"Dollar Crisis" Brings Them Together—These are the major figures taking part in the Anglo-American talks in Washington on England's "dollar crisis." Left to right are: Secretary of State Dean Acheson; Secretary of the Treasury John Snyder; British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin; British Chancellor of the Exchequer Sir Stafford Cripps; and Canadian Finance Minister Abbott.

SPORTS & by A SIXBIT CRITIC

Of all the various sports which we have watched, reported and—under extreme pressure—even taken part in, there are few that occupy such a deep-seated spot in our affections as the noble pastime of pitching horseshoes. When we get around to publishing that book of reminiscences—we are almost up to the middle of page one—the chapter on Horseshoe Pitchers We Have Mingled With will be written with extra loving care, and no fooling.

* * *

Few who ever attended them will likely ever forget the weekly outings of the Toronto chapter of the Pool and Poker Club, largely made up of big league professional hockeyists and big-time professional wrestlers. They used to gather at our former country estate — 3½ acres, 50 square yards of which were level ground — for the purpose of scoffing Russian delicatessen, pitching horseshoes and — it was rumored — imbibing keg brew.

* * *

There were times when we must have had, at a conservative estimate, half a million dollars worth of hockey and wrestling talent present — double that, probably, at present-day valuation. But outside of two or three, such as Harold "Baldy" Cotton, Roy "Squib" Worters, and the late Lorne Chabot, as horse-brogan heavers, they wouldn't have made many headlines.

* * *

All this, and a whole lot more, came to mind when reading an account of the United States national horseshoe pitching championships, recently held at Morray, Utah. There were 36 contestants—finalists from 18 states. They did their stuff in a brilliantly floodlighted, cement-surfaced arena, surrounded by thousands of spectators seated in trim metal bleachers.

* * *

The steel target-pins were tilted an accuately measured three inches toward the pitchers. They were set in scientifically prepared clay pits. The shoes, weighing up to 2½ pounds apiece, were made of "special analysis heat-treated steel, accurately balanced and plated with cadium and copper."

* * *

But there were two items in the account which came home to us with special vigor—reminding us of our own Pool and Poker Club conditions because they were so dissimilar. At the aforesaid U.S. championships they had a loud speaker system to carry a minute report of the play, and on close calls, the judges used calipers to aid in their decisions.

* * *

Heck, when our gladiators really laid into their pitching, you didn't need any loud speaker system to keep you informed of how things were going. Although the country estate was in a fairly secluded spot, folks with good ears could tell who was winning 'way down in Hogg's Hollow, a good four miles away.

* * *

And as for calipers, we didn't bother about gadgets such as that. In fact, we had what you might call a sort of "house rule," frequently invoked when the evening shadows were starting to settle and the athletes tended to become slightly weary and inaccurate. This rule "stated" that any shoe which landed within the limits of the estate was close enough to be counted.

* * *

The only other rule we recall was one which said that anybody whose shoe vanished over the brow of the hill and landed in the bog at the bottom had to go and retrieve it direct, without any detour in the direction of the barn where the first aid station was located.

* * *

But for all their flossy surroundings and up-to-date trimmings, the U.S. horseshoe champions don't seem to be in any danger of amassing unwieldly amounts of wealth at their calling. The ultimate victor, Fernando Isais, of Los Angeles—a guy who scored as many as 91 ringers in 100 consecutive tries—won 34 out of his 35 matches in the tournament, which must be almost par for the course.

* * *

But all he took home in the way of folding money was a mere $400. Why, there wasn't an athlete taking part in our Pool and Poker Club jousts who didn't earn far more than that per month.

* * *

Although not, it must be sorrowfully admitted, for his skill in pitching horesshoes.

Sealnaped — This month-old baby was sealnaped out of the water at Vancouver, B.C., by the crew of the tanker J. L. Hanna. When they turned "George" loose, out of the kindness of their hearts, he barked to be taken on board again. He was met by pretty Rosamund Wilfley with a bottle of warm milk. Now he'll 'serve a stretch' in the Steinhart Aquarium.

The Healing Railway

Electric trains, so people are apt to consider, are a fairly new method of transport but Ursula Eason writes interestingly of the very first hydro electric railway in the world. This, which is in Northern Ireland, was designed in 1879 and is now called the Portrush Electric Tramway. It still runs to the Giant's Causeway, a long line of octagonal rocks, stretching out to sea. The Causeway is one of the great geographical curiosities of the British Isles, for the natural rocks look exactly as though they had been hand cut. The antique railway runs along the edge of the cliff and the little open-sided carriages are roofed now, though they were not in the early days, when passengers got more than they wanted of the extremely bracing North Antrim air.

The oldest employee of the railway is Robert Scott, who has been working on it for fifty-seven years, and he told Miss Eason about its early days. The main change since then has been the removal of the third rail which carried the power. This rail was situated between the railway car and the ditch and was supported on wooden posts about eighteen inches high. There was difficulties and, according to Mr. Scott, the company was not allowed enough current for the little live rail, so that fifty years ago it was taken away and the overhead system adopted. Ursula Eason remarked that this was surely a good thing as a live rail in such a prominent position must have been rather dangerous? Mr. Scott countered such a suggestion with the story of the old countrywoman from the district who used to sit on the rail every evening. She was warned that, despite her copious skirts, the habit was a dangerous one but she refused to give up her apparently foolhardy practice because, she said, it eased her rheumatism.

Rivers of Ink And Lemonade

French scientists have analyzed what must be the most remarkable river in the world—the so-called Ink River in Algeria. Its name is not symbolic. It merely states the truth, which applies not only to the coloring of the water, but to its chemical composition as well. This is a stream of real ink.

The Ink River originates from two sources, one of which contains a considerable amount of iron salts, while the other abounds in lead oxide. It is the combination of these two substances that makes ordinary ink. The liquid is thick enough to be used for writing.

Another unusual river is in the State of Nebraska. Its water tastes very sweet and science is still searching for the reason. There are no sugar plantations along its banks. Neither are there any nearby sources of saccharine, which sometimes does become dissolved in rivers from the soil.

This sweet river came into existence quite unexpectedly in 1930, and since then has increased in size. Geologists believe this rare, natural phenomenon was caused by an abnormal rise in the level of certain subterranean waters, eventually leading to the bursting forth of the new river.

The Rio de Vinagre, a river which marks the boundary between Chile and Argentina, is known as the Acid River because its water is almost as acid as lemon juice. By adding a small quantity of sugar to a glass of its water, a beverage can be obtained similar to lemonade.

One enterprising American actually started a company to transport thousands of gallons of water from the sweet river in Nebraska to the Rio de Vinagre. The idea was to supply aerated table waters for the thirsty Argentinians, but in the end it was found cheaper to buy sugar on the spot.

The River Engari Niuki, in East Africa, has water which tastes like diluted bitter beer. Yet there is no alcohol in it. The natives boil it before drinking to get rid of the chemicals it contains. However, it seems to have no detrimental effect on animals, who drink it as if it were ordinary water.

There are black, brown, yellow, red and white rivers in many countries, and their bright hues may be due to the color of the river bed or to the reflection from the colored banks. Thus the Black River of Niassaland, in East Equatorial Africa, appears jet black because of the black lava over which is flows.

In other cases, it is the contents of the river, such as clay or peat, that give the river its characteristic coloring. Thus the Blackadder in Berwickshire, Scotland, is blackened by its peaty contents. The Yellow River of China, draining a vast basin of 600,000 square miles, owes its distinctive color to the yellow mud it carries down to the sea.

But the Niger, in West Africa, is not so called because it is black, but because "N-eg-hirren" is the native word for river.

The twins who had just celebrated their 95th birthday were the wonder of the village.

"And to what do they attribute their age?" a newcomer asked.

"One to the fact that he's an early riser, and the other to the fact that he isn't!"

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"I'm afraid not," replied the professor.

"Haven't you any idea where it was?" asked the porter.

"Why, yes," the professor brightened, "to be sure, I did notice one time this afternoon that the window looked out on a little lake.

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