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.
THURSDAY, JULY 29, 1943.

FINANCE

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 direc-
tors 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 con-
trolled by German dye interests.

Election of other officers of the
company was deferred until a later
meeting, but it was intimated yest-
terday 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. McNell, 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 In-
stitute of Technology. He joined
Coverdale & Colpitts in 1921, and
became a partner in 1924. Until
recently he was executive vice

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

Mr. Burpee is also a director of
the American Society of Civil En-
gineers and a past president of
the American Institute of Consulting
Engineers. His home is in Bronx-
ville, 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.
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,

Leo T. Crowley,
Alien Property Custodian
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.
February 24, 1944

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

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 ensure 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.
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
January 24, 1944

For the President: Roosevelt

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