

National GRAPEVINE

By CHARLEY CHEROKEE

CHOICE NEGOTIATIONS went on behind the scenes last week. Item one (Scoop): When F.D.R. offered Papa Ickes Manpower including CoFEP, Committee Secretary Larry Cramer nearly fainted. Since that time he fired Larry from governorship of the Virgin Isles. Ickes has made no secret of his distrust of him and his admiration for Bob Weaver. If Papa Ickes had taken over Manpower, Bob who is one of the original Negro advisers introduced to the New Deal through Interior, would have undoubtedly "taken over" CoFEP. Cramer and the CoFEP boys knew this and were frantically pulling Congressional strings to block the transfer, when Ickes turned it down to be Oil Czar and continue in Interior.

Item two (Scoop). That November "color" issue of Survey Graphic you just read and liked, actually represents just skimmed milk. The censors (mostly army) deleted the cream. Dr. Alain Locke hit a new high in cultural militancy, and his scathing denunciation of military Jim Crow in his superbly-phrased intro-piece, was seconded on other pages. But it didn't get by. (Exact stand of the S.G. folk on this is not at present clear, but it will be, chum.)

Item three (Scoop). Propwash from 99th Tuskegee Airfield wafts a peculiar odor. Colored commissioned officers complain of low morale, alleging: whites get rapid promotions, while Negroes, many of them experienced national guardsmen, get stuck as 2nd looyes. Commander's post staff includes only one Negro, and four-way segregation is maintained at Post restaurant—white officers, colored officers, white enlistees, and colored enlistees. Colored doctors cannot attend courses at the designated Texas school and must learn flight survey by correspondence course (Migawdamity!) White air-cadets who "wash out," proceed gaily to Scott, Lowery, or Chanute fields and become dashing bombardiers or at least ground force officers. Colored washouts join other privates and non-coms in the "walking army."

Item four (Scoop). Six Negro colleges bid hotly for the new army school to train Negro air mechanics, with Tuskegee ruled out. Instructors will be colored lads trained at Chanute (Chicago), and while they wonder why they can't instruct at the big Chicago school along with their white classmates, they lobby for a near-North location. CoFEP will be interested to know that the administrative staff of the new "cullud" school will be all-white. Army insists all this ain't so, everybody else insists it is. Possible compromise site, Jefferson Barracks (St. Louis).

WIN-WITH-WORK DEPARTMENT

Manpower, toying with touchy problem of shifting Negro workers where needed, indicates some breaking down of legal barriers against inter-state recruitment. The South is reluctant, fearing further South to North migration, but both NYA and WPA have already found inter-state transfer the only means of placing colored workers trained on vocational projects. Alabama trainees work in S. C. shipyards, etc. Importation of large numbers of starving West Indians is considered and numbers of imported Mexicans have been at work in the Southwest for months.

CoFEP was subject of rabid criticism. Tobacco-drooling Bilbo rose on Senate floor to denounce its attempts to force D. C. streetcars and busses to use colored motormen, seeing "alien forces" behind an attempt to break white supremacy. Call (Socialist Paper) correspondent Hamilton's attack on committee and individual members was so violent

his paper refused to print it. He had it mimeographed and handed it out as the boys tried to find some connection with the Bob Weaver-CoFEP feud. United Federal Workers of America (CIO Govt. Union) had the only legitimate complaint, accusing CoFEP of failure to push fight against discrimination in the D. C. government agencies. (They have something—see this space next week).

Cleaning the cuff... Washington domestics, colored and white, formed Local 2, Domestic Union (CIO)... Ed Lewis moved from the Baltimore to the New York City Urban League... Lucia Pitts, one of Bob Weaver's assistants, has left Manpower and gone home to Chicago... Christmas leave will not be granted to government workers if it involves travel... National Asso of Manufactures cited 16 honor workers who have made notable contributions to the war effort, among them Negro Rufus Turner of New Bedford Aerovox company.

"C'EST LE GUERRE!"

Liberty-lovers broke out in cold sweat as the army moved toward what they regard as dictatorship. Seems the military wants control of Manpower, including CoFEP, USES, Selective Service and everything. Army spokesmen let it be known there will be no football next fall except at the colleges. They smile on with their training-for-18-and-19-year-olds program. Incidentally Atlanta university expects to be one of these centers and is feverishly preparing in Atlanta, New York and D. C. conferences.

When Newark Office Dependency Benefits decided to concentrate all its colored employees in a Jim Crow unit "where they could be happy together," the army (not CoFEP or Manpower, mind you) dispatched Bill Hastie to scene to quiet indignant Newark Negroes. Altho the unit was disbanded and Negroes reintegrated, there is resentment against Hastie's reported statement that there is no trace of discrimination. Seems the sub-bosses are unchanged and continue their persecution of colored workers in all the well-known ways so hard to prove. (Keep an eye on this, Bill.)

News of landing of Negro troops in Liberia (which you knew months ago) was announced officially only when the Liberian-U.S. pact was complete last week, whereinunder U. S. gets airports and bases, and Liberia protection of neutrality, new roads, lend-lease of a million and a half, and a new army. Now that this is settled, Lester Walton is told he can return to Monrovia. News is still lacking on that Butte, Montana affair. Army claims the CIO union denied Negro soldier-miners who volunteered to work the under-manned mines, admittance to work. Last bulletin said Negroes would work, if with army protection.

December 12, last day for sugar coupon 9, and day for cotton farmers to vote on cotton quota. Believe it or not, Negro farmers will be welcomed at the polls. Vote, Farmer Brown, it will make it possible for you to grow foods valuable to self and war effort. Cotton price is up but the market is curtailed and if growing isn't—down come the prices.

Hollywood reports being urged to make a real Negro movie drama. Origin of urgings is variously reported as Walter White of NAACP and OWI.... In Australia, surprise was expressed when Negro soldiers were not the tap-dancing clowns and "Rochesters" depicted in the U.S. films enjoyed down under.... WPA closing is one step in well formulated post-war plans, which as Charley warned six months ago, do not concern themselves with Negroes.

THIS IS WASHINGTON

In a Pentagon Building (War Dept.) cafeteria, two girls grabbed their trays and raced for the one vacant chair. One a southern white girl, one a northern colored girl. Colored girl got there first and sat down. White girl said: "I was running for that chair." Colored girl: "But I got here first." White girl: "But I'm white." They looked at each other, puzzled, and the white girl walked away. Neither one knows till now what the other was talking about.

War-time taxis serving Washington's Union Station fill up with at

least four passengers, often strangers to each other before leaving. One left with three white men and one colored girl light enough to be white or colored as she chooses. First stop, two men got out, leaving a naval officer, the girl and garrulous taxi driver. Said naval officer: "Look, there's a Russian, a general." Taxi driver: "That's nothing I seen a Scotch general, and I also seen one Scotch nigger!" The colored girl reached her destination, got out, paid her fare, and said: "Now, you have seen two Scotch niggers—my name is Mac—!"

NEWSREEL IN COLOR

Recorder of Deeds (D.C.) Thompkins announced open competition for designs for murals of walls in new Recorder building to cost \$5,600. E. Simms Campbell is one of the judges.... Comes announcement of another mechanical cotton picker, but cotton is still picked by Negro hand labor.... CIO representatives couldn't get in to the big league baseball confab to press the case of the Negro player, and threaten to take it to CoFEP.... That Texas Primary case got another set back at hands of Circuit Court of Appeals which upheld earlier decisions against Lonnie Smith's attempt to vote.... White press ignores story of Father Divine's offer of his Atlantic Beach hotel for use of military, in contrast to news of his acquisition of property.... NAACP postponed until next week.

Headlines in the So-what department: "General Davis probes Phoenix riot"; "Lincoln beats Howard"; "Edgar Brown's National Negro council announces a ten-point post-election program.".... While you're dreaming of a light or dark brown Xmas, BUY ANOTHER BOND, MISTER, but until the naval officer swivel-chair brigade in Washington contains some Negroes, Keep 'Em Squirming!