

L.T. Sunoco - Philadelphia - May 4, 1943

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

And a special good evening to The Poor Richard Club, and friends. I most certainly do not deserve your award. But I'm delighted to accept it just the same. About the only one I deserve is a ~~ma~~ medal for starting a laugh that seems to have swept the country. But more about that later. Now for the news. ~~from North Africa.~~

SUBSTITUTE FOR TAX STORY

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The latest tonight is that Congress ^{has} passed a tax bill, finally and at last. Not the Ruml plan of skip-a-year-and-pay-as-you-go, nor the Official Administration bill-- which proposed to forgive fifty percent of last year's income taxes. The final result ^{is} a compromise between the two-- the Robertson-Forand bill which provides for the forgiveness of seventy-five percent.

~~This, of course, is a fifty-fifty down-the-middle compromise between the Ruml hundred percent skip-a-day-year and the Administration fifty percent.~~

~~In the case of the Ruml plan history repeated itself today-- with events much the same as when the question was up the last time.~~

~~First the Ruml plan, in the form of the Carlson bill, won a tentative vote-- was okayed for the time being, subject to change in a subsequent vote. then in the subsequent vote the House rejected the Carlson -Ruml idea.~~

COAL

Late today, the Labor Board in Washington took over the coal mine dispute. The board issued an announcement stating that it is taking immediate measures in the controversy that led to the strike and then to the fifteen day truce.

This assumption of authority by the Board followed a declaration today by Solid Fuels Administrator Ickes, who has been placed in charge of the soft coal mines which were seized by the Government. Ickes declared that the question of wage increases must be decided by proceedings before the Labor Board. This, of course, is in direct contravention of John L. Lewis- who all along has opposed the Board.

Secretary Ickes took the attitude that, while he was administering the seized mines for the Government, he was not acting in the guise of owner, although John L. Lewis had taken the stand that the miners were now working for the Government. Ickes said that he had no power to do anything

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about wages and that these must be discussed by the Union and the Mine Operators before the War Labor Board.

He stated that the truce of John L. Lewis, which sent the miners back to work, was not in the nature of a bargain. It was the result of a straight request made by the Government. He declared that no pledge or promise was made to Lewis.

~~These transactions followed an earlier order issued by Cokes - an order for a six-day week in the mines. The pay rate for miners are calculated on the basis of a five-day week and for the sixth day they get overtime-time and a half. And this means an increase of pay. Working five days a week, the miners get a basic thirty-five dollars a week. On the six-day schedule they get forty-five dollars and fifty cents a week- an increase of ten dollars and fifty cents a week. The pay raise they asked was an extra two dollars a day. These reckonings would seem to indicate the wage demands issued by John L. Lewis have been met to a considerable extent- by the Cokes six-days a-week order.~~

~~However it is not simple as that. It appears that many miners have been working on a six-day-a week basis for sometime with time and a half for the extra day of overtime. The mines were put on a six-day basis, but many worked the shifts in such fashion that the mine is worked for five days.~~

All of which obscures the meaning of today's six-day-a-week order. We don't know just how much it means by way of extra pay for the miners. However the six-day week, with its actual increase of money earned, is one of the demands made by Lewis, and today's order by Secretary Ickes would seem to be a concession. And this is to be balanced against the fact that Ickes has referred the general settlement back to the War Labor Board, to which Lewis is so much opposed.

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~~(Kill the Martinique story and also the piece about Russia. They are unimportant. Also you can kill the "rubber story")~~

Good Evening Everybody, I had
a special good evening at the
Richard Club and friends. I must
certainly do not deserve your award.
I am delighted to accept it just
the same. But the only one I deserve
is a medal for starting a club that

Today in Tunisia, American forces swept forward from the captured

town of Mateur, with gains of from eight to ten miles. We are

told that Mateur was taken by a small party of Americans in a

two shot battle. Just two shots were fired by a reconnaissance

outfit and each shot killed a German sniper.

All of which would indicate^s that the Germans

abandoned Mateur, ~~without a fight~~. American drives had made the

place untenable, and so a battalion commanded by ^{a Texan,} ~~Captain Andrew~~

~~McCutcheon of Dallas, Texas~~ ^{a Captain,} just moved in and fired two shots.

On top of which we are told that tremendous American pressure

during days of heavy fighting, has forced the Axis to pull back

all along the line in Northern Tunisia.

With their advances today, our troops ~~are developing~~

~~their success at Mateur. They~~ are closing in around the Southeast

of the great naval base of Bizerte, and also by threatening

German positions to the South, Nazi defenses that have been

holding up the British Eighth Army for days. One supposition

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is that the forward thrust of the Americans to and beyond
Mateur may cause the enemy forces in front of the Eighth Army
to withdraw- to avoid being outflanked by the Americans.

~~In addition, the fall of Mateur cut the only railroad
link between Bizerte and Tunis- the two great military centers
in the shrinking area held by the Axis. Only a single range of
hills now stands between our troops and Tunis. ^{Tonight} And the Americans
are so close to Bizerte that they can hear the explosions of
bombs dropped by General Doolittle's planes on the naval base.~~

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The bombing goes on incessantly , and we hear about a
couple of newly hailed American aces--Lingerie Lou and Fiddler
Overcash. Not to mention Lingerie Lou's technical sergeant -
Joe Palooka.

Lieut. Robert J. Byrnes of St. Louis Missouri used
to be a Lingerie salesman, ^{he's} now an ace war pilot with six victories
to his credit. ^{he's} Ace fighter Overcash has shot down five enemy
planes, and he's called " Fiddler," because he used to play
the big bull fiddle in an orchestra. Joe Palooka of Hazelton is
called Joe Palooka because that's his name.

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Lingerie Lou credits a lot of his air battle success to the
mechanical gifts of his technical sergeant - Joe Falocka.

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~~FOR-~~

PACIFIC

Today we have an account of a spirited naval battle in the North Pacific-- the Aleutian area. This had been mentioned previously by the Navy, which today amplifies a lively picture.

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Westward of the Jap controlled island of Attu, an American squadron was on patrol--a heavy cruiser, a light cruiser, and four destroyers. It was shortly after dawn, when they spotted the Japs-- an enemy force consisting of two heavy cruisers, two light cruisers, six destroyers and two transports. Our warships were outnumbered nearly two to one, but they promptly charged to the attack.

Fire was opened at long range, and for three and a half hours the ships wove patterns' over the sea in the maneuvers of naval battle--guns blazing, shells exploding. We hit the Japs, and they hit us. There was only minor damage to our vessels, and American casualties were extremely light. It isn't ^{it} ~~isn't~~ known exactly how heavily the Japs were battered, but

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Pacific - 21

shell hits were observed, , and at least one American torpedo blasted a heavy cruiser.

The mention of torpedo takes us to the end of the fight. Three United States destroyers sailed in with a torpedo attack, and with that the Japs broke off the engagement and fled.

~~Further south below the Equator, United States forces have occupied some additional islands in the Solomons--the Russel Islands, west of Guadalcanal; these are less than a hundred miles from the nearest position occupied by the Japs. Today the Navy discloses that we took the Russel Islands in February, and encountered no resistance, the Japs had left, if they had ever occupied these bits of South Sea land. The principal island of the group has the interesting South Sea name of ~~Davua~~ .~~

INTRODUCTION TO MAJOR EAGAN

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Major Eddie Eagan of the U. S. Army Air Force is standing beside me. Major Eagan who had a colorful career before the outbreak of this war, as a soldier in World War One, amateur Heavyweight Boxing Champion of the World, Graduate of Yale, Harvard and Oxford, Rhoades Scholar, world traveller, author and lawyer -- to all this he is adding another colorful chapter. Today he is with the Air Force Transport Command, and his war-time travels have taken him recently to Asia, Africa, South America and within the ~~the~~ past few days he has ^{just} ~~not~~ flown in from Alaska.

Major Eagan in one of our recent Sun Oil opening and closing announcements, my sponsor's urged the listeners to this program to write as often as ~~many~~ possible to the boys in Service. You've been getting around the world a lot, what is your verdict on this subject of mail?

MAJOR EAGAN :

Your sponsors were right. You can't send enough letters to the boys. Mail is what ~~makes~~ them feel that they are not fighting in vain. But, as we all know, most of

the men in uniform are right here at home. And they are greatly in need of many things. And here are one or two examples of what others have done, and what you, and you and you might do:- In Dallas, Texas the citizens are making a regular thing of inviting hundreds of service men into their homes for meals, during their off hours. In Long Beach California the citizens set up an elaborate Swedish bath for aviators, a place where they can get a massage and feel ~~right~~ like new after coming in from a flight across the Pacific. A few miles from here, less than a ~~hour~~^{half} hour from Philadelphia, a private citizen gave some thousands of dollars to provide an athletic field for service men. Much of this is being done, and a hundred times more is needed. If you would like to do ~~it~~ something special, just get in touch with the special service officer in your locality. You will find one at any headquarters.

INTRO TO MR. GIBSON

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One of the most distinguished men of our day is standing here with me at the microphone, the dean of American diplomats, Mr. Hugh Gibson. Hugh Gibson has represented us in Central And Latin America, in London, in Paris, in Belgium of course, and in Poland, Switzerland, and other countries, and as an Ambassador-at-Large.

This war isn't going to last forever and he is one of those who thinks we should start preparing for the peace. Isn't this so, Mr. Gibson?

~~L. T. ... a lot of talk nowadays as to whether we should~~

~~put off peacemaking until after the war. How do you feel about~~

~~Mr. Gibbons?~~

Mr. Gibbons:— In the last war we made a dreadful mistake by failing to prepare for the peacemaking. The self-proclaimed Realists told us our job was to win the war and that there would be plenty of time for peace-making once that was done. There wasn't plenty of time! There was no time at all. The result was that we failed to get what we wanted. We got neither peace nor security.

If we can utilize these precious months while the United Nations are held together by a common peril and a common purpose, we can make progress toward a good peace. And if we do that intelligently it may well be the means of opening a second front inside the enemy countries and hastening a victorious end of the war.

LAUGH

And now about what happened last Friday evening.

That uncontrolled laughter, in case ^S you were listening. Mail

~~and telephone calls are a part of the phenomena of radio.~~

~~Listeners are very kind about putting us right when we make~~

~~mistakes. Naturally, we are criticized; and, we receive lots~~

~~of encouragement from some of you who listen. But, that laughing~~

~~I did last Friday evening when I laughed and couldn't stop;~~

~~well, that~~ ^{alt} brought a response that was quite overwhelming;

~~a response a part of which is~~ ^{in fact} one of the pleasantest experiences

I have had in the more than twelve continuous years that I

~~have been on the air. At Radio City, where I was broadcasting~~

~~that night, all the telephone lines were blocked with calls~~

for more than an hour, ~~calls from some of you, wanting to~~

know what the laughter was about, and from others who just

wanted to talk ^{it over.} ~~about it. I haven't heard from all of the~~

^{one} ~~radio stations on this network, but from just one of them~~

^{received} ~~I received that~~ six thousand calls ^{in, in Cincinnati,} ~~came, in~~ asking about

the laughing.

~~Last night I mentioned that I wanted to go through~~

~~the telephone and letters before explaining what happened~~

~~But, I haven't been able to go through half of them. One~~

lady writes: "We were at dinner with guests, and we laughed

~~right along with you. We laughed so that we exploded with~~

soup in our mouths. And the soup went everywhere and the

dinner was ruined." ~~Linda Smith of East Norwalk, Connecticut~~

~~writes: "The harder you laughed the harder I laughed until I~~

~~nearly fell ^{off} off my chair.~~ A. H. Carstens of Stroudsburg,

Pennsylvania puts the query in the form of poetry:

Lowell, what we want to know

Is What made you giggle so.

On your broadcast Friday night.

Grandma said you might be tight,

Or perhaps that bare backrider

Made you want to sit beside her".

Charles R. Hamilton of Boston, ^{also} wonders if I was

inebriated, and writes words of sad reproof: "My family and

I are not even yet willing to believe what our judgement

almost forces us to accept. ~~In your gene by, "he admits,~~

~~"I have been out with the boys and~~ We all realize the temptation

a fellow like you must be up against!" To which he adds:

"Your having seemingly during all the past years successfully resisted makes the shock at this time all the more grievous".

No, Mr. Hamilton, it wasn't that. But what was it? ^π Well,

before I do tell you what it was, may I quote from two or three more of the messages that have come in, messages that show how much ^{some folks welcome a} ~~we welcome a laugh~~ laugh these days, whether

~~we have anything to laugh about or not.~~ Sarah Kraemer of

Allentown, Pennsylvania puts it this way:- "While I was

listening to the war news in your broadcast I began to think

about my son in the service and as usual tears rolled ~~and~~

down my cheeks. ^{But,} When you started to laugh, "she goes on,

"I began to laugh and the tears still continued to roll".

~~But here is one that sums it up for nearly everybody.~~

~~Helen M. Jenks Lockard writing on stationery of the~~

~~First Presbyterian Church at Caldwell, New Jersey says: "My~~

~~husband and I were ~~set about~~ convulsed with laughter -- without~~

~~knowing what it was all about".~~

Now a peculiar thing is this -- among all who have sent in comments, not one noticed the point that caused the undignified outbreak. And, I don't wonder. Because the joke

was so slight and hardly perceptible. It was a slip I made as I concluded the story of the Blue Star Mother of Flint, Michigan, the former bare-back rider in the circus, who has twenty-two children -- two sets of ~~12~~ triplets and eight sets of twins. Which is no laughing matter. And, nobody, I am sure, would have paid any attention to my slip except the erudite Mr. Charles Warburton, the production man who was in the studio too. The scholarly Mr. Warburton, is English, a one-time Shakespearian actor, and ^e Shakespearian producer, and, he looks like Hamlet. So ~~it must have been his~~ British sense of humor".

In my last line about the Blue Star Mother of Flint, Michigan, I was saying that she deserved the honor, doubly - triply - with twins and triplets. In rattling off the sentence I wanted again to repeat that she lives in Flint, Michigan. And there was where I got tangled up slightly, ~~for~~ I said -- "the Blue Star ~~the~~ Flint Mother". And, Charlie Warburton, the veteran Shakespearian thespian took it to mean that I was calling ~~in~~ her the Blue Star ~~Flint~~ ~~Mother~~ Mother made of Flint.

I am sorry I have to explain this so much, but you know how British jokes are.

subdued and dignified
Whereupon Charlie let out ^a Piccadilly guffaw and then tried to hide it by turning away. But I couldn't help seeing him. He was within three feet of me. *Whereupon I* ~~was~~ too, got the point about the Flint Mother. But by then I was into my next item, about ~~Miss~~ Alice Faye; and I was saying: "What could be more wonderful than a devoted wife and a loving Mother"?

~~The story told how Alice, the beautiful movie star, was retiring from the screen -- retiring to happy home and domestic bliss with hubby and the baby. The mix notes on Miss Faye that I had prepared featured sweet and sentimental expressions. *However,*~~

~~But~~ by then Charlie's laughter and mine had hit everybody in the studio, and we were all just about in convulsions. ~~And that made it worse for me. You know, how laughing is sometimes when you get going?~~

And that's the real story. We just got ^{to} laughing — and we laughed and laughed until we cried. And even if

a few people did suspect me of being tight I'm glad I

like that
laughed because from all the mail that ~~me~~ has been coming

in I guess there are many who needed a laugh.

Mrs. Langfelder of Brooklyn ~~in her letter~~ put^s it

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this way: "My only two boys ^{are} in the Army, and every day I

have the blues. My husband and I were listening at dinner

time, when Lo and ~~me~~ behold we both found ourselves laughing

harder than we had laughed for ages".

And you should have seen Hugh laugh. ~~and~~ *Q* Although

I'm in Philadelphia tonight and Hugh is in New York, I ~~suppose~~

wouldn't be surprised if he's still laughing. How about it

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Hugh? *And s-l-u-t-m-*