

XMAS NIGHT - DECEMBER 25, 1953 - FRIDAY

L.T., Jr. K (Repeat Taped)

Good Eveing Everybody!

A correction to that introduction is in order.

Mike Fitzmaurice put his Christmas remarks to you on a tape so that he might spend Christmas night with his family. That's why he hasn't explained that I am taking my father's place tonight. Mike didn't know about it.

As we all know, December is the month when that scourge of mankind, the common cold, hits so many homes. I hope it has missed yours. But, already three or four have had it at my Dad's house, and today it caught up with him too.

I had come home for Christmas, and also to tell my family about another expedition on which my wife and I are about to set forth to little-known parts of Africa, Asia and Australasia. So, once again, I happened to be around when my father needs someone to take over for him - which I am honored to do, especially as it may give me

INTRO -2

an opportunity to say Merry C hristmas to some of my own friends -- if any are listening in. Somehow I have a hunch that not too many people are bothering to listen to the news tonight. But if any are, as is usually true on Christmas, the news is light -- and here are some of the highlights:

The Yugoslav legislature has elected a new -- President of Parliament. Which is a top ranking post in the realm of Marshal Tito. He is Milovan Djilas, one of the closest associates of Tito. Rumor has named him as a likely ~~xx~~ successor of the Yugoslav dictator, and his election today, as President of Parliament, increases that ~~likelihood~~ ^{likelihood}.

Here's another significant angle. In the break between the Communist Marshal and Soviet Russia, in Nineteen Forty Eight, the first intimation of trouble was a blast from the Cominform. That line up of the Soviet satellites denounced various figures in the Tito government - and the first to be castigated was Milovan Djilas. Later, when the Tito regime was expelled from the Cominform, four Yugoslavs were singled out for bitter denunciation. One of them Milovan Djilas.

That's the background for a statement in today's dispatch from Belgrade:— That the new President of Parliament is one of the Yugoslav leaders most hated by Soviet Russia. ↘

Now he's elevated -- as a likely successor to Tito.

ITALY

In Rome today, Premier Pella threatened ~~to resign.~~ ~~to resign.~~

~~But~~ But he said it in a mild way - a gentle way.

Premier Pella took office without much hurrah - an inconspicuous candidate. Of late he has run into opposition in his own Christian Democratic Party. So he said - if that goes on, he'd resign.

Which he put in the following words: "I'll ~~tiptoe~~ tiptoe out, the way I tiptoed in", ~~tiptoe~~

Mild indeed - but it got results. Today the Christian Democratic Party proclaimed full support of the Premier. They don't want him to -- tiptoe out.

PRISONERS

At Pan Mun Jom, the neutral commission has prepared a report which will be given to the U N command. A report - unfavorable to our side. This ~~is~~ is indicated by the fact that India joined with the two Communist members on the ~~work~~ commission, Poland and Czechoslovakia, ~~with~~ While Sweden and Switzerland refused to sign the document, - Making - a report on their own.

The word is that the commission majority protests against alleged coercion among the anti-Communist prisoners who refused to go back to the Reds. The charge, which the communists had made before -- ~~is~~ that Anti-Communist agents, among the prisoners, indulged in acts of terrorism, -- Thereby preventing -- some of the captives from accepting repatriation.

The supposition is that this may encourage the Communists in their demand -- that the whole business ~~of~~ explanations be started all over again.

The belief is that the Communists don't care much

about the prisoners - really. Their purpose -- just to
create more argument and confusion.

INDO CHINA

In Indo-China, the Communists have launched an offensive into the Kingdom of Laos. The French have been expecting the drive, and it began on Christmas Day. A stronghold over-run, and an ~~important~~ important town evacuated.

Laos is one of the three ~~states~~ ~~of Indo-China~~ of Indo-China, and is situated in the -- "narrow waist."

A sort of bottleneck -- between Siam and the South China Sea. The French say the strategy of the Reds is to cut Indo China in two - if they can.

French General Navarre is expected to use paratroop tactics - with which he won striking victories in the past few months. The strategy ~~is~~ -- of invasion from the sky.

In the spring the Reds launched a previous offensive into the Kingdom of Laos, and almost reached the royal capital. But they withdrew - when the rainy season began.

JERUSALEM

Christmas in Jerusalem had a discordant note -- when thirty pilgrims were turned back by Jordanian guards, at the borderline between Israel and the Moslems.

They ~~we~~ were proceeding along the usual pilgrim route - from ~~Z~~ Nazareth to Bethlehem. Nazareth is in Israel, while Bethlehem is in territory controlled by Jordan. The place for passing the border - Jerusalem, where the Holy City is divided in two. Jewish on one side - Moslem on the other, the old city.

The custom has been for the border there to be opened twice a year. Christmas and Easter. But the party of pilgrims, from Britain and Ireland, Canada and France - were turned back.

Today they put in protests at their legations in Jerusalem.

It isn't known why the Jordanian Arabs would not permit them to pass. Other pilgrims ~~thousands~~ - thousands

of them. Proceeding from Nazareth to Bethlehem, with stops at the holy places in Jerusalem.

Christmas -- at the birthplace of Christianity.

SOVIET CHRISTMAS

Here's a statement -- ~~ask~~ you guess where it comes from. A Yuletide message reading "Christmas always conveys the finest cherished hopes." Sounds as if it might come from almost anywhere -- except a Communist outfit. But it emanates - from Moscow.

Today, the Soviet Radio beamed a "Merry Christmas" to the United States. Saying - never has the hope for peace been so bright.

Talk about the "new look" in Soviet Russia today -- it's a regular Santa Claus look.

QUEEN

Today Queen Elizabeth addressed a Christmas message to the British commonwealth, and one passage is a bit more than the usual pious expressions.

Elizabeth the Second refers back to Elizabeth the First - that Virgin Queen who ruled England so firmly in the days of yore.

"Some people" says the Second Elizabeth, "have expressed the hope that my reign may mark a new Elizabethan Age. But, frankly, I do not, myself, feel at all -- like my great Tudor forebear, who was blessed with neither husband nor children, who ruled as a despot, and was never able to leave her native shores."

No, it's hard to think of the amiable young woman, who ~~is~~ was crowned so gloriously last June, as anything like - a despot.

The Queen, in New Zealand, sent another message today - a mournful message. A telegram of condolence to the

scene of the tragic rail disaster, expressing her sorrow for the victims, many of whom were on their way to see the Queen at Auckland. The death list is now fixed - at one hundred and sixty.

A railroad employee tells how he saw the trestle was dangerous, and tried to flag the train to a halt. But the locomotive and crowded cars went right on, and plunged into the gorge, when the trestle gave way.

TRAIN WRECK

Red Czechoslovakia reports a rail disaster.

A dispatch on radio Prague stating -- that two passenger trains were in a collision twenty-five miles south of the city of Brunn. "A great number of persons killed," says the Prague radio.

No further details are given, but there's a considerable significance in the fact that the Red government reports the rail wreck at all. The custom in Communist countries is to ~~keep~~ keep disasters a secret. They held up the news of the crash for twenty four hours. ^{Then,} ~~Then~~ apparently, it was too serious to be suppressed any longer.

The other day I had a curious illustration of the Communist way in such matters. I was talking to Harrison Salisbury, formerly of the United Press, now -- Moscow Correspondent for the New York Times. He's home on a visit.

I asked him about a great earthquake in the Soviet Asiatic Province of Azerbaijan, on the borders of Persia.

This happened a few years ago, but only vague rumor got out. Indicating -- a great catastrophe.

Harrison Salisbury said - there was no news of it in Moscow. He learned about it - through mere accident. At the "Times" Moscow office, they subscribe to newspapers from all over the Soviet Union. So, in the course of routine, one came through from the city of Ashkhabad - giving a first brief report of an earthquake. When Moscow officials found this out -- they stopped all further copies.

Harrison Salisbury said he learned nothing more until a couple of years later, when he got details of the catastrophe-- in a curious way. In a Soviet literary magazine, he saw a poem about it. A long narrative in verse -- describing the utter destruction of an important city. And that was how he learned the real story of the earthquake destruction of the large central Asian city of Ashkhabad with appalling loss of life - tens of thousands, probably scores of thousands of people wiped out and neither the outside world or the Russians were told about it. Why?

Here is a headline in the world of the theater.

Lee Shubert died tonight -- at the age of seventy-eight.

He was a legend of show business tradition -- a dominating figure ~~figure~~ in the American theater for half a century or more.

Lee Shubert produced more than five hundred plays -- and, with his brother, Jake Shubert, owned more than six hundred million dollars worth of theatrical and other real estate.

Known along Broadway as Mr. Lee -- of the famous Shubert brothers.

THEFTS

The Post Office Department reveals that seven hundred and fifty nine persons have been arrested in the past four months -- charged with stealing letters containing checks and cash. A record-breaking number of arrests -- an epidemic of mail thefts.

Postmaster General Summerfield says that two nationwide rings were operating. Based in Chicago and Las Vegas. In Chicago, three letter carriers were in league with a gang of thieves. The mailmen -- supplying letters containing checks, which the mob found ways of cashing. In Las Vegas one thief arrested, admits that he stole twenty one thousand dollars worth of checks from mail boxes in cities all the way from Boston to San Francisco.

While all this was being investigated, the post office department adopted extra precautions in the past couple of weeks- to protect Christmas mail.

FLORIDA

In Florida, they're going to put on a demonstration to show - that the state is not open for gambling. For some reason a tip has gone through the underworld - that illegal gambling is being resumed in Florida. And gamblers have been coming in from far and wide -- from Nevada, from Cuba.

The statement is made by Director Dan Sullivan of the Miami Crime Commission, who adds that already -- gamblers, ~~are~~ pouring in, have begun operations at Miami. "Horse books are opening up on the beach," says he.

Governor Charlie Johns declares: "I'm ^{not} ~~am~~ going to put up with this. I haven't given any green light for gambling anywhere in the state."

So a grand jury investigation has been ordered, beginning on Tuesday. The proceedings - to be a spectacular demonstration that the rumors in the underworld are incorrect.

The lid has been on in Florida, since Nineteen

Fifty, following the Senate Crime Committee investigations.

And

The lid will stay on -- says the Governor.

BASKETBALL

Another scandal of attempted crookery in college basketball -- this time in Iowa. Today the Des Moines Register said that a 'would-be' big shot approached Ben Bumbry, star player on the Drake University team. Bumbry is quoted as saying that this individual mentioned three hundred dollars, then five hundred ~~dollars~~ -- in a point spread proposition, Drake to lose to the University of Iowa by eight or ten points. The player rejected the crooked proposition, and reported it to the basketball coach at Drake.

In the game with Iowa, Drake actually lost by ten points, sixty-nine to fifty nine. Bumbry scored seventeen points - about his average per game for the season.

The would-be briber is described as a young businessman, who runs around with a gambling crowd. He thought he would be a big shot -- ^{by} /rigging basketball games.

JAIL BREAK

Here's a strange story of an attempted jail break at a Wisconsin prison. "Would-be" escapers using a Catholic priest and the confessional - for a plot on Christmas.

The prison Chaplain, the Reverend Edmund Kramer, was informed that four convicts wanted him to hear their confession. A prison guard brought the "would-be" penitents to the priest. Whereupon - they seized the Chaplain and thrust him into a cell. The guard, well, they slugged him with home-made blackjacks, and tossed him into a cell too. Then -- they tried to make their break for prison.

But they had forgotten to lock the cell in which they had put the Chaplain! and he quickly got out, - gave the alarm. The escapers were soon rounded up -- after roaming around, unable to get outside the prison.

ACTRESS

Movie actress Terry Moore has been tossed out of Korea - because of that controversial bathing suit. She's been appearing before crowds of G I's in heavy winter clothing, such as is needed in winter time in Korea. Then discarding the winter clothing and displaying an ermine trimmed bathing suit, The G I's have been howling at the sight of the shapely actress in the bathing suit. But the army command also lets out a howl and a dispatch from Korea states tonight Terry Moore ordered to leave Korea at once and take ~~up~~ a plane back to the U.S.A.

EISENHOWER

The Eisenhowers are at Augusta tonight -- a party of seven -- including son, daughter in law, two grandchildren, and the First Lady's mother.

The President - having a Christmas vacation in family style.

But there's plenty of business -- that Eisenhower domestic program, which is being prepared for submission to Congress after the first of the year.

The President - working hard on that.

Here's hoping your Christmas has been the merriest ever --- now, back to Mike Fitzmaurice!