed them all; some were made worse, but others became sublime. None of them dominated China for something formidably and distinctively Chinese continued to govern their world. And, although the natives whimpered that "bombs never kill foreigners," foreigners came to die as miserably as did Chinese, while Western doctors, nurses and ambulance drivers rendered heroic service in the invasion of Shawei. Many had stayed in spite of the cynicism of those who thought China would be a fine place without Chinese and claimed to believe in Japanese despotism and controls. Most of those who stayed were Christians. Here the author draws a noticeable distinction also. The brave performed surgical miracles and guarded the gates of shelters.

Out of the debris of Mr. Schover's China arose a new race of people. Chinese, who had formerly thought themselves into safety for a respite, awoke to war alertness and safeguards. Some of the most comfortable people deserted the cause. Some talked too much and those who talked the loudest usually collaborated with the Japanese. But millions gave up entirely their old traditions for their united cause of helpfulness. In describing them Mr. Schover joins the authors steeped in wisdom of war all over the new world, who acclaim that "poor people are kind." His skill in delineating Chinese character is distinguished.

Preston Schover's love stories are truly stirring. "East is East and West is West" never fails to arouse mixed emotions in the reader. Here is a version which shows originality as well as dramatic and poetic sensibility. Peter had thought he was in love with Clover Browne. And here is

became a government official).

When Guthrie was demoted to head the textiles, clothing and leather goods branches, he pressed for a wool conservation order but was opposed by Kenneth Marriner, \$-a-year executive of a large wool dealing concern. An attempt by Guthrie to convert the carpet manufacturing industry to production of cotton duck was opposed by J. F. Proctor, WPB consultant on duck who is also an official of Wellington Sears & Co., large holders of government contracts for duck.

According to Washington informants, Guthrie also tried to spread orders throughout the textile industry and was opposed by Ames Stevens, wool section, and Lt. Col. Robert Stevens, head of quartermaster corps textile planning, both of whom are associated with the large textile firm of J. P. Stevens.

When Guthrie resigned, he said he had attempted to carry out his duties "without regard for special interests and to apply uncompromising devotion to the principles of the war effort." He resigned, he said, "since it is no longer possible for me to do this." Incidentally, when Guthrie came to WPB from Paducah, Ky., where he was a department store owner and the largest individual stockholder in the White Sewing Machine Co., he sold his holdings in the company at a loss, because of going with the government.

Congressional committees are now investigating the "conflicts" which, according to Donald Nelson, have "impeded" the war effort. Speed, accuracy and ruthless exposure of the facts is desired by the American public. And if the \$-a-year men must go—let them go, and quickly. If the winning of the war must come first, it must be the first, not secondary, consideration of every person charged with responsibility in the war effort.

a touch of picturesque speech: "Even her brown curls had a city-bred sub-mission;" also, her father, Commissioner Brown, "loved to crackle around in a boiled shirt." Clover understood China as did Peter, but she thought she loved Alex Murchison. Janet Wilde, thirty-five and an obstetrician at Union Hospital, who maintained you could never reform China but you could reform individual Chinese, also loved Alec, but with a disillusioned and wistful tenderness. This love made Alec almost a scoundrel, but a repentant one, while Clover held him with her coquetry. A beautiful Chinese girl, Meilan, whom Peter protects, first out of curiosity concerning Chinese intrigue and later because of a moving passion, gives the plot a bewitching appeal, a tragedy, a happiness and a mystery beyond all imagination.

There was a time some months ago, when we would have read this novel primarily for its enthralling story. Today many will read it to gain wisdom and courage from the "reasonable" Chinese, who were always polite, even when hiding their sarcasm behind a bland smile. It will not be read or digested hurriedly. It is detailed and exact but it is worth the time it takes to digest it. Too, all our own prejudices have been carried over into this gloriously unprejudiced country, where bickering was much more picturesque than it is in America.

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Mrs. W. H. Stratton, who was injured Tuesday in a fall during the Hunter Trials in which her horse, O'Moriarty, was killed, was reported yesterday considerably improved, al-

though still confined to Moore County Hospital. Mrs. Stratton suffered a chipped shoulder bone and a detached collar bone, it was reported.

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