

Alien Property Custodian

Subject File

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

July 30, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. LEO T. CROWLEY

I am told that the firm of Coverdale & Colpitts, of which Mr. George W. Burpee has been a partner, is one of the worst of the Administration hating crowd -- notorious in this regard.

What do you know?

F. D. R.

G. W. Burpee Is Elected President Of General Aniline and Film Corp.

*Engineer Succeeds McConnell,
Who Quit 2 Weeks Ago Over
Change in Policy—Naming
of Other Officers Deferred*

George W. Burpee, a partner in the engineering firm of Coverdale & Colpitts, was elected yesterday president of the General Aniline and Film Corporation to succeed Robert E. McConnell, who, when the present board of directors was elected on July 13, announced he would resign.

William H. Coverdale, head of the engineering firm, and Mr. Burpee were two of the new directors elected at that time. They have been friends for many years of Leo T. Crowley, Alien Property Custodian, in whom is vested 97 per cent of the shares of General Aniline and Film Corporation. These shares were formerly controlled by German dye interests.

Election of other officers of the company was deferred until a later meeting, but it was intimated yesterday that Dr. E. C. Williams, vice president in charge of research and development, would continue at his post. Other officers are Dr. Joseph S. Bates; Dr. William F. Zimmerli and W. I. McNeill, vice presidents, David B. Dyche, treasurer, and Francis A. Gibbons, secretary.

Mr. Burpee was born in New Brunswick, Canada, on Nov. 9, 1883, and is a graduate of Bowdoin College and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He joined Coverdale & Colpitts in 1921, and became a partner in 1924. Until recently he was executive vice



George W. Burpee

president of American Export Air Lines, of which he is still a director. He is also a director of the Burson Knitting Mills, the Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia Railway, and Lukens Steel Company.

Mr. Burpee is also a director of the American Society of Civil Engineers and a past president of the American Institute of Consulting Engineers. His home is in Bronxville, N. Y.

Mr. McConnell, in making his resignation public two weeks ago, said he was leaving the company because of a change in policy. He became president and chairman in March, 1942. His plans for the future have not been revealed.



OFFICE OF
ALIEN PROPERTY CUSTODIAN
WASHINGTON

August 2, 1943

Miss Grace Tully
Secretary to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Miss Tully:

In response to the enclosed query from the President, Coverdale & Colpitts is undoubtedly a Republican firm, but from the check we made on George Burpee we are sure he has never been connected with politics in any way and is most friendly to the Administration. The most important consideration was to be rid of Mr. O'Connell who hated everything the President represented, and in replacing him we employed Mr. Burpee on a temporary basis until we could find a permanent president. His association with a service company permitted us to make that arrangement.

The new board of General Aniline is now largely composed of Democrats and friends of the Administration, and when we find an industrialist who is qualified for the position of president we can release Mr. Burpee.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Leo T. Crowley".

Leo T. Crowley,
Alien Property Custodian

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Alien Property Custodian
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Sub. File
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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 6, 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. JAMES F. BYRNES:

Do you know when Leo Crowley expects to get out as Alien Property Custodian? The more I think it over, the more I think we should take action pretty soon -- and I think Francis J. McNamara is the best choice.

F.D.R.

Note:

Do not send to Mr. Byrnes the
attached letter addressed to Mrs.
Roosevelt.

For the President

E.R.

*Pres. R.
1-22-44*

February 24, 1944

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House
Washington, D.C.

FEB 25 1944

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Thank you for your earlier note. Really, I can assure you of the utmost discretion on our part.

At the moment we are very much concerned about the appointment of a successor to the Alien Property Custodian. As you can imagine, many of the most significant cartel problems in this country will be settled by the policies adopted by the Alien Property Custodian. The larger companies vested by the APC were all parties to cartel agreements, and all of the important patents seized were also involved in such agreements. The fate of our entire American chemical industry depends in large part upon the policies pursued by the Custodian in charge of enemy property.

Mr. Crowley's administration of this important office gave little hope that General Aniline & Film and the affiliated I. G. Farben properties would be subjected to strict oversight or that a real program would be developed to insure that we would not repeat the blunders following the last war. His policy on patents has left American companies, parties to cartel agreements, in the exclusive possession of these valuable rights; and thus makes it virtually inevitable that the cartel agreements with Axis firms will be restored immediately at the end of the war.

A week ago we heard that Francis J. McNamara, Assistant to the Alien Property Custodian, was to be named as successor to Leo Crowley. This was extremely good news since Mr. McNamara is completely honest; he is fully informed on Alien Property problems and was very active in the original vesting of General Aniline & Film and the other Farben properties; and he has been wholly out of sympathy with the weak program followed by Mr. Crowley. In the last few days, however, we have heard that very strong opposition -- developed by friends of General Aniline & Film -- is being organized against the appointment of Mr. McNamara. We have heard that pressures are being brought -- both by people in and outside of the Government -- for the appointment of a weak administrator, and that such pressures are expected to be successful at the White House.

Handwritten initials

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We wished you to know about this because of the importance of the whole matter both now and for the postwar future. As you know, the sums involved in the administration of alien property are gigantic. The value of General Aniline & Film properties in this country alone amounts to \$65,000,000. As a result, many people have a great personal stake in the appointment of the administrator.

Sincerely yours,

Irene Till and Jean Pajus

Irene Till and Jean Pajus

January 24, 1944

For the President: *Roosevelt*

E.R.

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✓
Irene Till and Jean Pajus
Jan. 21 - enc. papers on
activities of Pirelli Co.
of Italy