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GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:-

Some startling news from Puerto Rico. We narrowly escaped having a wholesale assassination of key officials on the island. The shooting of Colonel Riggs was ^{part of it.} ~~to have been the opening signal~~. ^{But} Governor Blanton's investigators have found that a regular plot was to have been sprung on Washington's Birthday. Only the fact that the conspirators couldn't find their victims that day stopped it. It was to have been a terrorist demonstration on a sweeping and sanguinary scale.

Apparently the independence of the Philippines has whetted the appetites of the Black Shirt leaders of the Army of Liberation. That is what the Puerto Rican Nationalist organization calls itself. The last Governor, Robert Gore, had his troubles with them:- Numerous strikes, bombings, and a sinister poison plot, which was just foiled in time.

Major General Blanton, who succeeded Judge Fore as Governor, has pursued the policy of not taking the Black Shirts too seriously. For the most part, they are radical students, ■ unemployed

agitators, together with revolutionists of the type which seem to breed in hot countries, like mosquitos.

The American authorities have taken the attitude that stern measures such as are adopted by some other colonial governments would dignify these hot heads too much. Just a month ago, the Black Shirts had the hardihood to open a recruiting office right in the heart of the business district of San Juan. That was when voters were registering for the election. In these open headquarters they had their hooks out not only for recruits but for funds. Those funds were not for campaigning but to equip their army. In fact, the Nationalists urged their partisans to ignore the regular election. "Which ever way you vote, it won't mean anything," they cried. To which they added, "The invaders will pay no attention to the will of the people." By invaders they meant Americans from the U.S.A.

There have been numerous election casualties during the past two weeks. A dozen people killed and some thirty-five wounded. Now the assassination of Colonel Riggs and District Police Chief Ortiz comes as the climax of all this turbulence and conspiracy.

HAGOOD

The removal of Major General Hagood calls to mind an interesting story. On one of the walls in John D. Rockefeller's home in Florida there's a huge stuffed fish. It is mounted on a handsome bronze plaque. Underneath it Mr. Rockefeller had inscribed the words spoken by the fish:- "I wouldn't be here if I hadn't opened my mouth." And that applies to the forcibly spoken general. If he hadn't opened his mouth, he'd still be officer in command of the Eighth Corps Area and in line to succeed Major General Dennis Nolan, in command of the New York Area, which is generally considered the most important army assignment of post in the country.

Everybody seems to agree that General Hagood was put on the skids for his remarks about W.P.A. "stage money", the way he ridiculed the Public Works program in testimony before a Congressional Committee. Critics of the Administration are talking caustically about the order which relieved him of his command, just for speaking his mind. There's a storm in Congress. There's strong defense for the Colonel in the Military Affairs Committee. However, it must be remembered that there is an ancient rule in

the United States army and in all the armies of the world. This rule is that officers must not express themselves about politics. A soldier is not supposed to have any.

Anyhow, the White House order removes one of the most colorful general officers in the service. He has always been a plain spoken gentleman. He has also been noted for his democratic inclinations and his hatred of red tape. He once shocked the entire staff college by declaring that a soldier could be turned out in thirty days. Said he: "You can teach even chorus girls to salute and make right and left turns." (Look at the Rockettes) "A Soldier should be taught to shoot and march immediately."

His pet loathing was clerical work. He hated writing official communications. One of the first orders he issued at San Antonio was that interoffice memoranda and long letters were undesirable. And woe betide the officer who ignored that suggestion! His forthright methods caused one important revision in army regulations. It used to be the rule that every corps commander should turn in a long report every year to the Chief of Staff. Most commanding officers burned the midnight oil concocting long, voluminous documents. But after his first year in

command, General Hagood took a single sheet of paper and wrote as follows: "Dear General MacArthur:- I have nothing to report, Signed Hagood." The consequence was that several months later General MacArthur issued an order abolishing those annual reports.

The death of President Roosevelt's cousin has set the rumour mills a-grinding in Washington. There is an unusual situation in Uncle Sam's Navy. A curious combination of mishaps and circumstances is responsible. Secretary Swanson has been ill several weeks. That left the late Assistant Secretary, Henry Latrobe Roosevelt acting head of the department. ^{Now} With his sudden passing the supreme command falls upon the fourth ranking ~~Rx~~ officer, Rear Admiral Andrews. Ordinarily it would devolve upon his chief, Admiral Standley, head of operations, but he's away in London having headaches at the Naval Conference. ~~And of course~~ ^{Yet} it's a well-established law and tradition that a civilian must run the Navy.

So Washington is guessing that the problem will be solved by a hurry-call for no less a potentate than Josephus Daniels of North Carolina. That certainly would bring an experienced man back on the job. Jo Dan'ls, as they call him in his own state, was Secretary for eight solid years, all through the reign of Woodrow Wilson. He was a politician and a famous newspaper editor when he walked into that job. But that left him with about as much experience in running a Navy as any Secretary ever had upon taking office.

And one fact stands out. When Uncle Sam was pushed into the war, his Navy was in first-rate shape. Its record in the war is amply attested in the history books.

But even before that ^{Daniels} ~~his~~ administration of the service was spectacular. ^{Also -} Even as a newspaperman and politician, Jo Dan'ls had been famous for stirring up hornets' nests. And he kept up the practice after he became Secretary of the Navy. The first thing he did was that famous order which abolished the use ~~of~~ of liquor on Uncle Sam's ships and in his Navyyards. That did ^{not} make Secretary Daniels popular with either officers or men. For one thing they ~~resented~~ resented the implication that they were tiplers. ~~Next~~

The next spectacular thing he did raised just as large a storm. He tried to demolish one of the oldest traditions of the sea. The terms "starboard" and "port," said the editor-secretary, were absurd. Why shouldn't men at sea say left and right just as we landlubbers do? The mariners, both officers and enlisted men, growled in secret. But they couldn't do anything about it. The order stood.

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Congressman Sol Bloom of New York, a most tenacious fellow is he. In spite of Walter Johnson's spectacular feat, throwing that dollar across the River Rappahannock, Sol is unconvinced. He sticks to his story that the Rappahannock in Washington's time was twelve hundred feet wide at that particular spot. However, Pietro isn't convinced. He's the Italian who found the dollar and has already been offered enough for it to enable him to realize his dream of foing back to Italy to see his dear old mother. ~~And, one sharp retort to the Congressman's skepticism~~

And, one sharp retort to the Congressman's skepticism comes from Clearwater, Florida. Garret Hobart telegraphs me:- "Why question Washington's ability to throw a dollar across the Rappahannock when we know he threw a sovereign across the sea?"

~~And I'll be thrown across the room unless I say:-~~

~~SOLONG UNTIL TOMORROW~~

The order of the day in all headquarters of the Red Cross Societies is "stand by." Floods are to be expected whenever Springtime approaches. But not in the memory of most living people has the danger been so terrific as it is ^{tonight.} ~~today.~~ Though the peril on the Ohio River has vanished, the threat hangs over a dozen states, mostly in the Midwest.

It is a well-known axiom that the more ferocious the winter, the more frozen the rivers, the more devastating the floods. Not only the Midwest states such as Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan and Iowa, but Pennsylvania in the East, Idaho, Texas, Nebraska and South Dakota in the West are full of fearsome expectations. The sudden thaw on top of the six weeks long frost brings about a most ominous situation.

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However, there is some hope in the fact that most people are being fore-warned. Everybody living along the banks of the big and badly frozen rivers, all the dwellers in lowlands and valleys, are making preparations. And the authorities in most localities are getting ready for the emergencies.

However, there was one emergency against which no

authorities could cope. The new dust storms in the West are as alarming as they were unexpected. That is, they were not expected as early in the year as this. And - another terrific snowslide in Colorado.

There's a decidedly cryptic note in Captain Anthony Eden's maiden speech to the House of Commons. That is, his maiden speech as King Edward's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He told Parliament that Britain will have no lot or part in the policy of encircling Germany with a ring of steel.

That's a statement which must have aroused consternation in Paris. The encircling of Germany, as everybody knows, has been the constant aim of the Quai d'Orsay. Cabinets have risen and fallen in France. But they've been unanimous in one respect; about that hedge of bayonets and forts around the Land of the Teuton. Hitherto, Downing Street seemed in sympathy with that objective. It was the policy which King Edward's grandfather, Edward the Seventh, laid down and carried out. And it's the policy with which Stanley Baldwin seemed to be in complete sympathy when he declared: "England's frontier today is no longer the English Channel; our frontier is the Rhine." Meaning, of course, that the development of aviation has pushed back His Majesty's navy as the first bulwark.

Another point to be observed in Captain Eden's speech

was the tenacity of British statesmen. They still cherish the illusion that they can drag Uncle Sam into their alliances and agreements. That's the clear implication in the Foreign Secretary's demand for "a worldwide system of collective security." Naturally, no system could be worldwide without our being in it. The United States Senate, and the people of the U.S.A. in two elections, have notified the world that we don't want any part of either their troubles or their alliances. And Australia, Canada and South Africa have taken much the same attitude.

Captain Eden's support of the League was today phrased in these terms:- "The road to disarmament lies through the increased power and authority of the League of Nations." Note the words "increased power". The handsome foreign secretary added that so far the League depends principally upon the might of Britain.

SYRIA

We began tonight with some revolutionary sedition in Puerto Rico. Now let's see what France is experiencing along that line.

One of the most stirring marches played by the bands of the French army is called "All Aboard for Syria." It's not such a popular tune in France today. Those present riots in Damascus have brought on a recurrence of a fifteen-year-old headache.

There has been trouble ever since the Supreme Council of the Allied powers handed the Syrians over to the French under a League of Nations mandate. The Syrians, like the Arabs under Emir Feisal felt they were cheated by the Allied powers. Also, during the war all sorts of promises were made to them:- Complete independence, for one thing, if they would revolt against Constantinople and help the British overthrow the Turks in Asia Minor. After the war was won, however, it turned out that those promises could not be kept. The situation was governed by a long standing agreement between London and Paris. So, while Iraq, and Transjordan were handed over to Britain as a sphere of control, the Foreign Office on the banks of the Seine asserted its claim to Syria, much to chagrin of Lawrence of Arabia.

One French Administrator after another has had his grief in Damascus. One storm came to a head when General Sarrail divided the country into two sections. And a serious uprising broke out when General Ponsot attempted to establish a Constitution. The Nationalists wrecked it, asserting that the only Constitution they would accept would be one that included complete independence. For two years, from 1925 to 1927, the young Republic was in a state of continuous revolt.

The French rulers met the discontent with iron measures. Many of the leaders were banished. But that hasn't made the Syrians any more docile.

The present uproar, they say, is the result of exorbitant taxes and tariffs. Heavy duties on all goods imported from anywhere except France. Government from Paris, say the Syrian Nationalists, is ruining their country, both economically and politically.

The French side of the case is that their presence in Syria is necessary to protect Christians. But it has been observed that the Christians in Syria are just as vociferous as the Moslems in protesting against being governed by soldiers

from France. With the Syrian Cabinet ministers quitting their jobs, Damascus, oldest surviving city in the world, scene of many a fascinating Arabian Nights story, is in a desperate condition tonight. A Damascene general strike has been going on for thirty-seven days, and there is no sign of an agreement. Business just doesn't exist in Damascus today. All the shops are closed along the Street called Straight. Almost the only people visible under the patchwork canopies are negro soldiers from Senegal on patrol. People are not permitted to gather in groups. If more than two persons talk together outside the portals of the mosques they are promptly dispersed by the long bayonets of the Senegalese. The city the desert nomads - the Beduoin - call Paradise, is no Paradise tonight.

As they say in Damascus - salaam alicum - and --

SOLONG UNTIL TOMORROW.