

The WASHINGTON

Merry-Go-Round

By Drew Pearson

The Farm Lobby Blitz

Washington, D. C.
October 5, 1942.

Major Robert S. Allen,
Third Army,
Leesville, La.

Dear Bob:

Your farm has just produced the record total of 72 tons of eating corn, all of which was put in gallon tin cans and will go to the Army.

You were lucky to get the corn cut and canned at the right time, because labor has become scarcer than isolationists in western Maryland. I have lost my one farm hand, who now commutes to town and makes twice and sometimes even three times as much as the \$3 a day I used to pay him. So I can sympathize with the farmers in the recent farm parity fight.



DREW PEARSON

While, I sympathize, however, I don't agree with them. It seems to me that the slight increase in farm prices they would have won would have been a mere drop in the bucket compared with what has to be done to get labor back on the farm. Increased prices might have enabled me to pay \$3.25

instead of \$3. But it would not have come anywhere near matching the \$7 to \$10 a day which some workers are getting around the city.

It seems to me that farm labor has got to be drafted, or else spared from the military draft, or else some other very drastic step must be taken if we are going to have enough food next year to feed ourselves and England, and the Russians, and above all, the Army.

One solution would be to draft about 30,000 of the red tape artists, Government publicity experts and bureaucrats here in Washington, and let them help feed the Nation.

Farmers Could Teach Army

The farm lobby put on a spectacular show, however. If the war were as carefully organized as the farm lobby in Congress we should be winning big victories. Nothing was left to chance. Charley Holman of the Federation of Milk Cooperatives, handled Congressmen from Wisconsin and Midwest dairy regions. Ed Babcock of the National Council buttonholed Congressmen from New York.

Upstairs in the gallery sat Ed O'Neal of the Farm Bureau Federation, surrounded by 15 lieutenants. Fred Brenchman of the Grange, Charles Bennett, publicity man for the Grange, and W. R. Ogg of the Farm Bureau were buzzing around like bees.

"Has anyone seen Reed?" asked O'Neal as Representative Reed of New York rose to speak.

"Yes, Charlie Holman has taken care of him."

"How about Senator Taft?"

"Albert Goss (master of the Grange) is seeing him."

The Army and Navy really might have taken some efficiency lessons from these farm boys. They even got Martin Dies to spring a phony report on alleged Communists inside the Government just at the psychological time during the debate in order to smear Gardner Jackson, who had persuaded one lone farm organization, the Farmers' Union, to support the President.

The funny part of it is that Gardner's father once built the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, owned about as much land in New Mexico as John Raskob, and Gardner is about as communistic as Tom Connally. But I suppose a lot of farmers will be fooled just the same.