

SEEN and HEARD
around the
NATIONAL CAPITAL
By Carter Field
FAMOUS WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT



Washington.—Small movie exhibitors are hoping for action now that the bill of Sen. Matthew M. Neeley of West Virginia to stop block booking and blind selling has been favorably reported by a senate committee. Although the house hasn't done anything on it yet, definite action seems probable unless it gets lost in the shuffle. The independent exhibitors have been telling congress that they are under constant criticism, are losing money and losing their show houses.

Testing before a senate committee in favor of the Neely bill, the little theater men lay all their troubles on "the big eight." They mean the eight big motion picture producers. The big eight owns about all the big chain theaters. Each year the producers make a few good pictures and a lot of pictures which are not so good. They reserve the good films for their "affiliated" theaters and force the rest on the little independent men, according to the latter's complaint.

This is how they do it, the little exhibitors say. The producers draw up a year's contract in which the little exhibitor agrees to take a certain group or "block" of pictures. In the block are listed two or three first-class films, to be made by good directors and competent players. The rest are merely labeled class A, B, C. The contracting exhibitor never sees them. In order to get any good films at all he must take a lot of stuff he doesn't want. Even a variety of news and other shorts, loaded with free advertising for women's wear and summer and winter resorts, goes with the lot.

This method of doing business is called "compulsory block booking and blind selling."

Subverts Morals

The neighborhood exhibitors contend that a huge motion picture monopoly subverts the morals of the nation by making racket pictures and sex pictures, when they could just as well make quality film. High-class pictures, they contend, have proved entertaining to the intelligentsia and the rank and file alike.

The "big eight" has two answers to the charges. More or less privately its claim is that the profit it makes from the not so good pictures is necessary to support the high-grade pictures. There would be none of the good if it weren't for the bad, in other words. And publicly, every time the little men go to Washington and start making things hot, the big men announce a new set of reforms, and suggest some more conferences.

Last Naval Resort

Suicide squadrons of high-speed torpedo boats, to be steered by human pilots head-on against enemy ships, are boasted by Germany and Italy. England probably has them too. Buried in Admiral Leahy's testimony before the United States congress in favor of a mightier navy is mention of a \$15,000,000 item for experimentation with small destroyers. The admiral declined to discuss the matter. Naval observers would like to know if this country too will call for a volunteer death squadron.

In time of peace, definitely no. It would be against the glory and tradition of the United States navy. The suicide boats, say navy men, are the unshamed last resort of an inferior sea power. The mere admission of the existence of such devices is the admission of the fear of defeat. Sending men to certain death, for any cause whatever is a barbarity wholly repugnant to the navy.

And navy men maintain that the torpedo boats are impractical. The United States fleet will fight its battles far out at sea, perhaps 2,000 miles. The sleds could not be used in usually choppy open water. In Europe, where sea fighting will be at close quarters, it's a different story.

But in the heat of war involving us, no one can say what might be done. If an enemy fleet should succeed in reaching our shores, it would be imperative to attack it with the most destructive weapons obtainable. A few dozen or a few score men sacrificed in torpedoes, made more deadly with human minds and eyes, would seem to be a low price to pay for victory in the face of national disaster.

Human Sacrifice

Would men volunteer for a work of such hopeless finality? Opinion is they would particularly if stirred

by dire emergency, and if assured with positive proof that their own destruction would mean certain destruction to the enemy. Whether torpedoes can sink battleships without fail is not known. Explosives and armor have both been improved since the World War. Torpedoes discharged from submarines were pretty sure fire when they made a fair hit. Of course all manner of defenses will be developed against the boats and all could not succeed in their purpose.

The navy is much more likely to consider designing torpedo boats for the Philippine government than for itself in the near future. The Philippines might be attacked from close in. The Panama Canal zone also could make good use of torpedo defense. But canal commanders fear sabotage or aerial bombings much more than attack from the sea. Sabotage could be accomplished by blowing up a merchant ship from inside as it passed through the locks.

Sees Senate Battle

The next major battle in the senate will be President Roosevelt's government reorganization proposal. And first to be affected by reorganization will be air transport. Whether the bill is passed or not, aviation is already being used by James Roosevelt as a guinea pig on which to make preliminary tests of his ideas. James is the President's specialist on reorganization.

Some weeks ago the President, embarrassed by the two-year-old wrangle of government agencies for authority over air transport, called Sen. Patrick A. McCarran of Nevada to the White House and asked him to write a bill creating an independent commission to control aviation and end the row.

McCarran and his aides had no sooner written the bill than they found that the matter had been turned over to James. The Post Office department and the Department of Commerce, which now control air transport, and which have a strangle hold on it, immediately set upon James and got many of their old foibles written into the bill. Not only that, but James proceeded to write into the bill unlimited authority for the President over the proposed air commission. He also would place the commission in the Department of Commerce building.

Chances are this aviation bill will get nowhere in congress. Probably the government reorganization plan will be only partly accepted. But meanwhile, the air transport people must go on through more months of their dilemma. Business men who complain about too much government regulation don't fully understand what air transport has to contend with.

Fixes Air Mail Rates

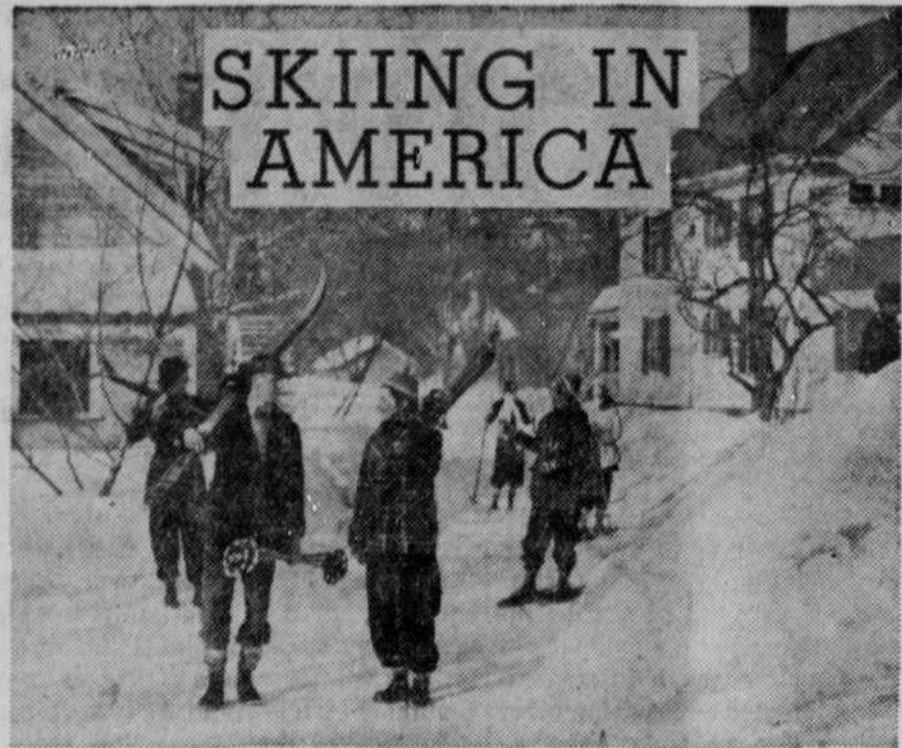
The interstate commerce commission fixes rates for carrying air mail, and in doing so it examines every detail of every operator's business each year. It even analyzes his purchases, his wage rates, equipment repairs, to see if he spent more than necessary. Nothing the company does escapes scrutiny. And to top it all, the commission publishes its findings in detail for all the world to read, although it's mighty dry reading.

The bureau of air commerce controls landing fields and radio beams, and it makes the safety rules. Then there is the federal communications commission, which tells the air lines what radio wave lengths to use. This is so complicated that the air transport companies maintain an organization in Washington called Aeronautical Radio, Inc., to keep track of the kilocycles.

Still another is the Department of Agriculture, which climbs aboard all United States overseas and foreign airplanes and looks in the passengers' luggage for Japanese beetles or what have they. Agriculture's weather bureau is the only agency that gives service without regulating strings attached.

Much as aviation's friends in congress would like to give it a new deal from the government, it is doubtful if they will go for it under the reorganization plan.

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SKIING IN AMERICA

Off for a Day's Skiing.

Thrilling Winter Sport That Is Popular in Our Mountainous Regions

Prepared by National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.—WNU Service.

AMERICA'S skiing season is on. Snow and weather conditions are right and railroads are publicizing the accommodations of their special ski trains.

When one has learned to enjoy it, skiing wins an affection akin to that of a golf addict for his game. No other sport, to a skier, is so much a matter of self. Skiing is essentially a solo performance.

A sportsman writes: "In my own limited experience, I have tried many sports. Polo has its tremendous thrills, but, after all, the horse does much of the work. Sculling has its charms, but also its labors. I have never ridden a free surfboard. Perhaps that is as thrilling, for the sport resembles skiing. I have soloed gliders. Soaring certainly is 'tops.' But even there, the machine introduces an impersonal element.

"I suppose the first man to stand on the top of Everest will have a feeling of personal achievement beyond that of any other mountaineer. But in a more humble way, every skier who stands at the top of a beautiful, unmarked stretch of new snow, waiting for the clean, flowing track of his own skis, experiences that exaltation. It is like being the first one out in the crisp frosty air of an autumn morning. The skier gets a chance to breathe it before anybody else has breathed it."

Racing on Skis Is Thrilling.

Racing has its place. It is a thrill to see a well-coordinated, confident runner come streaking down a narrow trail, cutting a hot corner by a graceful quick thrust with his heels and an almost instantaneous skidding of his skis, which changes their course; or to watch a skier in a slalom race, riding a steep slope in easy scuffles, checking his speed with broken cristies, or "tailwagging," taking deep or soft snow in a graceful telemark, or steered turn.

Some racers crouch very low to keep their center of balance near the ground. Others ride erect and confident.

The most experienced make their control movements so easily that they seem to float while the skis do the turns. "Tempo stuff," that, the acme of controlled skiing.

But a person alone in the wilderness, finding a pair of skis and knowing what they were, could find fun long before he found technique. "As a child on the Kenwood hills behind my home in Minneapolis," said a skier, "I learned to stand on skis, then to walk on them, then to run on them, then to slide on them, and then to stop and maybe fall down on them.

"No matter what language one uses to name it, that sequence is about all that skiing is. I used to crouch down when I was afraid of falling. It was 25 years before I knew I was doing an 'Arberg crouch.'

"I still lose patience when I hear some fairly good veteran chilling the ambitions of a would-be skier with a display of ski terminology. Yet even the most kind-hearted group of novice skiers, each owning skis and harnesses from which price marks have not rubbed off, will register derision when they notice some uninstructed girl or boy with a pair of store skis having only the leather loop, or toe strap, on them. 'Toe-strapper' is a word of open scorn."

Children always have learned skiing with only toe straps. Grown people will find for themselves that toe straps are good for nothing except straight-ahead, easy slides. A pair of skis which do not turn with the feet obviously cannot be controlled.

Girls Help Make It Popular.

When a grown girl attempts to ski with high-heeled shoes it is absurd. When she falls and twists her ankle, as she well may, her suffering is just a reward for her stupidity.

Girls, however, must be credited with much of skiing's popularity. Many no doubt became interested when attractive ski costumes were made available. They looked so swaggy in the clothes that they had to carry on, buy skis, board the snow trains, and become skiers.

And when all the pretty girls were going on the snow trains, they were not going alone.

Said an old-timer, "I have no intention of ever running the full headwall in Tuckerman ravine on Mount Washington. My racing days are all behind me. The only skiing championship I hold and cherish is the neighborhood championship won for riding down the vertical pitch from the high tee by the bridge on the Winchester (Mass.) golf course on a single ski without falling."

To have the world's most extensive network of down-mountain trails, more than 300 miles of them, as New England has, guarantees its popularity as a mountain runner's paradise.

Many of the existing trails, despite the effort to classify them as "expert," "intermediate," and "novice," vary so much from day to day with weather and snow conditions that under certain circumstances even some of the novice trails will scare the beginner.

New England Trails.

After all, how much multitude appeal is there in mountain trails with such reassuring names as "Hell's Highway," "Chin Clip," "Nose Dive," "Wildcat," and "Thunderbolt"?

Those are actually the names of five New England trails. They have a spectator appeal. People would want to go and watch others risk their necks on them. Such names, however, have not the persuasive lure that attracts participants rather than spectators.

Obviously, if a steep mountain trail has plenty of turns, a skier will automatically slow down when he makes the turns, or in trying to turn he will fall harmlessly. In either case, he has killed the speed which can be so dangerous.

A mountain trail with such frequent turns would not be fast enough for Olympic-caliber racing runners; most of the New England down-mountain trails were laid out according to the preferences of racing men.

Fortunately, New England has not stopped with its down-mountain network. Skiing, like golf, requires facilities. And communities, sensing the winter business possibilities, have undertaken to provide suitable open slopes, woods roads, new connecting trails, slopes which can be floodlighted for night-time skiing. They have constructed ski tows, American developments which pull the skier to the top of the hill and increase manifold the amount of sliding down which one can do in a day.

The snow trains, which brought 35,000 skiers to New England ski areas during the winter of 1935 have created an interesting new problem. It is difficult for the New York, New Haven and Hartford railroad, for example, to locate areas near enough to New York for a one-day excursion train trip, where the snow is sure to be satisfactory and where the skiing terrain can accommodate thousands of skiers.

Week-End Snow Trains.

The first regular snow train was run by the Boston and Maine railroad from Boston in 1931. That winter these trains carried 8,371 passengers. Last winter they carried 24,420 passengers, 80 per cent of whom were skiers.

Being nearer the more mountainous section of New England, the Boston and Maine has a wider choice of one-day snow train destinations than the New Haven. However, New York has solved that problem by introducing the "week-end snow train."

Skiing has had a peculiar development in America. It was introduced originally by the Scandinavians, with whom cross-country skiing and ski-jumping were the vogue. Cross-country skiing did not capture popularity in America. Ski-jumping did become a sports event.

It was the development of mountain skiing in Switzerland and Austria which suggested to New Englanders their own mountain possibilities.

Today, cross-country skiing over mountainous regions seems to be the coming thing. A series of shelter huts was built in the White Mountain National forest last summer, supplementing the Appalachian Mountain club trail systems. Individual skiing trail systems have been linked together and mapped for touring.

For Your Spring Wardrobe



DRESSES that not only satisfy your present craving for something new and spring-like, but also look ahead to a later season, too. Make them yourself at home, for very much less than you usually spend on clothes. You'll find it very easy to do, with the sew chart that accompanies each pattern.

Corsette Waistline.

If you have a slim figure, this is the afternoon dress for you! The fullness over the bust, the sleeves cut in one with the shoulders, and the lifted waistline, are just as flattering as they can be! It's the kind of dress you can wear to bridges, luncheons, meetings, and for every afternoon occasion, with the assurance that it is not only smart but becoming.

Slenderizing House Frock.

Especially designed for full figures, this house frock follows straight, tailored lines, and fits beautifully. You can get into it in nothing flat, and it doesn't take long to make either, thanks to the complete and detailed sew chart that comes with your pattern. Make it up in a pretty, small-printed percale, and trim it with rows of old-fashioned rick-rack.

A Frilly Home Cotton.

This is perfectly charming, made up in dotted Swiss, voile or dimity, in some flower-like color like delicate blue or pink or sunny, clear yellow, with sheer white collar and cuffs. It's ideal for slim figures. Nice to wear around the house now, and perfect to wear anywhere, later on, during summer afternoons.

The Patterns.

1442 is designed for sizes 12, 14, 16, 18 and 20, 40 and 42. Size 14 requires 3 3/4 yards of 39-inch material.

Uncle Phil Says:

We'd Be Fit for Life
If we had three choices of what we desired the most, we'd choose common sense. That would enable us to endure the deprivation of anything else.
Imitation may be flattery, but it generally accents your deficiencies.
It is easy to see the silver lining of a cloud when you are on the other side of it.
Let a man pick his own neckties. They are the expression of his real personality.

TIPS to Gardeners

Grow Better Flowers
GROW better flowers by planting them in the kind of soil in which they can perform best. Though your soil may be good and rich, certain flowers will not do as well in it as in poorer ground.

In rich soil plant zinnia, petunia, portulaca, snapdragon, stock, heliotrope, marigold and salvia.
Nasturtium, love-lies-bleeding, Joseph's coat, celosia, alyssum, California poppy, calendula, love-in-a-mist and hollyhock are suggested by the Ferry Seed Institute for growth in poor soil.
Heavy soil containing clay is good for sweet peas, pansies, stocks, carnations, scabiosas, snapdragons and most of the popular perennials.

The following prefer a soil of light texture:
Petunia, Portulaca, celosia, hollyhock, love-in-a-mist, annual phlox, calliopsis, nicotiana and all the climbers.
In garden plots that are partially shaded grow calendula, balsam, mignonette, pansy and vinca.

Strange Facts

Get an Eye-Full of This

IT IS often said of an ardent lover: "He seemed to devour her with his eyes." But the common or garden frog has him beat forty ways to a finish.

The large, bulging eyes of the frog are separated from its mouth only by a thin skin. When the eyes are closed they bulge inwardly. Thus the frog closes its eyes when it has an insect in its mouth, and the inner bulging helps to push the food down the throat.

Frogs are insect eaters, and for that reason are very helpful to man. Those that spend most of their time in or near water are also very fond of small fishes and worms. They catch their prey with their sticky tongues. The tongue is not fastened at the rear of the mouth as ours is, but at the front. The tip points backward when the mouth is closed.
The adult frog has lungs, but it does not breathe air into them as we do. It sucks air into its mouth through two nostrils, at the same time lowering its throat. Then the nostrils are closed, and the frog lifts its throat and pushes the air into its lungs.

In northern countries, when cold weather sets in, some frogs dive into a pond, bury themselves in the mud and stay there all winter. What little oxygen is needed the frog gets from the water through its skin. The frog sometimes, however, spends the winter in a hole in a soft bank, or buried under loose stones and earth.

© Britannica Junior.
Keep your body free of accumulated waste, take Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets. 60 Pellets 30 cents.—Adv.

Our Friends
Friends are not so easily made as kept.—Lord Halifax.

Favorite Recipe of the Week

PIMIENTO BISQUE

1 can cream of celery soup
1 cup milk
3 pimientos
1 tsp. salt
2 slices of onion
1/2 tsp. paprika

If canned condensed soup is used, prepare according to directions on the label and then add 1 cup of milk. If canned ready-to-serve cream of celery soup is used, pour the contents into a pan and add the cup of milk. Rub the pimientos through a sieve and add to the soup. Add salt, onion and paprika and heat until the soup is hot. Stir frequently to prevent scorching. Remove the onion before serving. Serves 6.

The food with red color in the main course might be a ring mold made with canned beets.
The red color for the dessert might be supplied by a raspberry gelatin made with a can of red raspberries.
MARJORIE H. BLACK.

CRAZY
It's crazy not to pay attention to a cough due to a cold. Get relief for just 5¢ with Smith Brothers Cough Drops—(Black or Menthol).
Smith Bros. Cough Drops are the only drops containing VITAMIN A
This is the vitamin that raises the resistance of the mucous membranes of the nose and throat to cold and cough infections.

"THIS MAKIN'S TOBACCO TASTES BETTER ALL THE TIME!"—SAYS ED DURRELL TO HIS WIFE

70 fine roll-your-own cigarettes in every 2-oz. tin of Prince Albert
Copyright, 1938 R. J. Barnwell Inc., Winston-Salem, N. C.

ED DURRELL is about to get some real smokin' comfort as he settles down and fixes himself a mild, tasty Prince Albert "makin's" cigarette. Says Ed to his better-half, Eugenia: "This P. A. 'makin's' tobacco tastes better all the time. Plenty of rich body, yet it's real mild on the tongue and there's no bitter taste." Says Mrs. Durrell: "Well, if it tastes as good as it smells, I can understand why you and your friends praise Prince Albert." (A tip for you pipe-smokers, too!)

PRINCE ALBERT
THE NATIONAL JOY SMOKE