

BETTER BACK UP HENDERSON



COLLIER'S

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LITTLE CAESAR PETRILLO

WE REALIZE that Leon Henderson, head of the Office of Price Administration and thereby in charge of the fight against wartime inflation, is not perfect.

For all that, Mr. Henderson is our official battler against inflation; and it is as certain as anything can be that if the American people and the Administration do not back him wholeheartedly in this fight we shall all be very remorseful in time.

The President as long ago as last April outlined in a message to Congress the seven measures which, if firmly and resolutely adopted, should keep the war from blowing the American dollar up into something as gaudy and unsubstantial as a toy balloon. These are: heavy but not crushing or inequitable taxes, ceilings on prices and rents, wage stabilization, farm price stabilization, large, widespread and continuous public buying of War Bonds, rationing of scarce commodities, discouragement of installment buying, encouragement of payment of private debts.

These are the general anti-inflation ideas of the veteran Bernard M. Baruch who fought wartime inflation in the other war to a virtual standstill. It is a point in Henderson's favor that he is a student of the Baruch anti-inflation prescriptions and that Mr. Baruch personally thinks well of the Henderson character, honesty and courage.

But the President's mere statement of the way to head off inflation will not head it off. We are now in the opening stage of what can turn into a bad inflation—because as soon as the President stated the seven anti-inflation measures, various pressure groups got busy fighting—doing their best to make them ineffective.

The farm bloc is dead set against farm price

stabilization, and against government sales of farm-product carry-overs to keep farm prices within reason.

The War Labor Board insists that labor's wages must be increased with the cost of living, so as to preserve labor's living standards while the war forces everybody else's living standards down. Congress refuses to give Henderson enough power to keep price ceilings even reasonably intact. And so on.

If this trend is not reversed, and soon, we shall be headed for disaster on the home economic front, no matter how swiftly and thoroughly we may beat our enemies on our numerous fighting fronts.

Human nature being what it is, Henderson cannot win the fight against inflation unless the Administration throws its weight behind him, fearlessly and without compromise—and unless the people back up such action by the Administration.

Special Administration weight and popular favor had better be thrown behind Henderson's desire to keep congressmen and their home-state political pals from getting control of the appointments to the OPA field forces. Let the politicians turn this phase of the anti-inflation fight into a political patronage grab bag, and we shall arrive speedily at a point where only those who vote right will get their sugar, gasoline, fuel oil and other rationed commodities.

All in all, it looks to us as if the best thing Americans can do about Mr. Henderson is to back him up and insist that their elected public servants do likewise—reserving the right, of course, to yell and scream whenever he puts his foot in his mouth, as Leon does from time to time.

WE GROW wearier and wearier of Mr. James Caesar Petrillo, president of the American Federation of Musicians. That a musicians' union is a necessity, we agree. That Petrillo's union has kept many a musician from being cheated, robbed and starved, we have no doubt.

Petrillo of late, however, has in our estimation been getting too big for his hat. He and some of his minions have taken to keeping Army band programs off the air, and to crusading against radio presentation of amateur musical programs of any kind. Petrillo when last heard from was determined somehow to halt manufacture in this country of phonograph records for use in juke boxes.

These Petrillo cutups can do Petrillo's musicians no good that we can detect, and they can do them a great deal of harm. It is axiomatic in all the arts that if you alienate your public's affections you personally get hungrier and hungrier.

Music is a seminecessity to most of us. But we do not need it so desperately that we have to submit to every whim and impulse of a union dictator who inhabits a luxurious hotel suite in the most luxurious city in the world.

Chairman James L. Fly of the Federal Communications Commission is talking about holding an investigation to find out what makes Petrillo tick and let the people in on the mystery. We are in favor of such an investigation; we believe most American music lovers also are in favor of it; and we have a hunch that the majority of the 130,000 musicians in Petrillo's union are in favor of it, too, though it is of course too much to expect them to speak their minds in any great numbers or volume about the man who controls their livelihoods.

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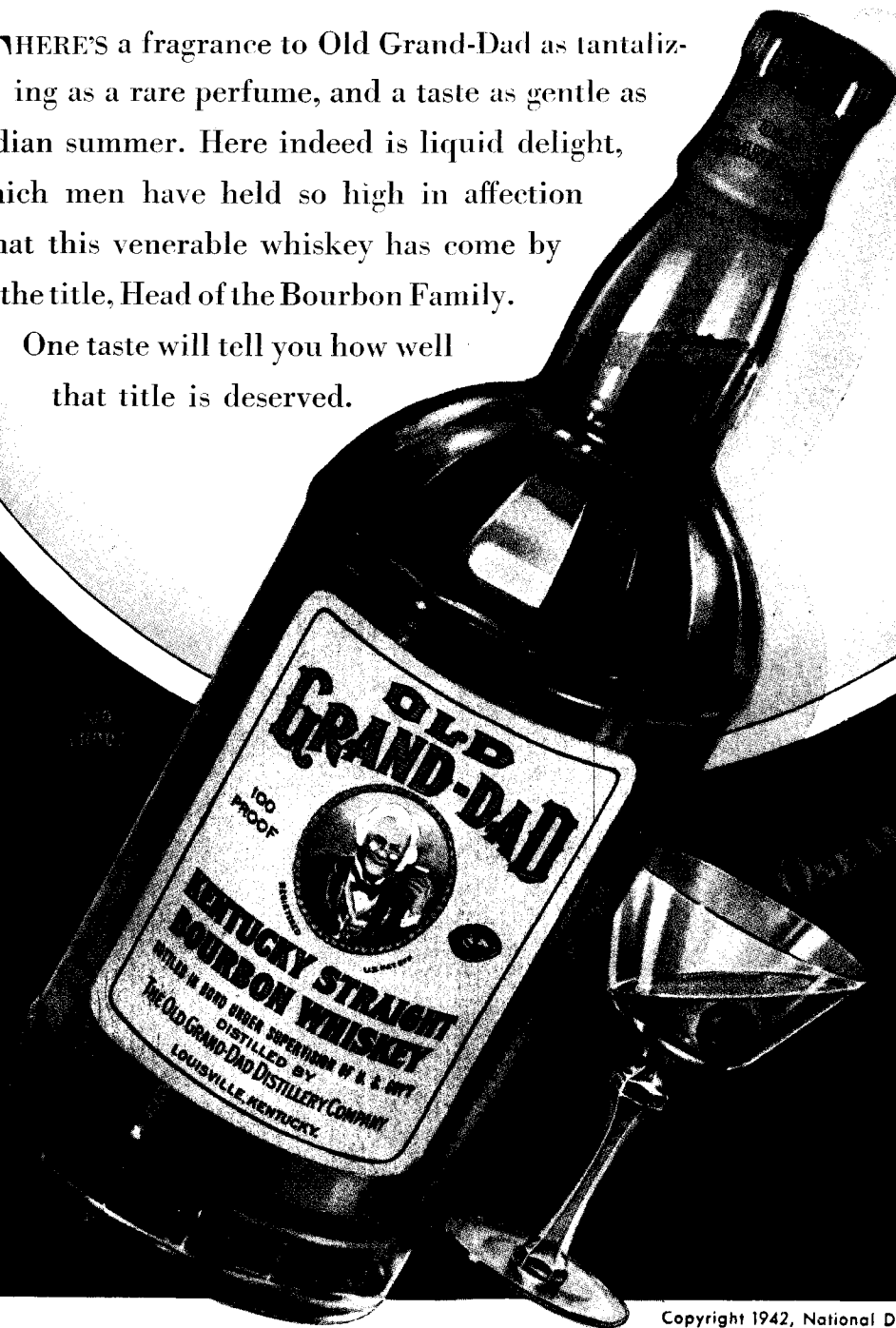
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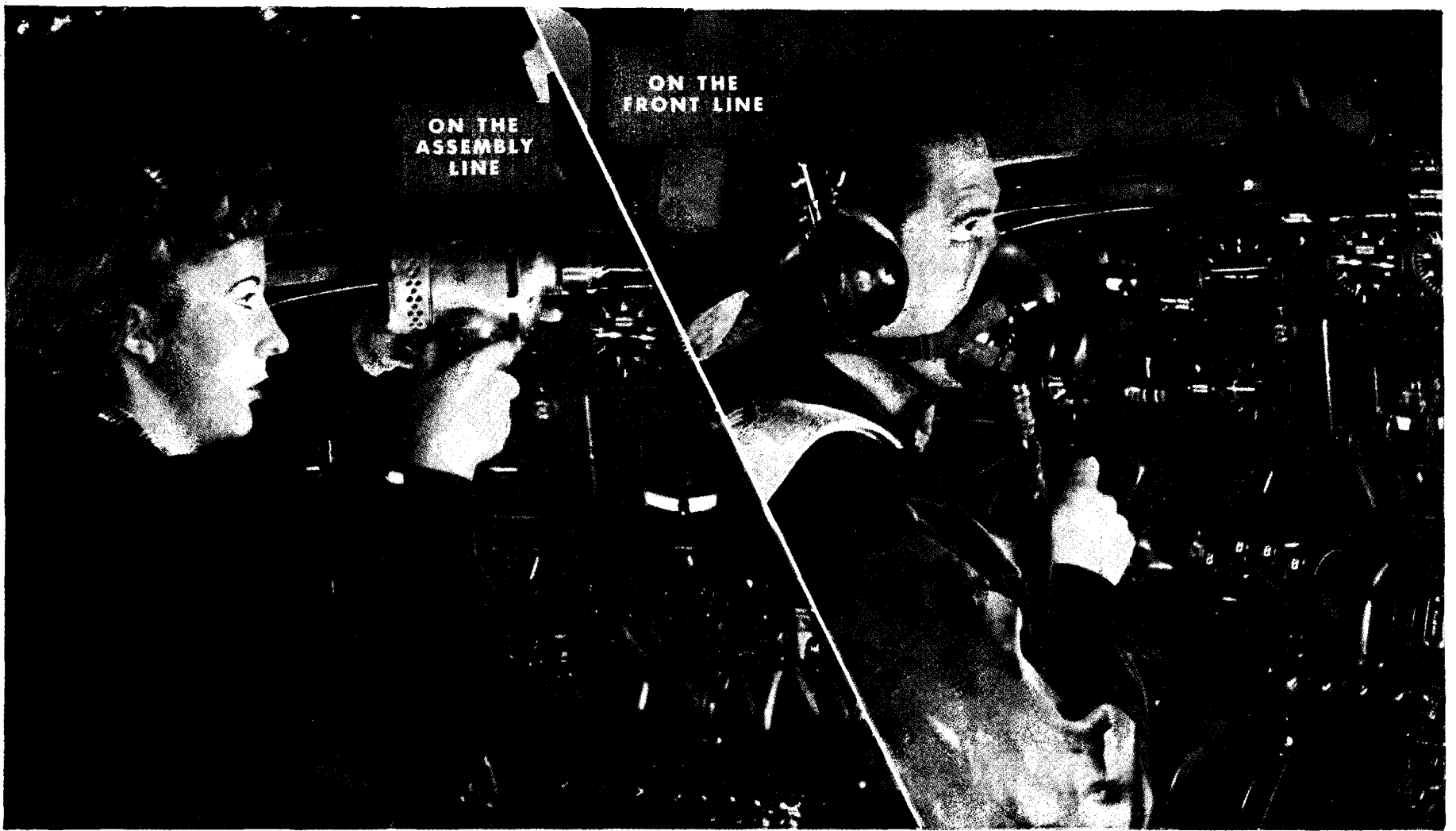
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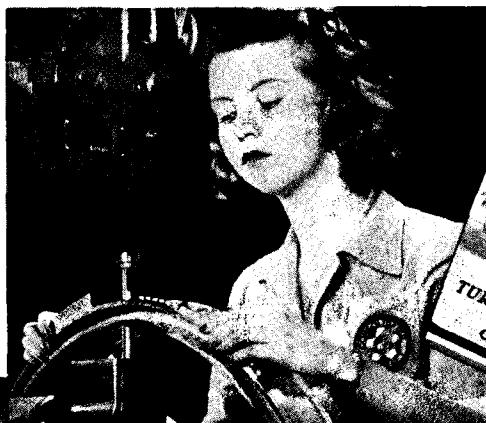
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B-24 ASSEMBLY — San Diego — Marjorie Blackmore (*with drill, at left*) speaking: "It's always Camels with me. They're milder and more flavorful." Darwin, Des Moines, Dutch Harbor—*wherever* you hear it—that's what they mean when they say: "I'd walk a mile for a Camel!"

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