WHAT GOES ON IN THE WORLD

by Norman Blair

RUSSIA

The bakers' dozen of men who rule the lives and destinies of almost 200 million Russians arrive at the Kremlin late in the day. But they frequently make up for it by burning the lights behind those yellow stuccoed walls far into the next morning; and often their most dramatic decisions are sprung on the world at midnight or later.

One such announcement was made at 11.45 p.m. Moscow time slightly less than ten years ago. For it was on May 3, 1939, that Molotov was made Russian Foreign Minister in place of Litvinov. Later that same year the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop pact was made public long after midnight.

A similar pattern was followed in regard to the latest move of the Kremlin boys—a move that still has the rest of the world guessing. At 1.58 a.m. (Moscow time) an announcer for the Russian radio read a terse 85 word communique over the air. Translated, it told of Molotov's having been "released from the duties of Minister of Foreign Affairs," and of A. Y. Vishinsky's appointment in his place.

Just what does this shift mean? In trying to answer this question, four great factors must be considered.

(1) Molotov and Stalin have been close friends ever since the "underground days" in Czarist Russia. For two decades Molotov has been known as "the voice of Stalin."

(2) On the other hand Molotov and Vishinsky have always been "twins" in their conduct of foreign affairs. Although Molotov is cold at meetings with foreign ministers while Vishinsky is fierce, there is nothing to choose between them when it comes to toughness.

(3) Some day—possibly soon—there must be a successor to Stalin. Now 69, he has carried a heavy burden for years, and there have been recurrent speculations that he is gravely ill.

(4) Russian foreign policy has not been working too well of late. The Berlin blockade failed to dislodge the Western powers. Attempts to wreck the Marshall Plan have got practically nowhere; and Soviet policy in Eastern Europe has brought about the "heresy" of Marshall Tito.

So, throughout the world there is much discussion as to whether the latest announcement means promotion for Mr. Molotov—or is it demotion? As a New York Times correspondent puts it, Factors 1, 2 and 3 support the promotion theory. Factor No. 4, that of demotion.

Only time can tell—and, at this writing, it hasn't said anything yet.

GREAT BRITAIN

The Conservative party seems to be in more of a quandary than ever. In an effort to win the Hammersmith bye-election the Tories "shot the works"; but even the personal campaigning of Winston Churchill failed to keep Labor from winning —by a reduced majority, it is true— but still winning decisively.

Now, in spite of reports of a "snap election" it seems unlikely that the Labor Government will call a general election before some time next year, as it is confident that it can retain or even increase its popular support by plugging away at the advantages of socialist welfare schemes, such as universal health insurance.

And the Conservatives are afraid to criticize such schemes too vigorously. Churchill called off his promised House of Commons attack on the tremendous expenditures for food subsidies, socialized medicine etc. for fear that it might be interpreted as an all-out assault on the highly popular principles of that same national health scheme.

The Laborites, quite naturally, have made tremendous capital of Churchill's retreat. More than that, as one commentator put it, "the Tories have so far been unable to devise any program to rival the 'something for nothing' Socialist appeal. This has proved particularly attractive to young working-class Britons, who have become used to the feeling that the state will take care of them, come what may. To them, Churchill is a reactionary old has-been."

In their enthusiasm for social welfare, few Government supporters have listened to the quiet warnings that British productivity has ceased to rise, that exports may soon drop, and that the vast expenditures on social service may soon eat up the entire national income. But then, optomistic prophets were always far more popular than those whose forecasts have a pessimistic tinge.

JOURNALISM

A country editor tried to persuade the local tycoon to give him a full-page advertisement for his Christmas supplement. "Where does your paper go?" inquired the dubious tycoon. The editor declared, "It goes from Nova Scotia to British Columbia, from the Great Lakes to Alaska and if you don't give me that ad pretty quick it is going straight to hell."

One Referee Who Packs A Punch.—The belligerent and portly-looking gentleman in the white shirt is none other than The Manassa Mauler in person. For although long retired from the fight game, Jack Dempsey still earns a comfortable living in the ring——refereeing wrestling bouts. Jack looks as though he meant business as he faces the Golden Terror—but we doubt if there will be any real damage done.

SPORTS-&c

by A SIXBIT CRITIC

In starting this week's opus we are reminded of a couple of stories whose age, at least, should make them worthy of respect. The first is about Clancy, who lay on his death bed, and who had been told by Father O'Reilley that before passing from the world, he must make peace with all his enemies, especially Grogan. After considerable argument Clancy consented, and Grogan was led in.

* * *

"Grogan," said Clancy feebly, "we've been enemies — and bitter enemies — for over forty years. But now the Reverend Father says that before I go to the place where the likes of you will never get, I must make my peace with you. And I do so, Grogan. I forgive ye for all the mean things you did to me, and all the dirty things you said about me; I forgive you, full and free. So now, goodbye to you Grogan."

* * *

Grogan, full of sorrow and remorse, turned to leave. But just as he got to the bedroom door the voice hailed him once again. "But remember, Grogan," said Clancy, "if by any miracle I should get better — THIS DOMMED NONSENSE IS ALL OFF."

* * *

Which will serve to introduce some exhaustive studies we have been making into the subject of just what it is that produces a winning hockey team — studies that took us a full five minutes. We must explain, however, that at the moment of writing it looks as though New York and Chicago have been eliminated from the N.H.L. playoffs. But if — between now and the time you read this — by some miracle Rangers and Black Hawks should happen to squeeze in, well— THIS DOMMED NONSENSE IS ALL OFF.

* * *

So now, just what is it that produces a winning hockey team, fellow students? Well, Lester Patrick is admitted — by Lester Patrick — to know more about the inside of hockey than any living human. So Lester once declared that a good goaltender is at least 75 per cent of any winning team. So we turn to the N.H.L. records and what to we find?

* * *

Here we arel Montreal Canadiens have had only 119 goals tallied against them — 15 less than the next lowest. Ergo — Montreal Canadiens must have the best goal tender. Double ergo — Montreal Canadiens must be leading the race by a large margin.

* * *

But there must be something slightly haywire here. Instead of Canadiens name being — like Abou Ben Adhem's — well in front, the Frenchmen are only in second position, and by a bare snoot, at that. While topping them by 10 full points in the right hand column are the Detroit Red Wings.

* * *

Well, maybe even Lester Patrick might be wrong for once. (There's got to be a first time for everything.) Perhaps, in modern hockey, stout defense is not as all-fired important as swift, hard-hitting offense. Let's take a peek at matters from that angle.

* * *

Ah, that's more like it. Sure enough Detroit Red Wings have twanged the twine more often than any of their contemporaries — and sure enough the speedy athletes from what we once laughingly termed "The Motor City" are out there winging, which is just as it should be.

* * *

But whoa, back up! What is this we see? Second in goal scoring, with a 27-tally advantage over the Canadiens, we have nobody else but the Chicago Black Hawks. But Chuck Conacher's pets aren't second — they aren't third — they aren't even fourth. In fact if it wasn't for those New York Rangers, would be trailing the procession, a lovely last.

* * *

Somehow or other it just doesn't seem to add up. And it was while trying to break out of the quandary we found ourselves in at this point, that we thought of the other ancient tale. This was about the village dignitary whose ignorance of the law was only equalled by his good opinion of himself and who, somehow or other, secured an appointment as Magistrate.

* * *

He was trying his first case, and the Prosecuting Attorney made a very telling opening speech. When he had finished, the new Magistrate spoke up. "That's enough," he said sharply. "Prosecution wins!"

* * *

The Attorney for the Defense quite naturally made a strong objection, saying that the Magistrate had no business deciding a case without hearing the other side. "Go ahead then," said the Magistarte. "Do your stuff — but I can tell you that it ain't going to do you a bit of good."

* * *

Whereupon the Defense Attorney proceeded to make a speech that was just about twice as eloquent and three times as persuasive as that of his opponent. When he was about half way through, the Magistrate halted him abruptly. "That's enough," he said. "This certainly does beat Aitch — but now Defense wins."

* * *

So, as we said before, our hockey studies have put us in a somewhat similar predicament to that of the beginning magistrate. First, we thought that in hockey the best defense was bound to win. Then we thought that it must be the most effective offensive. Now, after looking things over, we just plain don't know. Maybe the secret of producing a winning hockey team is to own the one that gets into the most tie games. But we have delved into the records long enough for one session. You might look up which team did that yourself — then go take a ticket on them for the playdowns.

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The Chancellor of the Exchequer does not approve of more tobacco. A quiet, ascetic man with the good of the people at heart, he thinks Britons ought to change their smoking habits, voluntarily if possible, otherwise by judicious government regulation. He holds it both immoral and uneconomic for people to burn up their wages when they are in need of other things.

The political leaders of the government are more sympathetic to some change. There is an election coming up and the Labor Party wants to remain in power so that it can continue to look after the interests of the people. They want to allow a little more smoking. The government, even in Great Britain, cannot completely ignore the wishes of the people.

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