

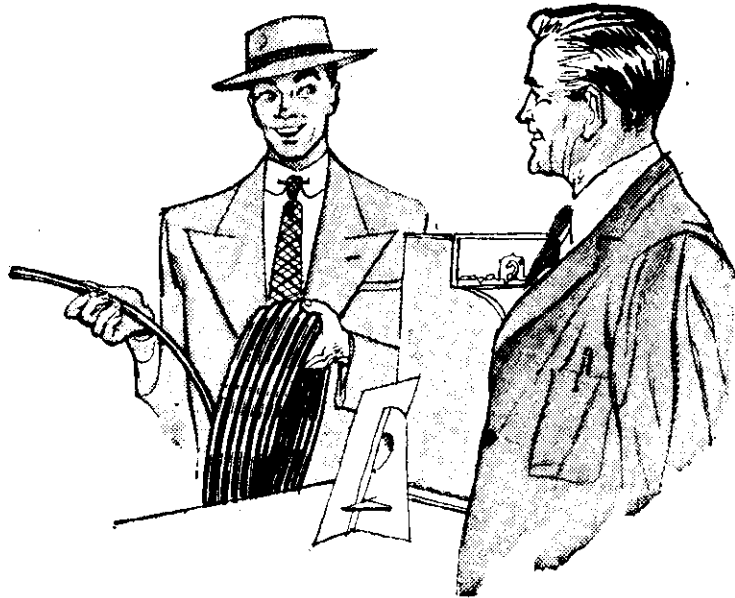
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Is this hose made from 'Welvic'?

Plastic hoses are grand . . . but like everything else there are plastics **and** plastics, so for your own protection look for a label with the name "Welvic" or ask firmly "**is this hose made from Welvic?**" Here's why: Hoses made from I.C.I.'s "Welvic" are only a third the weight of ordinary hose (a full 60 feet weighs a mere 7 lbs.). The bright attractive colour of "Welvic" does not come off on your hands. "Welvic" does not perish and it may be safely left outdoors in all weathers.

Imperial Chemical Industries make "Welvic" a raw plastics material which in turn is processed by various New Zealand manufacturers into garden hose, unbreakable dolls and other top-quality plastic products.



A Change of Temperature

A REMARKABLE change in the temper of world politics has occurred in the past few weeks. Immediately after Stalin's funeral the Soviet Government began to make proposals which, if carried out, will ease the tension between East and West. Negotiations were opened, and agreement reached, on the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war in Korea. There have been moves towards a resumption of the truce talks. At United Nations Headquarters the Russians accepted Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld as a candidate for the post of Secretary-General, and later voted for his appointment. In several other ways they showed a desire, even eagerness, to make concessions and friendly gestures.

These are encouraging signs of a new policy in the Kremlin. They have been received in the West with a mixture of hope, surprise, and caution. It was not to be expected that fear and deep distrust, fostered in years of friction, could disappear like a morning mist. A change of policy does not necessarily mean a change of fundamental beliefs, and it would be naive to suppose that the Soviet rulers have suddenly rejected the teachings of Marx and Lenin—even if, for the moment, they seem to have turned away from Stalinism. But it would be equally wrong to explain conciliation simply as a new move in a plot of extraordinary complexity. The Russians need peace as much as we do; and whatever the future may bring, its difficulties will be less formidable if in the meantime the cold war is interrupted or brought to an end. No theorist can predict with complete accuracy what will happen in a new situation; but peace can be dangerous only when it is bought shamefully, and there is infinitely more to be gained from it today than from a continuing hostility.

It is not only in the outside world that the new Soviet line is being followed. The release of 15 doctors, charged recently with political murders, was seen abroad

as a rejection of anti-Semitism. More than that, it was accompanied by a public indictment of the methods by which confessions had been extracted from the accused. Propagandists have always denied that confessions were gained by brutal methods of interrogation. Yet the Government itself has now said in effect that these things have happened. It has also indicated that they should not happen again. And it becomes tempting to infer from this that there has been opposition to Stalin's policies inside the Kremlin. Some experts have suggested that the change of direction was decided upon while Stalin was still alive, and that the new rulers are merely carrying out his purpose. If this were true, however, it would be hard to understand the studied exclusion of Stalin's name from public statements. A complete reversal of his policies is not the most obvious way of preserving the myth of his infallibility.

It may well be that we are now seeing the results of a concealed struggle within the Kremlin. If that is the true explanation, we may have to remember that policies linked to internal problems of prestige and power can be changed as quickly as they have been made. Perhaps our best reason for hopefulness is that Malenkov, at the beginning of his regime, has an obvious need of stability. Moreover, he could not have made far-reaching changes unless he felt sure of support from those close to him in the Kremlin. His actions so far have not been those of a man manoeuvring for position, but of a man who believes his position to be secure. Later events may confound these assumptions: we can only speculate without full knowledge. In the meantime we can be thankful for what has happened, and venture to hope that the best is yet to come. If Stalin's death has lifted the tension, and his successor is able to use the great opportunity now before him, our hold upon peace will be stronger than it has been since the end of the Second World War.