

Merry-Go-Round

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By DREW PEARSON and ROBERT S. ALLEN

One of the most important but little-heralded moves made by this country recently is the steady stream of mechanics, aviators, technicians which has crossed to Africa to establish equipment and repair bases in Egypt, Persia and the Near East.

On the surface, this young army is to repair American tanks, airplanes, and teach the British how to operate them. This, in itself, is a most important function, since the British seem to have a rare aptitude for gumming up American machinery. In the latter part of last summer the defeat of the British, when they advanced on the Italians and Nazis with 200 tanks near Tobruk, was due almost entirely to faulty handling of American tanks. The tanks were brand new, and the British had not taken sufficient pains to get acquainted with them. As a result they lost 200 of these best and latest lease-lend tanks.

Since then there have been no more advances along the Libyan front. Since then, also, Gen. Russell Maxwell has been heading a new American mission in Egypt to train the British in using and repairing U. S. tanks.

Beneath the surface, this army of American technicians also serves another important purpose. Actually they are the advance guard to set up bases, repair shops, docks and everything else necessary for the landing of an American army, should that ever become necessary.

That is the essential significance of the stream of men going to Africa. Some of them are staying on the Atlantic coast, just south of Dakar. And it is no secret that these American-manned bases are to guard against the day when Hitler might want to hop the narrow South Atlantic to Brazil.

New Russian Ambassador

The appointment of Maxim Litvinov as new Russian ambassador to the United States recalls the hitherto unpublished story about his negotiations with Roosevelt in 1933.

Litvinov was then foreign minister of Russia, and spent several days in the White House conferring, regarding the chief stumbling block—guarantees for religious worship. During the conferences, Broadway Comedian Eddie Dowling, old personal friend of the President, came to the White House, and Mrs. Roosevelt told him to go up to the Lincoln study and drop in on the Russian discussions.

Dowling was anxious to persuade Litvinov to send the famous Moscow ballet on a tour of the U. S. A., and Roosevelt knew this in advance. So, introducing Dowling to the Russian foreign minister, the President said:

"This is my old friend Eddie Dowling who may go to Russia. When he does, I am going to give him a letter of introduction to your government."

"We'll be delighted to see him," shot back Litvinov. "But as an actor, Mr. Dowling won't need your letter. We welcome the visit of artists. Now if you are sending us any bankers, then they will need a letter."

Note—Dowling never persuaded the Russian government to send the ballet, and Roosevelt never persuaded Litvinov to give satisfactory assurances regarding religious freedom. Asked by newspapermen as he was coming from the White House what progress he had made regarding religion, Litvinov replied: "I can't discuss it. This is Sunday."

Reynolds' Friend

Senator Robert R. Reynolds, handsome, oft-married North Carolina isolationist, is chairman of the Senate Military Af-

fairs Committee. As a sideline he is also head of an organization he calls the Vindicators Association, Inc., and publisher of a weekly with the title, the American Vindicator.

Recently the head of a company that has big Army contracts received the following letter from Reynolds on a United States Senate letterhead:

"My dear Mr. X: I have requested my associate, Mr. E. M. Forbes, to call on you this week to discuss with you a program of national legislation that deals with a situation which is important insofar as the future of our country is concerned. I want to assure you, my dear Mr. X, that I shall appreciate any courtesy you may extend to Mr. Forbes when he calls at your office, at which time I trust you will see him personally. With assurances of my highest esteem, I am..."

Mr. X was not personally acquainted with Reynolds or his associate Forbes. However, Forbes was received when he called. This is the gist of what he said:

That people all over the country were clamoring to have Reynolds fight the battle for them on the "all-American front." As a public-minded citizen, Mr. X was requested to give a substantial donation so that Reynolds could expand the distribution of the American Vindicator.

Forbes did not get a donation. However, he left several copies of Reynolds' paper and a subscription blank which read: "It is understood and agreed that the Vindicators Association, Inc., will furnish names and addresses to which these subscriptions will be sent."

Another Franking Grab

Unsuspecting taxpayers don't know it, but they are being tapped for more than \$6,000 this week to frank out a speech by Herbert Hoover urging the shipment of food to Nazi-occupied Europe.

Mr. Hoover's generous franking benefactor—at the taxpayers' expense—is Nebraska rookie isolationist Senator Hugh A. Butler.

This is the carefully guarded story:

On October 20, Butler inserted Hoover's radio address in the Congressional Record. This opened the way for large-quantity reprints by the Government Printing Office—at cost. Sure enough, a few days later Butler ordered 300,000 copies of the speech. The 300,000 reprints are now in process of being mailed out all over the country by the Senate Folding Room, at a cost estimated by the Post Office Department, of \$5,640 to taxpayers. But this isn't the only expense for which they will be soaked.

They will also have to fork over \$417 for the franked envelopes, which are furnished Hoover, via Butler, free of charge.

Another interesting angle is that Butler is using a mailing list supplied by Emil Hurja, one-time official of the Democratic National Committee who bolted to Willkie in 1940 and now is an active isolationist. This is the same list which Hurja turned over to Senator Wheeler when he mailed out his famous postcard referendum, some of which went to Army camps.

Asked about Hoover's franked speech, Hurja stated that he had "rented" a list of 50,000 names to Senator Butler and was running 50,000 out of the 300,000 postage-free envelopes through an addressograph machine.