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## THE WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND

(Trademark)

By Drew Pearson

(Lt. Col. Robert S. Allen now on active service with the Army)

WPB, WMC AND ARMY IN BITTER FIGHT OVER WHO'S TO DEFER WAR WORKERS; RECONVERSION ROW ALSO RAGES, WITH NELSON AND AIDE WILSON AT ODDS; EDISON'S SENATE APPOINTEE A SNAG IN HIS OWN SENATORIAL AMBITIONS; THREAT OF BLOW-UP IN FEA OVER CHIEF CROWLEY'S CONFLICTING ORDERS.

WASHINGTON -- The backstage fight over who is to direct the deferment of essential war workers is approaching white heat. It is being waged between certain of the biggest war chiefs in Washington, having developed into a row between the Army-Navy, WPB boss Donald Nelson, his vice chairman, Charley Wilson, and Paul McNutt.

Only the White House will be able to straighten out the tangle.

Trouble began when Undersecretary of War Patterson and the Army proposed that the question of industrial draft deferments be placed in the hands of the Production Executive Committee of which WPB Vice Chairman Charley Wilson is chief. The Army-Navy, which started out by trying to cut Wilson's throat, now loves him, but continues to hate Donald Nelson. So their recommendation of Wilson to handle draft deferments was a slap at Nelson.

Nelson immediately slapped back. He and War Manpower Commissioner Paul McNutt went to the White House and told the President that industrial deferments were the job of the War Manpower Commissioner. In fact, McNutt hinted that, if the President didn't consider the War Manpower Commission competent to handle the question, he could get another Manpower Commissioner.

Donald Nelson backed him up. Since this meant taking the deferment job away from Nelson's own War Production Board, it was a direct slap at Charley Wilson. Nelson even went further and indicated that Wilson and the Production Executive Committee were controlled by the Army.

### MORE CIVILIAN GOODS?

This row over essential war-worker deferments also has brought to light another important inside debate over reconversion for civilian production. Chief battlers in this row are Nelson and Wilson, with the Army-Navy rooting for Wilson.

Wilson would like to begin production of 200,000 automobiles soon, but Nelson flatly opposes. Aside from autos, however, Wilson does not favor getting back into too much civilian production any time soon. To study the problem, he appointed a committee to formulate a policy on reconversion -- which brought no enthusiasm at all from his nominal boss, D. Nelson, who disbanded the committee.

Nelson's cancellation, in turn, roused the ire of General Lucius Clay, General Somervell's chief production man, and Clay is now threatening to appoint an Army-Navy committee to study reconversion and make Wilson its head.

Behind this Nelson-Wilson row over reconversion is the basic conflict between big business and little business. Big business doesn't want any reconversion until it is finished with its war orders and, at present, it is chock-a-block with war orders. On the other hand, little business, which didn't get so many war orders, would like to begin right now making alarm clocks, electric irons, bicycles and a lot of small stuff which the public needs. Big business, however, doesn't want little business to get a head start.

In this row, Nelson sides with little business. His friends

also claim that Wilson favors the big business viewpoint and wants to wait until the war is over, so everybody can line up at the starter's tape and get an equal start. The Army sides with Wilson and big business for fear the second front may take more production than we realize.

Those are the issues. Meanwhile, some insiders, especially the Army, are out again to get Nelson's scalp. Nelson has as many lives as a cat but, this time, Bob Nathan, the man who chiefly saved him when Baruch, Byrnes and Judge Patterson had persuaded FDR to sign an order virtually ousting him, is off to Palestine.

#### CAPITAL CHAFF

King Carol of Rumania is reported readying himself for a Soviet call back to Bucharest by way of Natal. The diplomatic grapevine has it that he will be reinstated by the Russians, who now seem to be going in for kings...Madame Lupescu, faithful consort of the king, at long last will be granted permission to enter the U.S.A. to undergo an operation at the Mayo Clinic. She will probably come without Carol...Bob Nathan, "drafted" away from the WPB's planning board, will make an economic survey of Palestine to ascertain what industries it could support and how many additional Jewish refugees...Loyal General Jim Ulio, who served as best man to Captain Alf Heiberg when he married Mrs. Louise Atwill, the former Mrs. Douglas MacArthur, later was kidded about his wedding duties. He replied: "If Louise can come down from four stars to two bars, I can too"...Senatorial friends are wondering what will happen to the ancient feud between ex-Senator Lewis Schwellenbach and Senator Homer Bone, now that both will be Federal judges in Washington State. Bone, recently appointed a Court of Appeals judge, will outrank his old friend and rival, Schwellenbach, a U.S. district judge. They once campaigned together but were bitter enemies in the Senate.

#### ROOSEVELT AND WILLKIE

Efforts of Republican Old-Guard spokesmen to make out that Wendell Willkie is a White House "stooge" because of his support of Roosevelt war policies, is a huge joke to the President.

Roosevelt appreciates Willkie's endorsement but has not overlooked some of the body blows the Hoosier fireball has been dealing to New Deal domestic policies in his drive for the GOP Presidential nomination.

"That man Willkie shouldn't be so rough on my Administration," the President recently remarked to a few friends. "He owes me a lot. I've done him some good turns."

Grinning, the President continued: "If it hadn't been for me, Willkie wouldn't have been able to keep in the limelight. Who made it possible for him to write that book that got him so much publicity? Why, I did. I provided the bomber for him to travel around the world.

"Now he is going around criticizing me," drawled Roosevelt. "You would think I had never done anything for him."

#### EDISON AND HAGUE

Ex-Governor Charles Edison of New Jersey, former Secretary of the Navy and son of famed inventor Thomas Edison, has been maneuvering backstage to become Senator from New Jersey.

However, his maneuvers have struck a snag partly because of his own appointee to the Senate.

When Senator Barbour of New Jersey died, Governor Edison turned down Washington suggestions to appoint Leon Henderson or Jimmy Cromwell. Instead, without consulting other Democratic leaders, he appointed an old friend of the Edison family, Arthur Walsh.

Walsh not only is an interim Senator who does not expect to run for re-election, but also, from the Administration viewpoint,

he is a flop. Some around the White House suggest that New Jersey might just as well be represented by a Republican. For on the soldiers' vote bill, the tax bill, and the McKellar TVA amendments --all crucial to the Administration--Walsh voted against the President.

The other day, Governor Edison came to Washington to officiate at the opening of the new film, "The Story of Dr. Wassell" and, while here, intimated to friends that, if the White House would get him the backing of Boss Hague's machine in Northern New Jersey, he might run for the Senate. However, Boss Hague has a candidate of his own -- Congressman Elmer Wene of Vineland, N. J. -- and in view of Walsh's obstructionist tactics, it doesn't look as if the White House would be too sympathetic to Edison.

NOTE -- Possible compromise Senatorial candidate may be hard-hitting Dr. Frank Kingdon, former President of the University of Newark and leading figure in the former Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies.

#### . CROWLEY BLOW-UP

There's a blow-up threatening in the Foreign Economic Administration as a result of the so-called direction of the agency by Leo Crowley. Officials there had a laugh last month when Crowley resigned as Alien Property Custodian ostensibly because his FEA duties were taking too much of his time. Actually, they doubt whether he's ever set foot in the building which houses the FEA.

Half a dozen top men in the agency have tendered their resignations within the past six weeks, because they feel that it is useless for them to stay on. They get directives telling of the importance of their work, and next day are advised that they must cut their staffs. They've even been told that they may hire any number of people necessary for efficient operation, only to get orders next day to shave their staffs. The resignations have been kept on the table thus far.

They can't quite figure out the point of all this maneuvering. If it were any particular section of the agency that was getting it in the neck, then they could figure out answers. It's all of FEA, however.

With Crowley believed to be after an appointment as envoy to the Vatican, they don't see why he should be interfering with the agency simply to impress Congress with how much money he can save.

#### MERRY-GO-ROUND

Of the seven women members of Congress, only one, Representative Mary Norton of New Jersey, is a Democrat, a fact causing some concern to Democrat Nat Patton of Texas. "Cousin Nat's" attractive young daughter, Bonnie, is an attendant in the ladies' waiting room of the House, corresponding to the men's cloakrooms. "Bonnie has been getting along so well with the ladies, I'm afraid they'll make a Republican out of her," frowns the Texan... This column is happy to acknowledge that GOP Senator Harlan J. Bushfield of South Dakota, whom it described as a "bush-league politician" early this session, is shaping up as a most useful member of Congress. Bushfield is popular on both sides of the aisle, also usually keeps his mouth shut until he has something to say...The Administration is making a study of Willkie influences in the OWI...State Department learns that Haitian-Dominican tension is so great that Haitians are afraid to cross the border.

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