

SEEN and HEARD around the National Capital

By CARTER FIELD

Washington.—In connection with the proposed international loan to China—aimed at preventing the Japanese from obtaining a strangle hold on that market—a very interesting development, with a group of American manufacturers behind it, is under way. The government knows about it, but has taken no action.

Representing manufacturers who use tungsten, an American is now in China investigating the possibility of obtaining a very large amount of this valuable metal—enough to supply all the needs of this country for a period of years. The idea would be to ship this tungsten from China to Seattle or some other Pacific port, there to hold it as a sort of pool. Supplies would be sold from the pool as needed by the manufacturers.

The main object is not to aid China, but to stabilize the price in this country of tungsten. The price has fluctuated over a tremendous range, amounting to several hundred dollars a ton for tungsten ore! This is a situation, which is naturally most embarrassing to those using it, as it makes much more difficult the making of contracts which have any length of time to run, especially contracts where any sizable fraction of the cost is based upon the price of tungsten.

But if the plan succeeds it will be of enormous benefit to China. The supply of tungsten bought would be so large that it would run way up in the millions of dollars. This would provide a credit for China here for any imports she wanted from this country. It would not be barter in the sense that the word has been used, for example, in connection with the proposed exchange of half a million bales of cotton with Germany for blocked marks. But it would provide China with a large amount of exchange in this country on which she could draw. And the best of it, as the State department folks see the situation, though they are taking no part so far in the maneuver, is that it would provide a natural stimulus to trade, with no attempt to force goods along new channels, and with none of the difficulties and barriers with which most of the proposed barter agreements have been afflicted.

Wouldn't Stop Imports

Nor would it even put a stop to imports of tungsten into this country, thus depriving China of a natural source of exchange. Under the proposed plan, just as much tungsten would be imported from China for the three years, say, following the arrival of the huge shipments to make up the pool, as though the pool had not been created. In a way this would be a reserve supply, which would be replenished by purchases from China as fast as it was depleted. For the object of the pool is not to buy all at once a supply for a long period, and then not to buy again until the pool is exhausted. The object is just to obtain price stabilization. If the price should shoot up to a point the managers of the pool thought unreasonable, they would sell, but do no purchasing until the price should decline. If the price should fall too low, heavy purchases would be made, certainly to the limit of the pool capacity.

In effect, advocates of the plan point out, the organization of the pool would be an advance to China of some millions of dollars, in exchange for a valuable commodity, so that no element of credit would be involved—as between China and the United States. But it would serve just as useful a purpose as if the government—as desired by Britain and others worried about the Japanese credit to China—had advanced the money. Which is very important to the treasury because only the most optimistic think if the money were lent it would ever be repaid.

Those working for the pool say there would be no difficulty in financing the original purchases, as banks would be glad to lend money on tungsten stored in a bonded warehouse.

See Trouble Ahead

A simple relief measure for Porto Rico has opened up with probability of troubles and repercussions from now on, and involving not only Porto Rico but the Philippines, Hawaii, Cuba, and Louisiana, not to mention the beet sugar states.

It all grew out of the visits to Porto Rico by Mrs. Roosevelt and by Professor Tugwell, who happens to be under-secretary of agriculture as well as a brain trust. At least, critics of the move so insist.

What happened finally was that Secretary of Agriculture Wallace signed an order permitting excess sugar cane in Porto Rico to be ground into molasses and then brought into the United States. This means, of course, that the sugar so ground was—until this order—in excess of Porto Rico's quota. It could have been sold abroad, on the world market, or it could have been plowed under.

Obviously this move disturbed the whole quota set-up. Already Hawaii had been screaming that this very quota was ruinous to her. The beet sugar people had accepted it because they could get nothing better, but were far from happy. And the Cubans thought they were pretty nearly ruined.

AAA has not paid much attention to Louisiana sugar producers. They had been benefited. The price for their molasses had risen from 2 to 7½ cents a gallon during the past year. In fact, the sugar section of AAA claims that

Louisiana has profited more than any other section from the sugar program. This was due to a more or less unexpected development—the widespread use of molasses for the production of alcohol. And therein lies more trouble from the Porto Rico decision.

Hits Corn Belt

For it brings the corn belt boys up standing—and screaming. They have fought bitterly for years for all kinds of legislative devices to increase the price of corn. Many of them backed the proposal to force all motorists to use a mixture of alcohol—made from corn—with their gasoline. This was never enacted, but there has always been pressure for it, and it illustrates their interest in any proposal affecting the use of corn.

Now whisky men agree that neutral spirits for blending with straight whisky should be made from grain. They insist that the taste is different; that alcohol made from molasses does not produce as delectable a drink as if the alcohol had been made from grain, despite the chemical similarity.

And it so happens that the prime movers for this dispensation to Porto Rico on molasses, outside the Porto Rico interests themselves, were liquor people. Those most interested happen to be located in Philadelphia. Which presents a double-barreled argument for opponents of the concession.

Louisiana finds herself supported by the corn belt in protesting against this upset on the sugar quota, whereas just recently the corn belt was sore with the liquor people for using molasses from Louisiana. Moreover, the corn belt boys are sore because if the price of molasses had kept on mounting, as the Louisiana planters had hoped it would, the liquor people would have turned back to corn anyway.

But the end is not yet. For the liquor people are not satisfied, even with the concession on Porto Rican molasses. Now they want the same concession made for the Philippines—despite the fact that the sugar interests were most potent in the fight to give the Philippines their independence in the hope of eventually getting rid of Philippine competition on sugar.

So now the Philippine agitators will join the liquor people in insisting on having Philippine molasses—in excess of her sugar quota—admitted into the United States. And the corn belt boys are preparing to make Mr. Wallace's life miserable.

Long Perturbed

Huey Long is said by some close friends to be just a little perturbed about the selection of ex-Gov. Dan Moody of Texas to prosecute alleged tax evasion cases in Louisiana. This is one reason Long has been making such a crusade against Postmaster General James A. Farley. "He hopes to do just about what Senator Burton K. Wheeler did to Attorney General Harry M. Daugherty. And what Senator James Couzens of Michigan did to Secretary of the Treasury Andrew W. Mellon. In short, to beat them to the punch. So that when later developments are aired the country will get the impression that Long is being "persecuted."

It is no secret that the government thinks it has the goods on Huey. There is no doubt whatever that Dan Moody was convinced, in his recent interviews here with Department of Justice and treasury officials, that they had a good case.

The really interesting part of the story is why Moody was picked. It was on the recommendation of some very high New Deal advisers who knew the Texas situation intimately. They clinched their case for Moody when they told of the prosecutions that made him famous.

At that time Moody, only thirty-two years old, was attorney general of Texas. He went after a group, which was suspected of having made some fat profits out of road contracts. He did a masterly job of investigating first, and then so emmeshed the small fry that before they knew what they were doing they had dragged the higher-ups into the picture. So the astonishing picture was held up to Texas of actually putting the big fellows—the men behind—in jail.

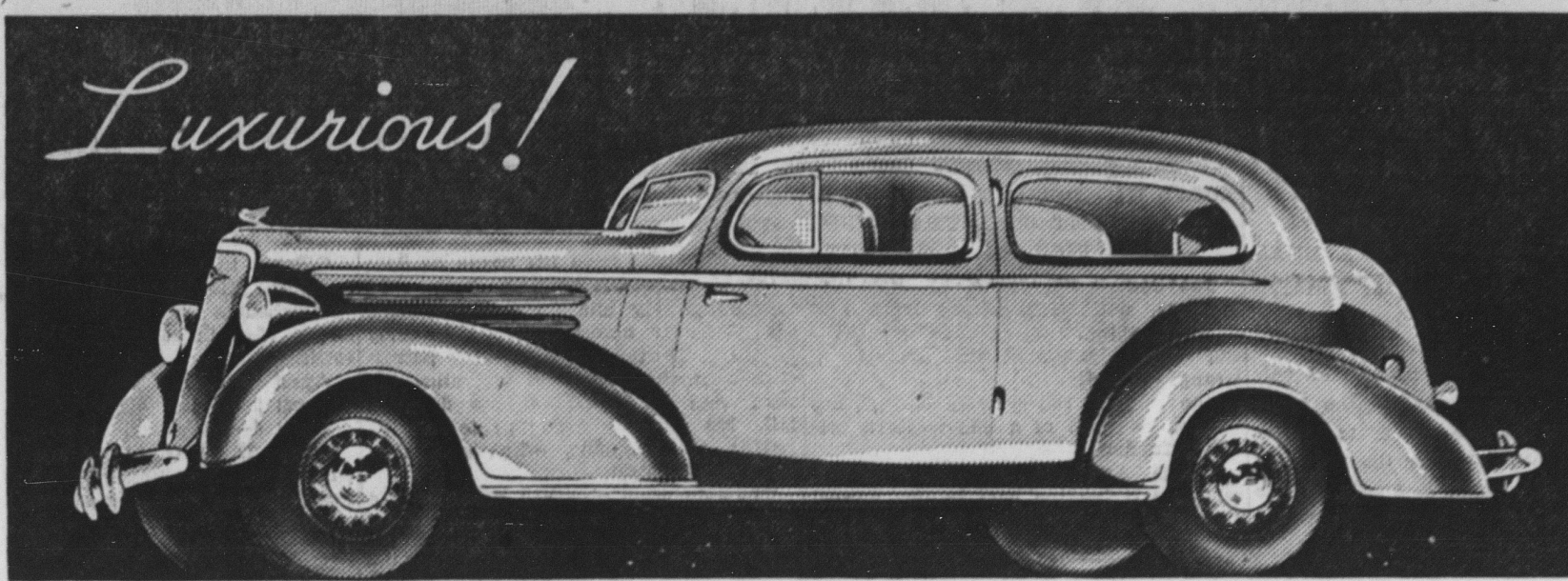
Made Moody a Hero

All of which made Moody a hero. He was elected governor and then re-elected. In fact, his popularity lasted until he, although a Baptist and a thirty-second-degree Mason, decided to support the nominee of the Houston convention for President. This happened to be Al Smith, and Texas did not take kindly to Smith's candidacy. Nor to its popular governor supporting him. This is important at the moment for several reasons. First, because Moody knew he was running counter to public sentiment. He told friends at the Houston convention that he did not think Smith would have a chance of carrying Texas if nominated. As a delegate he did not vote for Smith, but for Jesse Jones. But Al Smith once nominated, Moody took the unpopular course and went through for the New York candidate.

So that while his judgment was sound, his determination to do what he thought was the right thing regardless of consequences was also demonstrated. Afterward he retired to private life, and has been doing pretty well since at the practice of law.

The Long case promises to put him back in the national picture. His friends are enthusiastic about his prospects. He is only forty-three now, so he can wait. But they are sure he will wind up with the scalps of both the Kingfish and Gov. O. K. Allen, as well as many of their lieutenants. Which would make him a figure all over the country.

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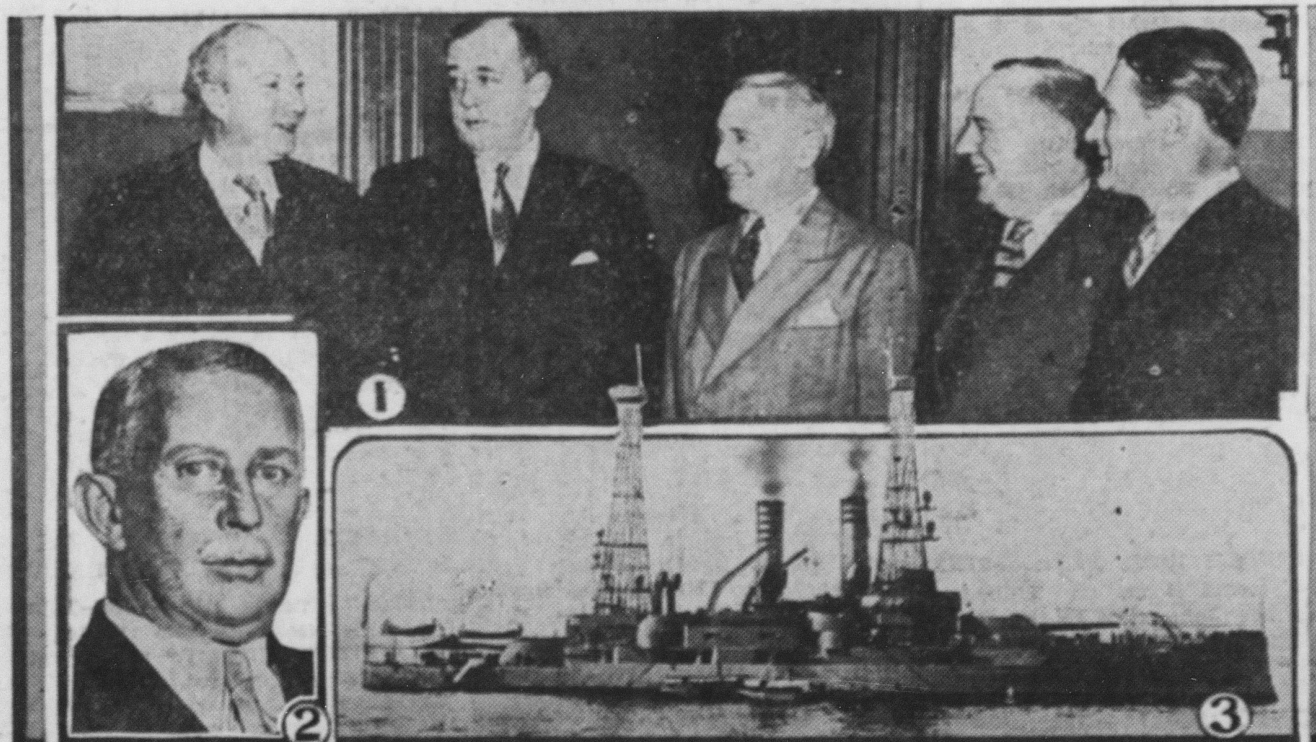
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Scenes and Persons in the Current News



1—Senate committee to investigate NRA. Left to right, Senator Pat Harrison; S. Clay Williams, chairman of the NRA board; Senator Walter F. George; Senator Clark; and Senator Nye. 2—Anning S. Prall, chairman of the federal communications commission. 3—Former U. S. S. Idaho, now a Greclan warship, figured in the uprising in Greece.

Tin Is Not Cheap

References to tin through such common expressions as tin lizzies, tinnies, and tin-horn sports have made its name synonymous with cheapness. But it is not cheap. In fact it is virtually a semi-precious metal. It costs twice as much as aluminum, six times as much as copper, 13 times as much as lead and 37 times as much as steel.—Collier's Weekly.

Imitation a Sin

The Greek of ancient days, with his exquisite sense of propriety, always feared for the transgressor of bounds, the mortal apeing of the divine, and insolence or arrogance seemed to 'eschynus and to Sophocles the unardonable sin, never condoned by the Greek divinities.

Pigmy Shrew Said to Be World's Smallest Mammal

The smallest mammal in the whole world, the pigmy shrew, has a total length of about three inches, but nearly half of this belongs to the slender tail, and its weight is a fraction of an ounce. It has the general form of a miniature mouse, but it is as different from a mouse in structure as a rabbit is from a badger, and its teeth resemble those of a weasel. These tiny, half-blind creatures, says a writer in the Montreal Herald, are to be found from eastern Canada and the United States northwestward to British Columbia, and probably are numerous but are rarely seen by anyone except through some chance, for they are extraordinarily secretive, spending their lives in searching for insects, earthworms, young mice, etc., underneath leaves, matted old grass and logs, or by boring into loose soil and punky wood; they do not hibernate, but are active all winter, even in extreme cold.

Too Much Rain

Rain is a calamity, not a blessing, in northern Chile, South America, writes R. J. Thompson, Dilworth, Minn., in Collier's Weekly. There they get plenty of it. Rain not only washes away their mud huts but it dissolves the great nitrate beds, which are one of the chief sources of income of that country, and thereby throws thousands of men out of work for weeks at a time.

Origin of Military Salute

The origin of the military salute is not definitely known. It was supposed to have been the practice in Rome at the time of Julius Caesar for an inferior to raise the palm of the hand to the front of his cap to show that it contained no dagger. This was because assassinations were so common in those days. It has been suggested that time and custom have modified this to the military salute.

Giant Clocks

The largest clock in the world is on the tower of a factory in New Jersey. The dial is 50 feet in diameter, the minute hand is 27 feet long, and the hour hand is 19 feet 3 inches long. The minute hand travels 155 feet in an hour's journey round the dial, which works out at about 3 inches in a minute or 270 miles in a year.—Tit-Bits Magazine.

Great Bear Lake Game Birds

The grouse, which are permanent residents of the Northwest territories, and several species of geese and ducks, which are migratory visitors, are the principal game birds of the Great Bear lake area and the rest of the vast territories, which embrace a million and a quarter square miles in their boundaries.—Detroit News.

BORN WITHOUT A GULLET

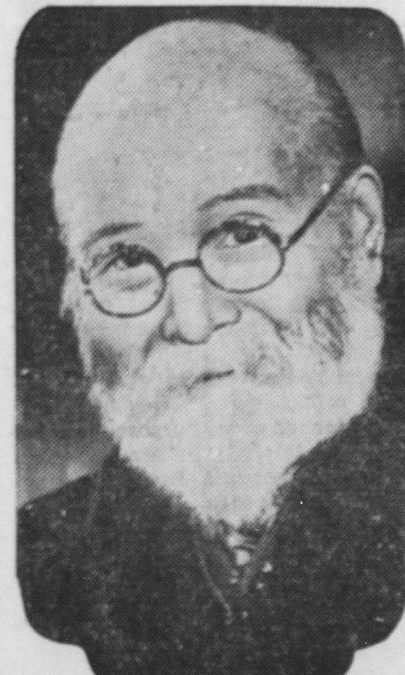


Robert Earl Linsig was born in New York without an esophagus, the narrow tube through which food passes from the mouth to the stomach. Robert has an even chance in his battle for life, but cannot be operated on for seven or eight years.

Use for Cellulose

The most interesting things about cellulose do not lie in its roles as food and fiber, but in its use as a raw material for chemical industry. The first successful attempt at the chemical processing of cellulose was made by an English weaver named Mercer in 1844. He had observed that cotton when soaked in lye became weaker and a trifle jellylike. He softened some cotton yarn with lye solution, stretched it while still wet, and then dried it and neutralized the lye. The resulting fiber had a silky appearance and, in memory or his name, is still known as mercerized cotton.—Chicago Tribune.

JAP FINANCE MINISTER



The owlish, eighty-three-year-old patriarch and veteran of Japanese finance, Korekijo Tahahashi, poses for this picture in his Tokyo office, after approving the governmental budget for 1935. He is the finance minister of the Okada government now in power.

MILK AND HONEY DIET



A diet of milk and honey, with now and then a little orange juice, can keep a man alive and well. This is the belief of Dr. Nykola Haydak of the University of Minnesota, who tried the diet for four months and ended up in perfect health.

Kinds of Wood

The forest service knows of no estimate of the total number of different varieties of wood in the world. There are in the United States 862 species of trees, 228 varieties and 57 hybrids, making altogether 1,177 different forms of trees which produce wood. In the Amazon valley of South America alone there are known to be at least 2,500 species, and new species are being described every year by the hundreds in all parts of the world. The total number, therefore, can hardly be short of 5,000 or 6,000 and may be as high as 10,000.