

Washington Merry-Go-Round

BY DREW PEARSON.

ABOARD THE SOUTHWEST SPECIAL FRIENDSHIP TRAIN, Nov. 24.—One of the hardest things to tell in print is the enthusiasm, generosity, and enterprise of the American people when it comes to giving food for friendship. This Friendship Train is the most spontaneous movement toward world brotherhood and friendship this country has probably ever seen and chiefly behind it is the belief that, whereas battleships can win wars, food can help win the peace.

Warm, Thrilling Response.

For two weeks now I have been riding three different sections of the Friendship Train, from Sunny California, through snowy Wyoming, across the brown plains of Kansas and through the smoke-begrimed industrial cities of Pennsylvania. But, regardless of geography, weather or industry, the response has been equally warm and thrilling.

This has not been government aid from diplomat to diplomat, but from people to people. Every conceivable cross section of American life has co-operated. Railroads and railroad employees, small towns and big towns, all religions, all races, rich and poor—all turned out at the railroad stations to help build the bridge of friendship between Europe and the United States.

In Fort Worth, Texas, Big-Hearted Amon Carter, who usually gives away broad-brimmed Texas hats, this time gave away 15 carloads of flour (along with other Fort Worth residents) and had the flour bags especially stamped with messages to the French and Italian people . . . in Secaucus, N.J., the farmers, under the leadership of Mayor John J. Kane, sold pigs and contributed the cash equivalent of one pig each to the Friendship Train—total \$2,800 . . . David C. White, a big wheat farmer twenty miles south of Dodge City, Kansas, gave five carloads of wheat because, as he expressed it, "in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew Christ says—'as ye have done unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'" . . . Dick Long, managing editor of the Wichita Eagle, practically quit being a newspaperman in order to organize this southwest special of the Friendship Train . . . Hundreds of newspapers used up tons of precious newspaper telling their readers about the train and scores of radio stations sacrificed valuable advertising to do the same.

Children Make Sacrifices.

In Sedgwick County, Kansas, the school children collected wastepaper, ran errands, saved their money until they raised enough to buy one carload of wheat (and that's a lot of wheat) . . . In Philadelphia, the children of the John Bartram High School contributed seven times as much money as the Pennsylvania Manufacturers Association—Joe Grundy's high-tariff outfit which used to write United States tariff laws. . . . In Grand Island, Neb., the Teamsters Union, headed by Bill Noble, furnished twenty men to load cars. . . . In Trenton, N.J., Mrs. Laura Marsavitz, a teacher in a Negro school, had won a war

prize for making parachutes. The prize was a Bible. When the train passed through Trenton she came to the station with her school children and asked that the Bible be sent with the train to Europe.

In Newton, Kan., the Menonite Church scoured the adjacent wheat-growing counties until twenty-eight cars of wheat and flour were attached to the Friendship Train. . . . The Tall Corn Network in Iowa staged an all-out radio drive for food and funds, later reported that, for the first time, people who phoned in to the radio station pledging money gave more than they pledged.

Down in Texas the eight district managers of the Lions Club worked so intensively that carload after carload came in from all over Texas—Longview, Odessa, Austin, Amarillo, Plainview, Lubbock, Sherman, Dallas, Beaumont. Other service clubs, plus local radio stations and newspapers, worked with them. The Rock Island Railroad and the Missouri Pacific helped the Santa Fe by bringing these off-the-main-line cars to Wichita, where the Santa Fe Southwest Special started. In Pennsylvania, the Reading Railroad also co-operated with the Penn Railroad in hauling off five cars.

Outstanding Response.

Greenville, S.C., decided to attach one boxcar to the Friendship Train, but, before it finished, hooked on two.

In Toledo, Ohio, Arthur Wieland, vice-president of Willys Overland, organized a fleet of station wagons and jeeps to pick up donations.

Up in the mountains of Central Pennsylvania, well off the main line of the train, Lockhaven and Renovo insisted on loading cars. So did Williamsport, Clearfield, Bellefonte, Bedford, Tyrone and other off-line towns. . . . Because California didn't have much time to organize, the citizens of Berkeley raised \$4,000 after the train left. The momentum of Oakland's drive also carried over, so energetic Mayor Joseph E. Smith has just reported that city raised a total of \$46,613. . . . Los Angeles, the starting point for the first Friendship Train, also raised \$35,000 after the train left. They couldn't stop the money from rolling in.

Genuine Generosity.

Out in Colorado's Dust Bowl, Baca County sent two carloads of wheat, the Springfield, Colo., Lions Club one and Walsh, Colo., one—genuine generosity from an area which may not have a crop next year. Corpus Christi and the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, though far from the train's starting point, sent five cars; diminutive Garden City, Kan., two cars; Emporia, Kan.—home town of the late William Allen White—four cars, to say nothing of Pueblo, Colo., Stanton, Colo., Kansas City, Topeka, Peoria, Ill., and Dodge City, Hill City, La Crosse, Sterling, Hays, Lawrence, Navarre, Bird City, Syracuse and Winfield, all in Kansas.

And so on and on. . . . The roll call of American generosity is too long to tabulate here but it's bills of lading spell out just one thing—the heartfelt desire of millions of Americans to help and to live at peace with their fellow men.—(Copyright, 1947, by the Bell Syndicate, Inc.)