

CALLS PROBE IN RUBBER A WASTE

Leader in Industry Explains Situation

"The recent decision of the Government to spend \$500,000 for an investigation of the crude rubber situation means a plain waste of that much of the people's money," declared William O'Neill, vice president and general manager of The General Tire and Rubber company in a statement this week. Mr. O'Neill is a director of the American Rubber association, has given the subject careful study and is a member of the committee of four American rubber men who recently conferred with the representatives of the British rubber growers. His statement in part, follows:

"Much as every American would like to see the production of crude rubber dominated by Americans, and all the rubber necessary for American use grown under the American flag, the fact remains that it is not practical as an economic proposition. The subject has long since been investigated very carefully and thoroughly, and the results are available in dozens of responsible places, so that the recent decision of the Government to spend \$500,000 for 'investigation' means a plain waste of that much of the people's money.

"This refers of course to the highest grade rubber, hevea, of which Great Britain grows about 70 per cent of the world's supply, on the Malay Peninsula, and of which the United States uses the greater part. Hevea rubber is a native of Brazil, and was transplanted across the world, in planation form, over ten years ago,

when the Brazilian Government, which then had a monopoly, held its supply and ran the price up to \$3 a pound.

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"The Dutch have developed other plantations not far from the British rubber territory, so that the two now supply practically all the world's needs, and the output of original Brazilian rubber is now negligible.

"There is in fact an overproduction of crude rubber at the present time and the development of an American enterprise for rubber growing, as now proposed, would only make an unprofitable industry more so.

"The Philippine Islands are suggested for the proposed American plantations. Rubber men generally are agreed that Philippine rubber is not as good as that grown in Brazil or the Malay Peninsula. Climate and soil have a great deal to do with this. It is also well known that even if Philippine rubber were as satisfactory as that grown in the Federated Malay States or Java, it would be necessary to use ten-cent-a-day coolie labor in American possessions to produce it at a competitive price. The

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"Most Americans, I think, prefer to have ten cent labor working for Great Britain or Holland rather than under the Stars and Stripes. There is not much more hope on the American continent itself. High grade rubber cannot be grown in the United States. If we encourage Brazil, in South America, that is a foreign country, and rubber men have not forgotten what Brazil did to rubber prices when she had a chance. That was in peace time, too.

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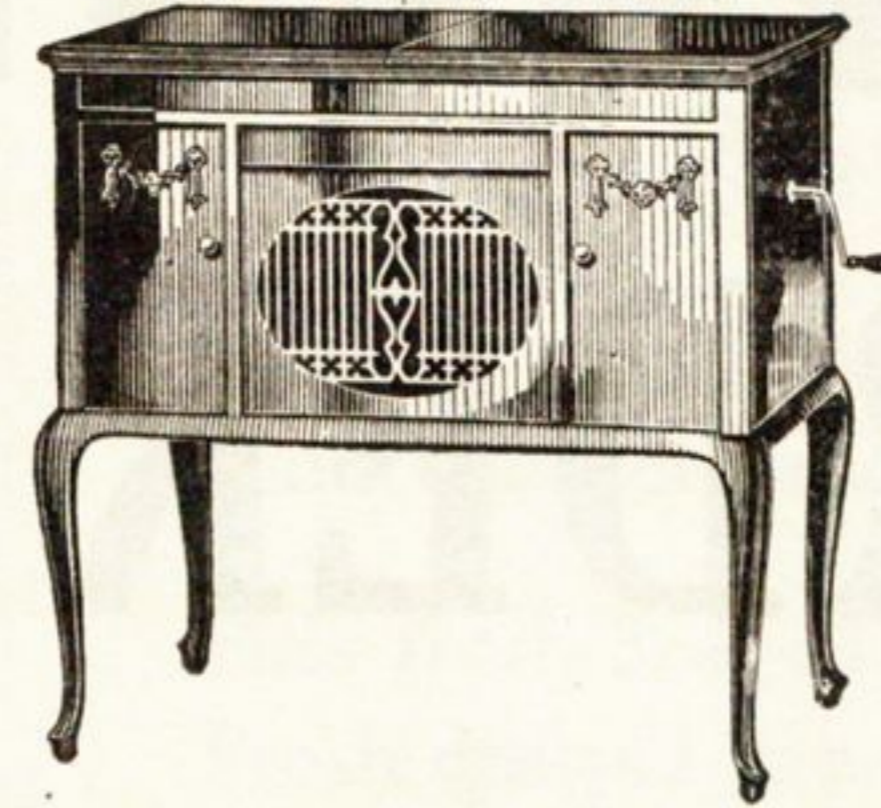
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