

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

16
Today began with everybody wondering about the tremendous battle of the Skaggerak -- and nightfall leaves us with a good deal of wonder still. A few thousand newsmen spent a good part of the day scanning the dispatches with a close scrutiny -- trying to figure out what really happened; ^{what were} those events which blazed at us in sensation ^{al} reports yesterday and last night. ^{and are} Those same newsmen were a good deal mystified by a maze of rumor and contradiction.

One angle to be observed is this: Yesterday's accounts ^{in the Scandinavian Straits} of an immense naval battle came mostly from Amsterdam via Stockholm. Swedish sources gave us most of the flaming account of the British fleet forcing the Skaggerak and bombarding its way to Oslo. Little ^{of it} originated in London. There was no official ^{of victory} report from the British Admiralty. ^{AP} So let's see what elucidation today brought forth.

17

CHURCHILL

The ~~only~~ large official statement about the battle at sea was made by Winston Churchill, ⁱⁿ ~~who delivered~~ a highly dramatic account ^{before} ~~to~~ the House of Commons today. Yet Churchill did not tell the world what happened in the Skagerrak. "I've been asked what the Navy is doing," said he, "but the House will not expect me to lift the veil at this time." ~~The~~ [#] British Admiralty secrecy is still preserved.

Churchill said: ~~this afternoon~~ "The naval battle is still proceeding." ^{And he} ~~He~~ indicated that the battle was all over the place, not concentrated particularly in the Skagerrak. "Operations were widely dispersed," said he, "but none the less there was general action between numerous German ships and aircraft and such forces as we were able to bring to bear."

How greatly the sea fight is dispersed is indicated by a series of individual events that the First Lord of the Admiralty enumerated. ^{Up there} ~~That, of course, is~~ He related that last night sixty German war planes struck at Scapa Flow; ~~That, of course, is~~ at the northern tip of Scotland. It was a moonlight raid. Apparently the light of the

48

moon wasn't so good for bombing, because Churchill declared that the sixty bombers did no damage. Six, he added, were shot down. The First Lord of the Admiralty revealed that the British Navy once more is using Scapa Flow as a great naval base - after having abandoned it because of submarine and sky attack. Churchill described that sea stronghold as adequately protected now. Or, in his words - "a safe and sure home for the fleet." He stated that at Scapa Flow the British Navy now has the greatest concentration of anti-aircraft fire in the world.

One huge
~~Another~~ fight occurred up around the Arctic Circle,
~~****~~
north of the Norwegian port of Narvik. There occurred the first encounter of capital ships during this war. "Capital" meaning - not cruisers, but battleships. This clash was between the British sea giant RENOWN and the German battleship SCHARNHORST - aided by a cruiser. Winston Churchill, one of the world's ~~greatest story~~ ~~tellers~~ ~~related~~ ~~it~~ ~~this~~ ~~way~~ ~~ix~~ great authors and speakers, related it this way:- "The RENOWN ~~perceived~~ perceived the SCHARNHORST. ~~They were~~ Cruising in the distance, dimly - amid a snowstorm of tempestuous character. The sea was running high, the gale

t9
1

was blowing furiously, and the RENOWN opened fire at eighteen thousand yards." He told how the SCHARNHORST replied, shooting fast. "After nine minutes," Chamberlain continued, "the RENOWN scored hits in ^(the forward) ~~that~~ super-structure of the SCHARNHORST. After that," he added, "her whole armament stopped firing."

Apparently the firing ^{control} control of the Nazi craft had been ~~knocked out.~~ ^{disrupted} Churchill said:- "The after-turret of the SCHARNHORST began shooting again under local gun control." He said the RENOWN scored what looked like another hit, and then the SCHARNHORST turned and fled at high speed.

The RENOWN herself was hit - twice. Churchill, the famous author, put on the dramatics as he told it. "A shell," said he, "passed through our ship above the waterline - without bursting."

"That," ~~he remarked,~~ ^{he pointed out} indicated that the Nazi ammunition was not so good. "A second shell," he continued, "went through the foremast and carried away the main ~~serial.~~" ~~He said the next phase of the~~

~~fight occurred when~~ ^{Then} the German cruiser HIPPER appeared through the snowstorm and threw a smoke-screen to protect the fleeing ~~giant~~ ^{Scharnhorst.}

~~Whereupon~~ ^{Whereupon} ~~of the ocean. Then~~ both Nazi craft steamed away as fast as they could.

Churchill concluded the battle story this way:- "A snowstorm swept across the ships," said he, "the seas continued to run high. In the end," he concluded, "I regret to say that the German ships succeeded in leaving us, and the firing ceased."

The First Lord
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~~He~~ told of the loss of two destroyers by the British, one - the GURKHA, blasted and sunk by German air bombs. Another - the GLOWWORM. That destroyer was destroyed - because of an act of mercy. The GLOWWORM was steaming along with a flotilla, when a man of her crew went overboard. The GLOWWORM stopped to pick him up, and then started out to rejoin the other British destroyers. She was alone, when she got into a fight with two German destroyers. Then another Nazi warcraft appeared from the north, and in the uneven fight the GLOWWORM was sunk.

Just as dramatic was the story that Winston Churchill told of the sky bombing of the mighty British superdreadnought - the RODNEY. Hitler bombers flew overhead and aimed their ponderous ~~charges~~ ^{charges} of high explosive. One huge air bomb hit the RODNEY

square on the deck. What happened? These were Churchill's words:-

"Her decks resisted it," said he. As for casualties, ~~he declared~~
~~that~~ four officers and three sailors were injured. This sky
bombing of the RODNEY may be highly significant - possible proof
that a powerfully armoured super-battleship may be able to take
the high explosives from above, without fatal damage.

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Britain's First Lord of the Admiralty today denied
yesterday's stories that the British had recaptured the Norwegian
ports of Trondheim and Bergen. "We have not reoccupied Norwegian
ports," said he. Today's news, however, brings a Norwegian
statement that Bergen has been recaptured by the Norwegians
themselves.

Churchill told of a British air raid against the Germans
at Trondheim, a raid by torpedo-launching planes. He indicated that
~~at Trondheim~~ the British hoped to bag a German cruiser, but blasted a
destroyer instead.

And here's a late dispatch telling of another British

52
raid
air ~~raid~~ against Trondheim! - *Violent sky and sea*
fighting.

~~The First Lord of the Admiralty told of other airraids~~

~~which did succeed against Nazi cruisers.~~

"Great losses have been sustained by the German Navy,"
Churchill
proclaimed ~~the First Lord~~. He said that four Nazi cruisers had
been sunk since Sunday. This includes the loss of two cruisers,
which the Germans themselves announced. A number of German
destroyers have gone to the bottom, and various merchant ships
have been sunk or captured.

Paris gives a more precise figure, placing the German
losses at eighteen ships - war vessels and merchant craft,
including troop transports. *Possibly as many as
eight transports - with heavy loss of life.*

~~First Lord of the Admiralty~~ Winston Churchill had
nothing more to say about the Skagerrak battle than this - a
promise:- "All the German ships in the Skagerrak and the Kattegat
will be sunk," he predicted. One detail of his address to
Parliament ~~may cast~~ may cast some light on the stories of
huge ^{sea} fighting in the ~~Skagerrak~~ *Strait*. "Our submarines," said
Churchill, "have by no means been asleep. They've taken a heavy
toll of German transports and store ships crossing ^{to} Scandinavia."

53
So part of the story of the forcing of the Skagerrak by the British
fleet may be traced to attacks made by submarines. *Another account
says German ships may have been blown*

up by mines -- laid by the British, some say. The Germans, on their part, deny that there was any battle in the Skaggerak. They say they never heard of it. A Hitler spokesman today declared that there had been no heavy loss of German ships in the narrow Scandinavian straits. The Berlin attitude is to ridicule the mighty battle of the Skagerrak.

The whole thing is still involved in rumor and contradiction. It reminds me of something I heard at lunch today. A group of us were gathered - War Correspondent Wythe Williams, Columnist George Sokolsky, N.B.C. Vice-President Frank Mason, Editor Merle Crowell, Radio Commentator Raymond Gram Swing, and Ex-President Herbert Hoover. We were talking about the battle situation in Scandinavia, and Wythe Williams told how "Jimmie" James, now editor of the NEW YORK TIMES, used to size up events in the World War. In his dispatches from Europe, he became famous for this sentence:- "The situation is very confusing." That seems an apt thing to say today about the sea struggle off Scandinavia - very confusing. Here's an example :- in one single dispatch from Sweden we are told British warships are in Oslo fjord. And -- that more German warships are arriving in that same fjord!

Here's a late claim made by the Nazis. They declare that a German bomber today hit and damaged a British aircraft carrier. The communique reads this way:- "German fighting planes," it says,

"flew over the North Sea to attack enemy sea forces. They attacked, among other ships, an aircraft carrier, which was badly damaged with a direct hit by a bomb of heavy calibre." So says the Berlin statement.

25

The Nazis ~~likewise~~ deny that the Norwegian defense has had any success. They claim they're consolidating their positions in Norway according to a methodical plan, and tell of landing more forces of invading troops in the Scandinavian kingdom. There's a Berlin denial of a report that an ultimatum was sent to Sweden - demanding passage for German troops across Swedish territory into Norway.

The Norwegians tell of victories over the Nazis, including the recapture of Bergen. Also, the inland city of Hamar, where the Norwegian government first took refuge. And they say they are encircling the Germans in such places as Trondheim and Narvik. Reports tell of the Norwegians blowing up bridges and tunnels to impede the advance of the invaders.

- Swedish
A late dispatch from the Norwegian frontier states that today Hitler war planes bombed and destroyed the headquarters of the

Norwegian army. It adds that fears are felt for ^{Norway's} Crown Prince Olaf.

The belief is that the ^{Viking} Crown Prince was visiting headquarters at

the time the Nazi bombers struck with blasting devastation.

RUSSIANS

56
There ^{has} been a report that the Germans who seized the Norwegian Arctic port of Narvik came by Soviet Russia. ^{with} Soviet connivers ^{ance} the invading force traveling By rail from Leningrad to Murmansk and thence across to Norway. Tonight Moscow issues a denial in these words: "This report is entirely unfound^d and constitutes a provocational fabrication." ^{It} There's a positive ^{Bolshevik} denial in big [^] words.

WESTERN FRONT

The Allies believe that the Scandinavian situation may have a reflex action on the Western Front. Winston Churchill told Parliament today that he thought a Nazi offensive in the West may be expected, and Premier Reynaud in Paris echoed the same thought. Government sources in the French capital said today they expected that Hitler might try to divert the attention of the Allies from Norway by starting something in France - a blaze of battle on the Western Front.

From Roumania comes an expression of confidence - confidence that Soviet Russia does not intend to make any grab at the Roumanian province of Bessarabia. This follows reports that the Red army ~~was~~ ^{is} massing troops on the Bessarabian border, with the intention of invading. Roumania says it doesn't put any stock in these reports - doesn't believe there's any cause for *fear*.

Well, it
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~fear~~ ~~It~~ might be that Roumania is whistling to keep up courage.

57

MEXICO

There was a huge demonstration in Mexico City today - against the United States proposal for the arbitration of the oil dispute. An immense multitude, as many as ninety thousand, jammed into Constitution Plaza and demanded that the Mexican Government say "No" to Secretary Hull's suggestion that there be arbitration ~~of~~ the dispute about the seizure of American oil properties. The ^{Washington} ~~American~~ action was denounced as "international imperialism." On the balcony of the presidential palace stood Cardenas, the Mexican President, ~~he~~ ^{ing} reviewed the vast ~~demonstration~~ ^{shorting} throng.

AIRPLANE

A snappy bit of rescue work was done today at Hartford, Connecticut. An airplane crash and an airplane rescue stunt.

At Brainard Field, Frank Holbrook was practicing take-offs and landings - and one landing went wrong. He overshot the flying field, the plane went whizzing out over the Connecticut River - and there the motor failed. Down plunged the plane into the water. It was sinking, and Aviator Holbrook hung on to it as long as he could. He was dazed, could hardly have done much swimming. He might have drowned, but along came rescue in the most unexpected fashion.

The crash had been witnessed by Hank Wetherell, who operates a flying service at the field. Hank jumped into a plane. He had his wits about him, and ~~he~~ grabbed a life-preserver. He flew over the aviator struggling in the water, took a good aim and dropped the life-preserver. It fell near Holbrook, who grabbed it - and was kept afloat until somebody came with a boat.

CENSUS

8/2
Here's the best census yarn that I've heard. One of the lads who do the ~~enumerating~~ enumerating called at a New York apartment and asked the usual questions. They were answered with prompt good-will by the father of the family - and why not. He was a policeman, Officer Gorman. When the census-taker got his form completely filled out, all the questions answered - the cop added in off-hand fashion:- "By the way, I'm glad to see you. I've got a warrant for you. And this saves me some trouble."

9
Whereupon he produced a warrant charging - non-support, a warrant that had just been got out by the census-taker's wife. So instead of asking questions, that census-taker is now answering them.

9/4
And Hugh what answers have you?