

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

Korean Row Caused Collins' Trip

By Drew Pearson

Real story behind Army Chief of Staff J. Lawton Collins' rush trip to Korea is that it was to straighten out bickering over the South Korean army.

Conflicting reports have been sent to the Pentagon as to how big a role the South Korean army can play. Gen. James Van Fleet, outgoing Eighth Army Commander, has



Pearson

been optimistic about turning the fighting over to the South Koreans. However, his boss in the Far East, Gen. Mark Clark, has been pessimistic.

To make matters worse, the American training mission has demanded seasoned South Korean officers to help speed the training of green, new troops. This would take South Koreans away from the front, and the battle commanders warn that the South Korean army is short of good officers, that they can't be spared from the front.

The whole problem was dumped in President Eisenhower's lap by General Collins just one day after the President took office. After listening carefully to Collins, however, Eisenhower ordered him to take off for Korea immediately and come up with a detailed plan on exactly how large the South Korean army can be built and how long it will take.

Oil Predicament

The National Security Council is so red-faced it won't breathe a word about it, but Central Intelligence has submitted a report indicating that the prosecution of the five U. S. oil companies in the Near East should not be dropped. Its report is exactly the opposite of the plea made by ex-Secretary of Defense Lovett for dropping prosecution.

Lovett had stirred up President Truman and other Cabinet members by arguing that the Justice Department's criminal case against the oil companies would play into Russia's hands, would cause American companies to lose their Near Eastern concessions. He based this partly on a Central Intelligence report of last spring.

Recently, however, Central Intelligence submitted a new report. It stated that its survey

of last spring was in error. Reaction to the Government's prosecution of the oil companies, CIA stated, had not been bad.

The report made two other significant points:

1. If the case against the oil companies is prosecuted, there will be some reaction in the Near East, but nothing to worry about.

2. If the prosecution were dropped, on the other hand, the reaction would be worse. It would play into Moscow's hands, make it appear the big oil companies were dictating United States policy.

Small Business Friend

New Hampshire's perennial Sen. Charles Tobey (R.), who though 72 years old is one of the most vigorous members of the Senate, has got presidential advisers a bit worried about small business and the Federal Trade Commission.

Tobey, a stalwart champion of little business, is also the champion of Federal Trade Commissioner John Carson, a Truman hold-over.

Carson was reappointed to the Trade Commission shortly before Truman left the White House, and Republicans expected to knock him out of the job almost immediately. However, it has developed that Carson is not only a protege of Tobey's but also has other friends on the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee.

An independent Republican, Commissioner Carlson is the former secretary of the late Sen. Jim Couzens (R-Mich.).

Tidelands Dinner

It was hushed up at the time, but Texas' ex-Speaker Sam Rayburn and Senate Democratic Leader Lyndon Johnson, also of Texas, staged a private dinner for President Truman just before he left office in an effort to persuade him to keep hands off the tidelands oil.

The dinner was held in Sam Rayburn's private apartment at the Anchorage and featured chili con carne—Texas style. Truman is fond of chili and after he had enjoyed several

large helpings Johnson and Rayburn were about to open up the ticklish question of tidelands oil.

They wanted to persuade the President to leave these oil reserves under the Interior Department rather than transfer them to the Navy, which they feared would make it embarrassing for Eisenhower to transfer them back.

However, Truman, perhaps sensing that Rayburn and Johnson had a lobbying move up their sleeves, suddenly got up, announced that he would have to leave.

Quickly and with no chance for finesse, Rayburn asked point-blank whether Truman intended to go ahead and transfer the tidelands to the Navy.

"I've already done it," replied Truman. Then he gave a brief dissertation on what these oil reserves meant to other parts of the Nation, pointing out, for instance, that North Dakota would be able to get six million dollars for its schools if tidelands oil is kept for all of the 48 States.

Rayburn and Johnson groaned.

Capital News Capsules

The Navy is keeping a watchful eye on 10 Chinese torpedo boats which have been maneu-

vering off the China coast across from Korea. The Navy fears they may dart out from the protective 10-mile limit and make hit-and-run attacks on American shipping. In fact, they opened fire with anti-aircraft guns on a Navy patrol plane, snooping close to the China coast for a better look.

The Army will soon unveil the first action pictures of its amazing new anti-aircraft guided missile. It's called the Nike and the pictures will show it streaking through the air at supersonic speed automatically locating and blowing up a bomber. The Nike is the best weapon so far developed to protect American cities against a bomb attack.

Turkey has formally offered to increase her forces in Korea to a full division, if President Eisenhower will only give the word. The Turkish Foreign Office has assured the United States Embassy that a new, tough division could be ready by spring for any new offensive. Eisenhower may decide upon. Inside fact is that the Turks have been eager to send more troops to Korea for two years but the Joint Chiefs of Staff have discouraged this for fear the Russians might strike against the Dardanelles.

(Copyright, 1953, Bell Syndicate, Inc.)