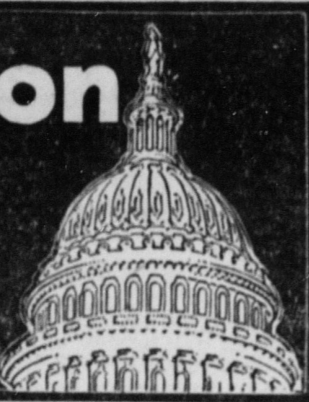


Washington Digest



National Topics Interpreted
By WILLIAM BRUCKART
NATIONAL PRESS BLDG. WASHINGTON, D. C.

WASHINGTON. — There was a press statement sent around to newspaper offices the other day that failed to attract any attention.

Significant Decision
It failed to gain any publicity at all and yet, it seems to me, it was one of the most significant announcements to come from any government department in months. The statement, issued by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, said simply that a decision had been reached "against making effective a potato marketing agreement and order program covering interstate shipment of potatoes grown in 13 early and intermediate states."

The AAA announcement explained that the "overall vote" was sufficiently large to make the marketing agreement operative under the law, but it was the conviction of officials that it was "not feasible" to place the program in effect in the light of the character of the vote taken. In some areas of the 13 states and, indeed, in some of the states as a whole, there was actually a majority of the producers of potatoes who voted against the agreement.

Thus, for the first time, a marketing agreement sponsored by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration is rejected. Perhaps, to be technically correct, I ought to say that, for the first time, there was such lack of public support that a marketing agreement has been abandoned before it was started. Certainly, if the folks charged with official responsibility deem a plan unlikely to succeed, there must be a quite evident lack of enthusiasm for it. The tendency heretofore has been to cram rules and regulations and marketing agreements and contracts and what have you right down the farmers' throats as a means of "educating" them to the benefits eventually accruing. Recognition of this lack of support, therefore, constitutes something of a change in the attitude of the AAA, but the significant thing as far as I am concerned continues to be the fact that the farmers again are asserting their independence. It amounts to a sign that agriculture has begun to desire less of Washington meddling in management of farms.

There are obviously two schools of thought about government's relations with agriculture in this country. There is the philosophy represented by Secretary Wallace and his followers who favor crop control. It was they who argued for the program of scarcity of supplies as a means to the more abundant life for the farmer, and it is the same Mr. Wallace who now is promoting what he is pleased to call the "ever normal granary" idea. The other group of friends of agriculture take the position fundamentally that the farmer should have some form of government assistance, but they object strenuously to any program that contemplates regimentation—Washington control over how the farmer operates his farm and what he produces.

I suppose that the marketing agreement idea is a proper one to be carried out if the crop curtailment idea is to be paramount as a national policy. It is an historical fact, of course, that adoption of one type of regulation begets other regulations. No man ever lived who could conceive at one time, all of the necessary rules to control a set of circumstances in which natural laws figure. And natural laws figure in any question of production of farm crops. So when and if there is to be national crop control, there must be these subsidiary and district programs to carry out the broader aspects of a plan.

Since I never have been convinced that a national crop control program was sound, it was no surprise to me to learn of what amounts to a plain rejection of the theory by the farmers, or one segment of them. The wonder to me is that these same farmers waited so long to reassert themselves as bosses of their business. It may be an incident, however, that proves the statement of one farmer who wrote to me saying, "We may be slow in learning, but when we learn we usually are right."

Rejected By Farmers
One of the reasons given privately for the rejection of the potato agreement was that the "educational work" in advance of the vote by eligible producers "was not of a very high order." But why, I ask, is it necessary for our government to use propaganda at any time? There might be an emergency, such as came with the World War, when propaganda can be justified. Otherwise, I feel it is not a function of government, and one of the results is bound to be a government by men and not by law. The government is not anybody's salesroom. Our congress and the legislatures of states are elected by popular vote of the citizens. They are the fellows who create policy, not officials appointed to office.

There might be some interest in an examination of the states concerned in this proposed, and now abandoned, marketing agreement. They are: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia. The AAA announcement said there were 7,300 producers voting on the adoption of the agreement. My information is that this number is a pitifully small proportion of potato growers, even the growers of "early" and "intermediate" potatoes as distinguished from fall potatoes. Yet, there was not a sufficient number of these to warrant the AAA in making the program operative. What happened to the other growers? Well, I can make only one guess, namely, they just did not have any interest in it.

Of course, it may be different with growers of other crops. It must be recalled, however, that there has been a multiplicity of evidence that the corn farmers are dissatisfied, and there have been howls from the cotton growers and from the tobacco growers, and the wheat sections are the source of other complaints. I have no way of knowing what proportion of the growers of these crops are represented in the opposition already voiced. There can be no doubt on one point, however. The independence of the farmer is bound to be shown and if he is becoming disgusted with bureaucratic direction of his affairs, it is a condition that is more likely to spread than to decline in scope.

And speaking of regulation, I heard a conversation the other day that I am going to record here as faithfully as I can recall the words.

Case of Corrigan

It took place at my favorite table in the National Press Club, a large table at which men gather for lunch. Usually, all 12 places are filled, and the types of work and means of livelihood represented are interesting of themselves—some lawyers, some government officials, some trade representatives, some writers. On this particular day, Douglas Corrigan, flying "west" from New York to California, had landed in Ireland—without a permit from the department of commerce. The question: what could or should the department of commerce do about the violation of its sacred rules?
"Of course," said former Sen. C. C. Dill of Washington, "the department must take away his license. It has to do it. If it doesn't, there will be any number of foolhardy lads try the same thing."
"Well, now," observed H. O. Bishop, famed student of George Washington, "I just wonder whether that's right. Here we have a government department telling one and all of us that we must not fly across the ocean unless we get their permission. What are we coming to in this country? Presently, we will have to have a permit to walk across the Potomac river bridge. It may come to the end that we have to have a permit to buy food—as they do in Russia."

Senator Dill: "Oh, but that's not the point. There is a question of safety involved, human lives."
Mr. Bishop: "The railroad engineer isn't licensed. He is responsible for hundreds of human lives. This whole thing of the government getting tangled up in everything we do is silly. We don't have a democracy, any liberty, any more. It was the spirit of adventure that made this country great."

Senator Dill: "True. Take the Corrigan incident, however, and think what the government would spend looking for him if his \$900 crate had fallen in the Atlantic. I've an idea that the cost of looking for Amelia Earhart mounted to several hundred thousand dollars. If the government hadn't made an effort to look for her, or for Corrigan if he had fallen, the newspapers of the country would have 'burned up' the officials responsible."

Mr. Bishop: "Where's it going to stop? Year after year, we see rattle brains get into congress and immediately promote some new regulation or create another political bureau or commission."

And so it went, on and on. Some finished their lunches and left; others came, and the argument was continued.

A few days later, the National Press Club entertained Howard Hughes and his "round-the-world flyers" at a luncheon. Mr. Hughes was praised and his aides commended. They had made all preparations for their flight in accordance with department of commerce requirements. They were successful in their effort. And what do you think—the success of the Hughes trip subsequently was used by the same two men as a means of renewing their argument.

The moral? If any, it proves why a democracy is a good form of government. If you have an opinion, express it.

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GREAT BOOKS

Dumas' Story Formed Basis For 'Traviata'

By ELIZABETH C. JAMES

ONE has grown used to seeing characters from favorite books on the screen. There is interest also in meeting again the old books, just as their authors wrote them long before the cinema era. Among famous love stories recently brought to the screen is that of Camille, the lady created by Alexandre Dumas in his book, "The Lady of the Camellias."



Elizabeth James

You recall that Dumas opened his romantic novel by relating how he himself had gone to the sale of the personal possessions of Marguerite Gautier, a beautiful courtesan of Paris. He bought the book, Manon, which had been inscribed by one Armand Duval, whom he guessed to be one of her lovers.

The day after this sale a card was presented at the author's door, bearing the name of Armand Duval. Very curious, Dumas invited the caller into his apartment. The per-

VERSATILE DUMAS

Alexandre Dumas, fils, was the natural son of the noted novelist and a seamstress. The mother brought up her son carefully and early he attained a wide and cultured education. Taunts from his playmates shadowed his childhood with unhappiness.

The younger Dumas was versatile in the number of his literary talents, but one quality ran through them all, the purpose of a reformer. Most of his works have a didactic theme, which caused the elder Dumas to scold his son.

sonable young man could hardly talk for weeping. He wanted to buy back the book, Manon.

After much weeping, Duval told the story of the Lady of the Camellias.

Marguerite Gautier, outstanding among the lovely women in Paris, had as her favorite flower the camellia, which she wore the year round in preference to all other flowers. From the time that Armand first saw her, his life was not the same. When he obtained an introduction to her, he was so overcome that he made a very silly impression and for two years he made no effort to see her again. At one time she was ill for two months, and he went daily to inquire about her, never leaving his name.

Marguerite Is Consumptive

Finally he arranged to meet her again. When she learned that it was he who had come daily for two months, she was interested and invited him to supper. He knew already that she was consumptive.

Marguerite had never seen any one pity her so deeply and she was touched. When Armand told her how much he loved her, she explained that her mode of life was lavish, that she spent 100,000 francs a year. But no arguments prevailed against their mutual attraction. Marguerite loved Armand.

As spring came, she suggested that they leave Paris and take a house in the country for the summer. This plan seemed idyllic, and proved to be so. For six months the lovers were happy. Then came a message for Armand to meet his father in Paris.

The interview between father and son was stormy, but neither gave way to the other. The next day Armand called again to see his father but found him out. Returning to Marguerite he found her in a state of agitation worse than he had believed possible. She gave him vague reasons and wept continuously. The next day she urged Armand to go once more to see his father. To please her, he did so.

Marguerite Disappears

Late in the evening when Armand returned to the country, he found the house dark. Frantic, he found that Marguerite had gone. A letter stated that their relationship had been lovely, but it could not last. Armand was wild. He would show her! Back in Paris he went everywhere that Marguerite went, he gambled and lived recklessly, taking every occasion to insult her. Marguerite fled from Paris.

In her exile, the Lady of the Camellias knew that she would soon die. Longing for Armand she wrote him each day, but did not send the letters. She gave instructions that when she was dead these letters with one other should be sent to Armand.

On returning to Paris, Armand learned of her death and received her letters with one from his father to Marguerite in which Armand's father had implored Marguerite in the name of her love to give up his son so that the family name and future would be untarnished. The importunate letter had used every means to win her to the idea that she would be doing a heroic deed in the name of love.

The plot of Verdi's opera, "La Traviata," comes from this book.

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SIX GUNS and CARPET TACKS

A Gallos County Story

© McClure Newspaper Syndicate, WNU Service.

MOST times, here in Gallos county, a six gun's a-got just a leetle the best of the argument, but there was one time when the difference between two gun toters was a box of carpet tacks.

See that tree a-standin' out there, there at the bend in the road. Well, that's where they were finally lynched Butch Manton. Folks just heard that some of Butch's friends was a-plannin' to ride in to town and take him out o' jail. And Butch a-bein' a cow thief like he was, they just up and taken him out and strung him to that tree. And Butch'd been livin' right, like as not, if it wasn't for them carpet tacks.

It was right here in the Happy Hour where things was a-beginnin'. Butch was at the bar when Johnnie Rucker comes in and was a leetle slow when he said something 'bout Butch stealin' 50 head of steers from Johnnie, but Johnnie did nick Butch's right foot as the lead from Butch's gun went a-tearin' through his own heart.

without givin' him a chance, but Butch still had that gun in his hand when he backs out of the Happy Hour.

'Fore long after the shootin', Sheriff Tom rides into town and hears 'bout the shootin'. It kinda hits him hard on account of Johnnie bein' a pal of his'n, and he don't wait for reason why there ain't been no posse after Butch. He lights out for the Diablo canyon country down close to the border where Butch and his gang has holed up for years.

Butch oughta gone right on to the border, but he don't. He stops by the shack, sends them riders of his'n on with them steers he stole from Johnnie and waits back to see if he can't do something 'bout that foot of his'n.

He's a doin' a leetle doctorin' of his own when Tom rides up. Tom ain't never been a fool 'fore, but a-thinkin' 'bout Johnnie musta got him off, 'cause Butch gits the drop on him and takes Tom's gun but Tom does manage to kick a table over and put out a candle,

Along the Highway

Don't let ownership of an automobile rob you of your politeness.

Probably the worst fault in driving a car is believing you haven't any fault.

In these days, on the roads, it's a case of the survival of the fittest.

Thinking about one thing while doing another causes accidents.

the only light that's in the room.

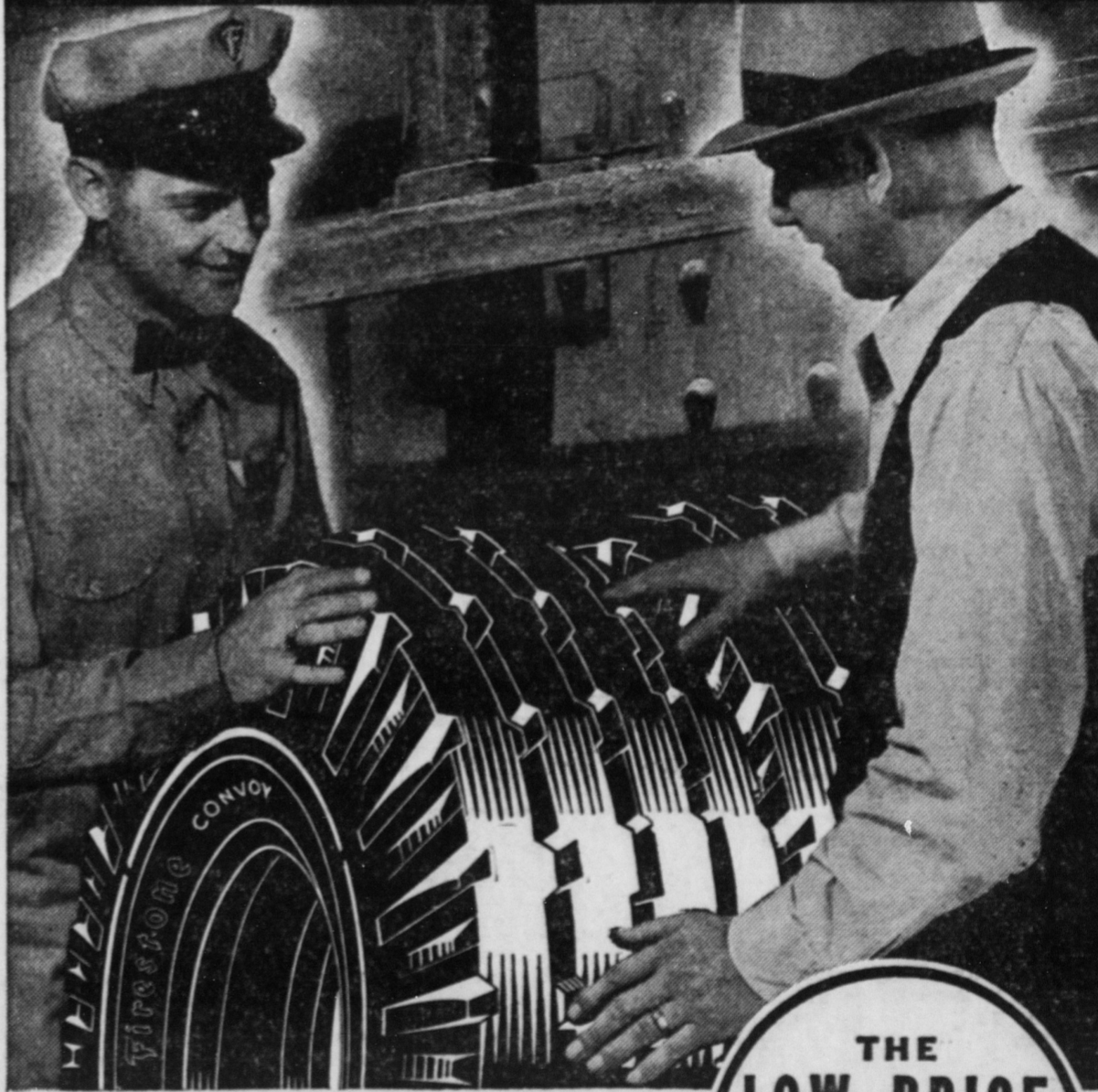
No sir, Butch don't get away from Tom and Tom lives to bring Butch Manton right to the jail from which he was taken and hung on that tree at the bend of the road, down yonder.

You see, Tom, he's been out a-tackin' up signs when Johnnie was shot. Well he'd just brung them tacks long with him, and them tacks is how he caught Butch.

He just spread them on the floor quiet-like while he was movin' around there in the dark and a-fore long Butch steps on one with his foot that ain't got no boot on.

Butch's kinda surprised and lets out a hoop and Tom just grabs in the direction of that hoop.

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