

From UNITED Feature Syndicate
220 East 42nd Street, New York 17

underlined

FOR RELEASE TUESDAY, JUNE 13, 1944 AND THEREAFTER

THE WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND

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By Drew Pearson

(Lt. Col. Robert S. Allen now on active service with the Army.)

REPORTS INDICATE JONES-CLAYTON FORCES WERE BEHIND TEXAS REVOLT: ASSOCIATES OF TWO PRESIDENTIAL AIDES LED ANTI-ROOSEVELT GROUP; FDR ON EVE OF D-DAY GAVE CALLERS ONLY ONE SIGN OF NERVOUSNESS; CONGRESSMEN NOTED HIS HAND SHOOK A LITTLE AS HE LIT CIGARETTE.

WASHINGTON -- The President's political advisers aren't shouting about it, but they have now received a 20-page report on the Texas "revolution" from Texas New Deal leader Alvin Wirtz, plus a word-of-mouth report from one confidential envoy arriving from the rebellious Lone Star State.

These appear to confirm the report that Jesse Jones and Will Clayton forces were behind the move in the Texas Democratic convention to instruct electors to disregard century-old precedent in the Electoral College and not necessarily vote for the winner next November.

Here are some of the facts laid before White House political advisers:

Executive

Chairman of the Democratic State/Committee who led the anti-Roosevelt group is George Butler, Jesse Jones' nephew and attorney for "Jesse H. Jones interests", including banks, radio stations, newspapers, office buildings, building and loan associations. The White House has been informed that Butler has the reputation in Houston of never doing anything without consulting Uncle Jesse, and that many Texas interests seeking to do business with Jones' Reconstruction Finance Corporation employ Nephew Butler as their attorney. It is inconceivable that he would act without Jesse's approval.

LEADERS OF REVOLT

Chairman of the Harris County (Houston) delegation which spearheaded the revolt against Roosevelt was John H. Crooker, attorney for Will Clayton, the man who sits at FDR's right hand when it comes to post-war liquidation.

Working with Crooker was Lamar Fleming, head of the giant Anderson, Clayton & Company, biggest cotton brokers in the world, of which Will Clayton is a partner. Both Fleming and Crooker came to Austin in advance of the convention to spearhead the drive against Roosevelt.

Others active in the move included the following representatives of big oil and gas companies: George Heyer, president of Crude Oil, a subsidiary of Sun Oil and in the employ of the Pews, Republican bosses of Pennsylvania; Clint C. Small, lobbyist for Humble Oil, a Standard Oil of N.J. subsidiary; Hiram King, chief lobbyist for Sinclair Oil; E. E. Townes, former chief counsel for Humble Oil; Neth Leachman, representative of Lone Star Gas.

So far, the President has been too busy with the invasion to have any show-down with his Secretary of Commerce and Will Clayton. And if he should go to England, as reported last week, it is doubtful if he has any show-down with them at all.

FDR ON EVE OF D-DAY

A group of Democratic and Republican Congressmen, calling themselves the Monday Night Club, dropped in to see the President on Monday, June 5. They did not know this was the eve of D-Day. The President did. However, they got no indication from him that momentous events were impending--except for one slight sign.

When the Congressmen first arrived at about 6 P.M., the President was his usual wise-cracking self.

"I suppose we ought to take an inventory to find out how many of you boys will be back here next year," he remarked.

"That's a good idea, provided you believe in reciprocity," shot back Representative John Sparkman of Alabama, indulging in Washington's favorite pastime of angling regarding the fourth term. But the President didn't rise to the bait.

He had just finished his afternoon swim and apparently was relaxed. He remarked that he was going to broadcast on the fall of Rome later in the evening, and explained that the problem of feeding the Italians was growing more difficult.

"When Rome fell, we had several shiploads of grain at a nearby harbor all ready to feed the people," he commented, "and there is a good deal more on the way." He added that grain did not appeal to him as appetizing in its raw state, but that the Italians will get plenty of macaroni and spaghetti out of it.

SIGN OF NERVOUSNESS

Representative Francis Walter of Pennsylvania presented the President with an odd gift during the visit--a letter opener made from the forearm of a Jap soldier killed in the Pacific.

"This is the sort of gift I like to get," the President said, as it was placed on his desk.

Representative Walter apologized for presenting such a small part of the Jap's anatomy. But the President interrupted him. "There'll be plenty more such gifts", he said.

The President did not touch the letter opener with his fingers, however. He probed it with a metal letter opener of his own, and called Assistant President Jimmy Byrnes and White House Assistant, Jim Barnes to look at it.

At about this time, the President lit a cigarette and his Congressional callers noted that his usually steady hand shook a bit. He looked in excellent health, but some of them were worried.

Leaving the office at the end of the visit, one of them asked Justice Byrnes about the President's nervousness. Byrnes, who knew what was coming later that night, replied: "That man has an awful lot on his mind."

A few hours later, the Congressional callers realized how true this was.

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