

Economic Hi-Lights

Happenings that affect the Dinner pails, Dividend checks and Tax bills of every Individual. National and International problems Inseparable from Local Welfare.

As this column pointed out last week, American industrial production in many fields has suddenly shot upward even though consumption has remained at about the same level. Obvious reason for the rise is the expectation of big war orders from Europe, plus the supposition that raw material prices are due to go up and stay up. Manufacturers have figured that they'd best buy heavy stocks at once, while prices are relatively low, and be prepared for big business when Europe begins calling for supplies.

But, going by some significant recent indications, there is a very good chance that the manufacturers who have been planning on a major war boom taking place soon will be fooled—and that the "war prosperity" balloon may be rudely deflated.

In the first place, it is a certainty that our only major war customers will be England and France—Britannia rules the waves, and the German merchant marine has been almost entirely driven to cover. Britain has been preparing for this war for a long time. She didn't say much about it, but has been laying in abnormally heavy supplies of basic materials for many moons. The result is that considerable time must go by before she will have to face a shortage of any important material asset.

In the second place, the allies must husband their slender gold possessions. They haven't any money to spend foolishly. Every penny expended must do two pennies' work, if possible. That means Britain will exhaust to the utmost the resources of that empire on which the sun never sets, before she makes any big purchases elsewhere. And the British empire (taking it for granted that her fleet will be able to keep the trade lanes open, and hold down losses from German submarine, battleship and air attack to a minimum) is exceedingly rich in almost everything that is necessary to the maintenance of a country in either war or peace. To a considerably lesser extent, this is also true of the French empire. And what the French lack will, as long as possible, be supplied them by the British.

The effect of the war so far has been harmful to American business. England and her possessions normally constitute our largest single foreign customer. The outbreak of hostilities caused an immediate drop in British imports from this country. Where for instance, we used to have a fine stable market in England for perishable fruit, that market has dwindled—and, think some, in the near future it may disappear entirely.

There is one obvious exception to this—and the exception is arms. If the embargo is removed, we may confidently expect the munitions industries to boom. Britain is not able to produce adequate war materials, even though all the resources of her great manufacturing establishments are today being given to supplying her soldiers with the weapons of destruction. If you have airplanes, rifles, shells, or machine guns to sell, you have no need to worry about your future business—you will probably receive more orders than you can handle, if the war goes on. But producers of other materials cannot be sure of a sanguine outlook as yet. And those who are buying raw materials on a

big scale in anticipation of sustained and growing foreign demand, may be sadly disappointed. The truth is that if the war lasts long, all of Europe will be practically out of gold, and won't be able to buy here no matter how great the need, unless this government permitted belligerents to obtain American credit. And the temper of Congress now is almost 100 per cent against that.

There is one big catch in the cash-and-carry plan which would forbid American ships to transport cargoes to belligerents. And no one seems yet to have figured out a way to solve the problem presented, and at the same time safeguard our neutrality from being imperiled by untoward "incidents."

That catch lies in the fact that American ships can no longer go to Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the British West Indies—in brief, any number of countries near or within this hemisphere. These countries are part of the allied empires. They are formally at war with Germany. German U-boats would be perfectly justified in capturing or sinking ships trading with them. And, if that trade is stopped, the American merchant marine might as well shut up shop and call it a day. Most of the major ports would be closed to our vessels.

On top of that, American citizens would no longer be able to go to Montreal, Sydney or Bermuda, for instance, save at their own risk. Bombs haven't yet fallen on such places—but they are possible targets of war, and are on war footing.

Sentiment at this writing seems to favor sacrificing our shipping if that is necessary to keep out of the war. Pithraps in the future some system will be worked out whereby we will be able to carry on trade on a more or less normal basis with colonies of belligerents, but at the moment the outlook for our merchant marine doesn't seem bright.

New Bill Seeks W. Indies Isle for U. S.

Washington, Nov. 16—(By A. E. White for ANP)—British and French possessions in the West Indies will be cited to the United States in payment for World War debts if Senator Lundeen of Minnesota, who has introduced a bill in congress to that effect has his way.

But should Uncle Sam get these islands, of primary importance in defending the North and South America from European aggression under the Monroe doctrine, the preponderant Negro population would in all probability take a step backward. The nation's colonial policy has never been of the best, and the introduction of present American prejudices and methods of dealing with minority groups would spell trouble.

Analyzing the situation and looking into the geographical distribution, it is seen that the British possessions predominate in the West Indies, with a total area of 10,427 square miles and a population of 1,386,074 inhabitants.

The French possessions embody 1,073 square miles, with a population of 474,268.

Chief exports of the islands are sugar, molasses, cocoa, nutmeg, cotton, mace, lillies, onions, potatoes, rum, sponges, coffee, bananas, vanilla, maize and salt with products being confined to certain islands as in the case of Bermuda, which specializes in lillies, onions and potatoes. Jamaica is famous for its rum and the other products are distributed among the many smaller islands which comprise the group.

The Dutch possessions are the smallest. They comprise two or three small islands in the Curaco group, plus a half interest in the island of St. Thomas, the other half belonging to France.

France in turn has two major groups in the West Indies Guadeloupe and Martinique, the latter

NEGRO DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN NEW DEAL AGENCIES

Washington, D. C.—At the National Conference on the Problems of the Negro, held here in Washington some time ago, there was catalogued a list of discriminatory practices by New Deal Agencies as they affect Negro citizens of the United States.

Included in this catalogue of discriminatory practices, attention was called to the fact that the Social Security Law, a piece of New Deal legislation automatically excludes 70 per cent of the Negro population from its provisions, including farm and domestic labor. It was affirmed that "an undetermined number of Negroes, particularly in the South, have been displaced from jobs as result of this Act."

With respect to Labor Standards, the Conference stated that the elimination of differentials has failed of its purpose in that racial and sectional differentials continue to exist in the matter of wages and working conditions to the disadvantage of Negro labor.

Even the minimum wage which was increased throughout the country from 25 cents to 30 cents an hour, effective October 24, 1939, by the Wage and Hour Law does not do away with racial dif-

ferentials.

Also, it was noted that a tendency exists to use Federal funds for purposes of fixing residential patterns according to local prejudices, and thereby establish segregated areas and racial ghettos. The Federal Housing Administration is one of the worst offenders in this respect, the Conference reported, with its policy of guaranteeing Negro mortgages only in segregated Negro neighborhoods.

The TVA is similarly culpable with its segregationist policies in both employment and community settlement.

The Conference noted failure of Negroes to benefit properly from many kinds of Federal expenditure of funds because of the lack of effective publicity acquainting Negroes, along with others, of the existence of Federal services and their availability.

Request was made by this group of Negro leaders for better medical care and preventive medicine for the colored masses utilizing the additional funds which have been made available under the Social Security Act. In this connection the Conference found that little or no progress has been made to improve the

Federal Employment of Negro nurses. They continue to be excluded entirely from two Federal services, The U. S. Public Health and the Army Nursing Service and subject to salary and work differentials in two others, the U. S. Veterans and the U. S. Navy Nursing Service.

It was the conclusion of the Conference that, aside from encouraging a program in the treatment of syphilis among Negroes, "there has been no notable change in the approach to Negro health problems." Also, that while there has been some slight increase in the employment of Negro public health nurses, "in no sense is the increase comparable to the needs of the Negro population." The fact was emphasized that while many gains have been definite and distinct "there is much—very much to be done. The task has just begun."

With respect to unemployment, the Conference felt compelled to call attention to the fact that 33 per cent of the Negro population as compared with 20 per cent of the White population, is still dependent upon public relief as ample proof "that unemployment continues among Negroes in severe disproportion to their number in population." They wish this condition changed.

These are but a few of the many and detailed, and, in some cases, gross examples of tyrannical bureaucratic unfairness in carrying out the clear mandates of extravagantly publicized New Deal legislation.

In view of widely published statements to the effect that so large a proportion of Colored voters supported the New Deal in 1932 and 1936, but with considerably lessened support in 1938 among the Colored population of the country there is an insistent demand that such discriminatory practices be discontinued by the Administration, or that less and less be said about "united democracy" and "united patriotism."

famous for two things; one the volcanic eruption of Mt. Pelee which almost destroyed the island some 25 years back, and second, as being the birth place of Napoleon's Empress Josephine.

Starting with Jamaica, the largest, and the two islands of Turks and Caicos, there is a tremendous population divided into several classes—white, colored, blacks, East Indians, Chinese and many other mixtures not listed. The total population runs well over 800,000 inhabitants with 14,686 listed as white.

Bermuda, the perpetual paradise for tourists, and the Bahamas do not like to be classed as part of the West Indies. The former has an area of 19 square miles with a population of 20,127 of which 7,006 are whites. The Bahamas, a group of 20 islands, has an area of 4,404 square miles and a population of 54,886.

The Windward islands, Grenada, St. Vincent and St. Lucia are in a class by themselves as are the Leeward islands, with Antigua being the largest. Following are the islands of Barbuda, Redona, St. Christopher (St. Kitts) Nevis, Anguilla, Dominica and Montserrat.

Possibly the best known of the islands is Barbadoes with an area of 166 square miles and a population of 156,312. Affectionately known by its inhabitants as "Little England," Barbadoes has its own university, a branch of one of the larger universities in England. It is also the oldest crown colony in the islands. And because of this, the inhabitants are very proud of their little domain.

What then will become of the 1,916,864 inhabitants of this conglomeration if they are taken under the American flag?

Long known as a poor administrator of colonies, Uncle Sam will have his hands full for these French, Dutch and English people are not used to the tactics usually employed by American administrators of colonial possessions.

In Jamaica, history was made years ago when the natives rebelled against the English government. Let by a man who later became famous whether rightfully so or not, a revolt against the British was formulated, only to be broken by the bombing of Georgetown by a British man-of-

war and the capture of the fort, where this Negro and his associates had taken refuge. When brought before the governor and the commander of the battleship, the man gave his name as "Sir Samuel Benjamin Quasshie" and now, according to some who have related the story, the term "Quasshie" is used by the natives in designation of a chap who is a trouble maker.

But this mixture added to the United States citizenry will prove more of a headache to this government than the Virgin islands, the Philippines, Porto Rico, Guam and all the other possessions put together, if the natives follow their usual customs.

For years, it has been customary for the English and French to permit the natives a large share in the government activities. They are members of the local governing bodies, hold high offices in the communities and have been inculcated with British and French and Dutch ideals for centuries. Whether this could be changed or not probably never entered Senator Lundeen's mind, nor, it is the belief of many, is sified problems which are the familiar with the many diverse West Indian' exclusively.

Bitter opposition to the proposed annexation, which would ostensibly strengthen the United States military naval defenses, has been voiced in many sections here in Washington and it is hardly probable that the proposal will get beyond that stage.

Americans are not anxious it is believed to annex territory which would bring into the population of the United States nearly 2,000,000 additional people, of which more than four-fifths are Negroes or of Negro extraction.

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L. Baynard Whitney
THINK UPWARD

One of my readers complains that my opening remarks on color in last week's column were decidedly inept, perhaps offensive, and that prejudice is an outworn subject on which to write. Nevertheless, experience kindred sufferings and a host of other things keep on proving that prejudice is a realistic subject which must be faced and dealt with for some time to come. However, we must think of what we want—justice, equality, opportunity—and think less of the things we don't want. It is true, as my reader declares, we must constantly keep our minds uplifted toward truth and human understanding. It is refreshing to turn from the dark side of the picture and see the brightness in our strivings.

SELF-MADE MEN
We are all proud of that fact that we have many Negro leaders who are self-made men and women, who came up the hard way. This usually augurs well for their remaining longest at the top. Recently I had a peep into the private life of Herbert L. Bruce, New York's first elected Negro Democratic District Leader. During this conversation these things came to light: From the time he got his first job as page boy at the Prince George Hotel until today, he has maintained a life of rigid personal independence. He has lived a paradox of liberal spending and careful thrift; that is to say, he had a good time as a young man

but always made certain that his bank account increased weekly. Bruce has never been unemployed except for two weeks while waiting to change from a good job to a better one—and he had \$400 saved from one season's work at a Pennsylvania hotel. He was nine years at the Prince George, a summer season in Pa., four years at Penna. Station as a red cap, then into business for himself for nine years.

This is just one of many personal records of which we can be proud.

DEMOCRACY MARCHES ON
It was an impressive sight. A race member of New York's "Finest" was being honored with a Police Inspector's Funeral. It was Patrolman Anthony Buckner, who died as the result of injuries received in the line of duty. Headed by the 75 piece New York City Police Band, the solemn procession that moved through the streets of Harlem included 150 uniformed patrolmen, 40 plainclothesmen of the detective division, a corporals' guard of the 369th Regiment under Sergeant Wallace, 50 members of the Veterans' Corp and 12 funeral cars. The casket was draped with the American flag.

New York City has been for many years a citadel of Democracy, and although there is still much to be desired, the Police Department under liberal Mayor has given its members every opportunity for advancement upon its merits, without regard to race, creed or color.

"Common Opportunity," "United Democracy" and "United Patriotism," of which they hear so much demand, they say economic, opportunity and the full enjoyment of the same rights granted so freely to others be granted them also.

It is not expected, of course, these leaders pointed out, that any Federal Administration can remove all the disabilities of a race, or group, but there is expectation these Colored leaders contend, that there should be less

and less flagrant color discrimination in relief and the various New Deal set-ups here mentioned and the alphabetical many associations.

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