

APR 19 1953

## The Washington Merry-Go-Round

# Brass-Hat Logic Baffles Wilson

By Drew Pearson

OCCASIONALLY, hard-working Defense Secretary Charlie Wilson gets all tangled up trying to follow some of the brass-hat reasoning at the Pentagon.

While Wilson has one of the most complex jobs in the world, the generals and admirals sometimes make it even more complex with their upside-down logic. Once, says Wilson, he ran into the same backhanded logic when he was running General Motors.

"Some years ago," Secretary Wilson recalls, "we thought GM was in danger of losing its supply of rubber. So another fellow and I scouted around trying to buy up as much rubber as we could find.

"One day I happily told my associate that I'd located thousands of tons of rubber—we could have it at once for 10 cents a pound.

"I was flabbergasted, however, when he said 10 cents was too high a price. Despite all my pleas, he insisted on paying less.

"A few days later he walked in and said he'd changed his mind about the price question. He now agreed that 10 cents was a pretty good figure. Then he explained his change of heart.

"Well, Charlie," he said, "over the weekend I went into a store to buy some sheep manure for my garden. Believe it or not, I had to pay 20 cents a pound for that manure. That got me thinking, and I finally decided that if sheep manure is 20 cents a pound, rubber is certainly worth 10 cents a pound."

### Probabilities of Peace

THE HARDEST THING in the world is to find out what's going on inside the Kremlin or to fathom relations between Russia and her chief Far Eastern ally—Red China.

United States intelligence is not considered as good as the British on this subject, so we lean heavily on the British, the Indians, and the Yugoslavs. The latter seem to be pretty good at finding out what's happening inside Russia, probably because Tito's top men once served in Moscow and still know a lot of people in Communist countries.

Bearing these difficulties in mind, here are various evaluations of how genuine is the Communists' desire for a truce in Korea:

The Indian Embassy in Peking reports the Chinese wanted the Korean war to end last fall, now are taking the lead in forcing the truce talks.

The American Embassy in Yugoslavia sends the same report. It's based on Tito's own intelligence agencies.

United States reports from Far East headquarters merely speculate that the Chinese may be taking the lead in the truce talks. It's pointed out that, last year at the U. N., Andrei Vishinsky took the lead in vetoing the Indian truce plan, and it was not until two days later that China echoed Vishinsky. Now, however, Chinese Foreign Minister Chou En-lai was first to do the talking. Two days later, Moscow did the echoing.

However, prevailing belief in Washington, based on CIA evaluations, is that Russia is still dictating all moves in Korea. The Korean peace bid, it's claimed, is part of a Soviet pattern to

start peace offensives all over the world, including Europe, for their effect on the Italian elections, the coming Japanese elections, and the French vote on the European army.

This European peace bid, significantly, got started in the West before it got started in Korea.

Furthermore, some of our experts are now convinced that the death of Stalin has had nothing whatever to do with the change of policy in Russia. The present peace propaganda was planned some time ago, it's believed, in order to lull the West into complacency. Stalin's death was merely a happy coincidence that didn't change things at all.

Those are the different intelligence reports. If you're an armchair strategist, you can step up and take your choice.

### Payroll Repercussions

IT DIDN'T COME OUT in the open, but Republican House leaders faced a delicate problem in selecting the new clerk of the House of Representatives.

Ordinarily the job should have gone to Irving Swanson, the minority clerk under the Democrats. Normally, the minority clerk moves up to the top spot automatically when his party takes over control of Congress.

Last year, however, this column revealed that Swanson's wife, Margaret, had been put on the payroll of Rep. Ernest K. Bramblett (R-Calif.) at \$4700, though not working for the Congressman either in his home district or in Washington.

Bramblett and Swanson were close friends, and Swanson was fully aware of the gravy-train job his wife held at the taxpayers' expense. Other data unearthed by this column about Rep. Bramblett's fancy payroll juggling was later turned over to the Justice Department, and Bramblett now faces grand jury action.

Republican leaders also knew of the "Bramblett story" and of Mrs. Swanson's connection with it. Therefore, when the time came to choose the clerk of the House, Speaker Joe Martin was faced with the choice of either following tradition and appointing Swanson, or avoiding possible embarrassment by selecting somebody else.

Calling a meeting of other Republican leaders, including Leo Allen of Illinois, chairman of the Rules Committee, Speaker Martin outlined the problem. Finally it was decided that tradition was less important than political storms. So Lyle Snader, former secretary to Leo Allen, was named clerk of the House.

### AFL-CIO Talks

REALISTIC LABOR CHIEFS admit privately that the chances of AFL and CIO unity at this time, or even this year, are slim.

Some positive steps toward merging the two big labor groups nonetheless were taken at a closed-door huddle of AFL-CIO top brass the other day. As one leader described the meeting: "Despite the obstacles that must be ironed out, it was the closest step we have ever taken toward unity."

For the first time, there was a joint understanding by both sides to ~~see~~ <sup>see</sup> up their dues-paying membership rolls to each other. This

(See over)

has been off-limits in the past, leading to charges of "paper membership."

However, big rub will come in handling (1) jurisdictional conflicts between CIO and AFL unions working in the same industry, (2) membership raiding, which both sides are slow to admit, and (3) organizing the millions of non-union workers under either the AFL or CIO.

Joe Beirne, of the CIO Communications Workers, and Bill Doherty, boss of the AFL Letter Carriers, insisted the obstacles could be overcome. The big needle trades unions would be no problem, they argued, because the CIO (Amalgamated Clothing Workers) already has solidly organized the men's clothing industry, while the AFL (International Ladies Garment Workers) is equally strong in the women's clothing field.

"This merger of labor, so we can have a solid front equally as strong as management forces, arrayed against us, is a must," declared Doherty. "It has been delayed long enough."

"It is an economic necessity to the workingman," spoke up Harry Bates, president of the AFL Bricklayers. "I pray that we will never have another economic crisis as we did in the early '30s, but we must prepare for any emergency by uniting our forces."

(See Drew Pearson's staff conference at 6:45 p. m. Saturday on WTOP-TV, Channel 9. Hear Pearson on WTOP-Radio at 6:15 p. m. Saturday.)