

L.T. Sunoco Thursday, May 1, 1941

GOOD EVENING EVERY BODY:

The war news is comparatively light tonight -- not nearly so much as a week or so ago, when the Battle of Greece was raging. Fairly quiet today in the various areas of the conflict, not much more than can be told in several minutes -- about four minutes.

The only military event that amounts to a battle occurred at Tobruk, the North African harbor where an empire force has been under siege for several weeks. The Axis has been attacking it constantly, on the ground and from the air -- but Tobruk has been holding out valiantly.

Today, British headquarters at Cairo report that the outer defenses of Tobruk have been penetrated. A violent German and Italian attack broke through the line of fortifications. Cairo says the assault was made by infantry supported by tanks, and that during the day fighting raged in the besieged city.

The British are taking vigorous action in Iraq - that strategic area which controls the great Mosul oil wells and is the back door to the Suez Canal. The situation there is ticklish, because the new govern^{ment}_A in Iraq is reported to be pro-Nazi. Some days ago, Empire forces were landed at the port of Bassra. And today another contingent of Imperials went ashore. The supposedly pro-Nazi government made no complaint when the first landing was made, but today they protested. It has something to do with the terms of the British-Iraq Treaty, which provides that the Empire may send certain specified forces to defend the Mosul oil wells. The Iraq government claims that under the treaty, today's British force should not have gone into the country until the previous one had withdrawn.

48

One dispatch tells of a threatening concentration of Iraq troops. They're gathered near a strategic British airport to the east of Baghdad. That drew immediate attention, with the British Minister registering a prompt protest. He demanded that the Iraq army units be withdrawn from the vicinity of the airport, and used these words:- "Their presence might otherwise

lead to an unfortunate incident for which the Iraq government would be held fully responsible."

The focus of Empire attention is on Baghdad and the old land of the ARABIAN NIGHTS. London believes that a Nazi attempt on the Iraq oil wells and the back door of the Suez Canal is certain to come.

The British evacuation of Greece is complete.

That is indicated by the word "final", in the following dispatch

from Cairo:- ^{it says} "Numerous flights^{it} were carried out by R.A.F.

fighters protecting the final convoys in the evacuation of our troops from Greece." Cairo continues with the information that, not only were eighty per cent of the British troops taken out, but also forces of the Greek army - Greek soldiers who wanted to go on with the war.

49

With this termination, we have eye-witness accounts by American newspaper reporters who were with the Anglo-Greek army. They are Correspondents McMillan and Gorrell of the United Press, and they begin their dispatch with these words:- "It was worse than Dunkirk." They tell of British Imperials, retreating through

southern Greece, to secret embarkation ports - while Nazi bombers hunted them incessantly, (~~sweeping down and bombing whenever they could spot the columns of troops and harbors where they were going aboard ship.~~) The American newspapermen likewise emphasize how incredibly the British were outnumbered in the Battle of Greece. They quote a New Zealand soldier who described the break-through of the armored columns at Thermopylae. He told of the defending front in these words:-

"Our platoons were separated sometimes by a third of a mile. We sent out patrols of five or six men. They encountered enemy patrols with as many as four hundred men. We smashed plenty of tanks," the New Zealander continued, "but they still came on. The enemy infantry seemed to be just cannon fodder."

obs {

50

RUSSIA

Soviet Russia celebrated May Day with a huge Red Army display. All over the world there were May Day parades, but the one in Moscow was the most imposing, a vast march of troops and military equipment through Red Square. The Red Army panoply was accompanied by a Soviet call for -- peace. "End the war!" - demanded the Soviet Defense Commissar, Marshal Timoshenko. Speaking of Britain and Nazi Germany, he proclaimed:- "We trust that they will attain peace, and the sooner they attain it the better."

With that we can end the foreign news, and take a look at our own country -- where of course we find reverberations from the war abroad.

SHIPPING

51
The Maritime Commission went into action today, to put into effect the President's plan for a pool of ships as aid to Britain. ~~A gathering of~~ Two million tons is the objective, and the shipping pool is expected to include the sixty-nine Italian, German and Danish ships which the government seized, a number of French vessels - possibly including the eighty million dollar liner NORMANDIE, and also - a large number of American freighters.

The first step taken by the Maritime Commission ^{was to} ~~is to~~ call a conference of operators of oil tankers. Fifty oil carrying vessels are sought for immediate aid to Britain. ~~Now~~, however, that the British will ~~immediately~~ get these tankers. The word from Washington is that the original plan to transfer the vessels to British registry has been ^{an} ~~abandoned~~ - because Britain now faces a shortage of sailors. The British haven't the merchant seamen to operate the tankers. So ~~now~~ the proposal is to use the tankers with American crews and under American flags - but within the Neutrality Law. They to transport oil from American gulf ports and from Latin-American oil fields to the United States harbors

in the North Atlantic, where British tankers could pick up the petroleum cargoes and take them across. That would save them a lot of long distance hauling.

52
In Congress, the Administration bill to take over foreignshipping is under consideration, and Senator Tobey of New Hampshire said today that he's going to offer an amendment. The Senator is sponsoring a congressional resolution against convoying. This was shelved yesterday by a Senate Committee and now the Senator says he'll bring it forward again as an anti-convoy amendment to the bill for requisitioning ships. The Senator wants to get the convoy question into open Senate debate - which the Administration opposes.

Senator Guffey today made a declaration on convoying. He's an ace administration supporter, and he's for it - strongly. He said ~~we~~ we should start convoying right away, and argued that this would not be what he called - "an act of aggression." It would not be aggressive action against German sea raiders, argued the Senator, and he reasoned as follows:- "If there was

SHIPPING - 3

53
any shooting," said he, "they would have to start it - and whatever action we took would be an action in defense. The mere presence of an American warship with merchant vessels," Senator Guffey contended, "would be notice to the Nazi sea wolves that reprisals would be immediate for any attack. And," he concluded, "the safe transport of most of our shipments would probably be accomplished without firing a ~~shot~~ shot." In other words - if they attack the British ships, in convoy, we'd attack them, and that would be as defense.

HIGHWAY

President Roosevelt today recommended to Congress just about the greatest ~~highway~~ road-building job on record. He suggested an appropriation of twenty million dollars to complete the Inter-American highway all the way to the Panama Canal. This, said the President, is a vital project for Western Hemisphere defense - especially the defense of the ~~Panama~~ Canal.

The Inter-American highway right now extends from the Rio Grande to Mexico City and well beyond - nine hundred miles. The road is also virtually complete in the Republic of Guatemala.

54
What remains to be constructed is fifteen hundred miles of highway ^{through} to Costa Rica, Salvadore, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. ^{Central} America! an area of mountains and jungles! The President's proposal is that the United States put up two-thirds of the cost, twenty million dollars; ^{and} the various Central American Republics to pay one-third.

TAXES

The Secretary of the Treasury announced today that plans are being considered for issuing a special type of government security. The purpose - to enable people to pay their income tax next year. National defense and aid to Britain cost a lot of money, a lot of billions. The income tax is scheduled to go up steeply. The people will have to pay much more, and you know how hard it is sometimes to raise the money. Hence the idea of providing the public with a convenient way of saving - so that they can put their money aside to pay their income taxes.

Secretary Morgenthau stated today that special stamps might be put on sale - something like the present defense saving stamps *— which with defense bonds went on sale today.* ~~You could buy them from time to time during the year, and then use them to pay the next year's income tax.~~

COTTON

Radio is a modest art -- with all the straight-laced propriety of a mid-Victorian maiden aunt. However, there are times when the news calls upon one to talk about delicate subjects. For example - the underthings the ladies wear or men's shirt tails. That's the case today, as we find in tidings from Washington, from the Congress of the United States.

The lawmakers were debating the depression in the price of cotton, and Congressman Clevenger of Rhode Island proposed a new law; to increase cotton consumption. "There was a day," declaimed the Congressman, "when sister ironed several petticoats every washday. Maybe we ought to have a law," he proposed, "putting those cotton petticoats back on, and also -- that extra yard that disappeared from men's shirt tails."

PRANK

The military authorities today extracted a confession from the foreign agent who was sending mysterious radio messages.

It looked mighty sinister. For a couple of months the army wireless ~~xxxxxx~~ picked up dark and cryptic messages sent by a secret radio transmitter. Here's an example:- "Staff plans now coming in," said the voice of the foreign agent. ^{Then it went on:-} "We have too much trouble to decipher again." And each of the messages ended with this alarming sign-off - "Heil Hitler Fritz."

Foreign secret agent Fritz went further than that. He butt in on official government radio communications, and demanded information, ~~from them~~ - military secrets. On one occasion an army radio operator asked him who and where he was. To which Fritz replied - "Say 'please'".

But you can't do that to Uncle Sam. ~~The Army made a search for the secret radio transmitter, but couldn't find it.~~ Recently, ~~however~~, the Army has perfected a new type of equipment to detect the source of wireless messages. They put it into operation, and they found Fritz, the foreign agent.

He turns out to be Charlie Johnson, of Peoria, Illinois.

Charlie is twenty-one years old, the son of an insurance executive. When he was arrested today he explained that he had taken a correspondence course in radio engineering.

57
He said - he was "bugs about radio." That's why he set up as a foreign secret agent by the name of "Fritz" - just as a joke, to kill time. He said wistfully today, "I was just whiling away the time while waiting for the draft." Well, as for waiting for the draft - he might find other ways of doing it. The penalty for his crime can be two years in jail and a ten thousand

dollar fine. Personally I think he should promptly be drafted as a radio operator in the counter espionage service, - Charlie the Peoria radio bug!

PIES

58

I'm ~~all~~ in favor of national defense, but even a good thing can be pushed too far. We all know that soldiers love chow - especially when it includes a big hunk of pie. However, consider the embarrassment of the troops at the headquarters of the Sixth Army Corps, in Rhode Island. A big mass production bakery, sent a consignment of pies to the Army post, free - out of patriotism, enthusiasm for national defense. There are three hundred soldiers at the post. The number of pies was eighteen thousand. That came to sixty pies per man - apple, peach, lemon meringue, all kinds. The mess sargeant nearly collapsed, ~~when he saw that xxxxxxxx~~ ~~mountain of pies arrive.~~

58 1/2

Of course you may ask - what was wrong with the bakery company. Was it the heat? Or an excess of patriotism? Or too much enthusiasm for national defense? Well, it's like this. There's a strike at the bakery plant, and the stock of pies on hand could not be distributed to the customers in the usual way. So the company figures ^d~~s~~ - now was the time to show

patriotic spirit in a big way. ^{Hence} ~~So away went~~ the eighteen thousand pies to the three hundred soldiers - sixty per man.

The bewildered mess sargeant recovered his wits, and sent a distress call to nearby Fort Adams. He unloaded on them as many pies as he could. And they finally arranged the distribution at a ratio of seven and a half pies per soldiers. The ~~piesxxxx~~ boys are having them for mess tonight. They can eat pies until they're pie-eyed.

Here's a gentleman
who is never pie eyed!
Am I right Hugh.

9

a/4