

L.T. P. & G. MONDAY, JANUARY 3, 1949

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

2

When the Eighty First Congress convened today the Democrats immediately demonstrated that they are in undisputed control. The first test came when a voice vote was called to reduce the power of the House Rules Committee. The Rules Committee is a mighty important one. It acts as a clearing house for bills. Decides which to be considered, which to be pigeonholed. You have to have the approval of the Rules Committee to get your bill to the floor.

In the last Congress the Administration sometimes did not have the support of the Rules Committee. So Mr. Truman has been eager to curb its power.

Today's motion was for a change in congressional procedure. To empower the chairman of all legislative committees in Congress to have their bills considered by the House, if the Rules Committee does not clear

them within twenty-one days. No more bills can be pigeonholed by the Rules Committee!

Today that motion was put to the House; and it was carried by a voice vote of two-hundred-and-seventy five to a hundred-and-forty-two. Republican leaders tried to defeat the maneuver. They said it would bring about a dictatorship. But when the votes were counted forty-nine Republicans, more than a quarter of the Republicans had voted with the Democrats. On the other hand thirty-one Democrats had voted with the Republicans.

That vote also shows that the Dixiecrats may join up with the Administration, in a crisis. On Saturday, forty-eight of the Southern Democrats voted against the new rule in their party caucus. But today, in Congress, seventeen of the southerners supported the Administration.

~~The political stage is now set for the President's state of the Union message, on Wednesday.~~

BEDELL SMITH

Our post-war Ambassador to Moscow called at the White House this morning. General Bedell Smith was there in person to ask the President to accept his resignation. Did Mr. Truman say "yes". Not yet. In fact he said he had told the President he would return to Moscow - if necessary. But, he doesn't want to go.

The reporters naturally asked him if there was anything in the story of a split in the Soviet Politburo -- the top men in the Kremlin. His reply was that his own relations with the Politburo had been somewhat limited. But that as far as he ~~knows~~ knows there never is any cleavage in that body! If the members of the Politburo do have differences they keep it a secret.

A definite split in the Politburo would be "beyond my imagination" said the Ambassador.

~~All he would add to that was that of course there could be people behind the Iron Curtain who would~~

SPEAKERS FOLLOW CONGRESS

Sam Rayburn of Texas once again is Speaker of the House. Said Joe Martin as he gave the gavel to his successor: "You know, Sam, I really thought you meant it, two years ago, I didn't know it was just an Indian gift".

REPUBLICANS

The Senate Republicans today re-elected Taft as head of their policy committee. Lodge, of Massachusetts, favorite of the younger Republicans, lost out. Senator Wherry of Nebraska, was selected floor leader over Senator Knowland of California.

Only one of the Senate G O P insurgent group won an important position -- Saltonstall of Massachusetts -- to be the party whip. Which makes him an ex-officio member of policy committee.

BLOCKADE

Colonel Frank Howley, our military commandant in Berlin, is telling our men to get ~~xxx~~ tough, - and stop fraternizing with the Russians. Over the New Year, Howley heard that an American official had wished a Russian official "all the best" for the New Year - and had invited him to dinner.

Let them eat their own food, said Howley. Let them eat the bones of German cattle. I want none of my men to play footsie with the Russians during this intolerable blockade.

He spoke of how American and British fliers are dying to keep the air lift moving. And how the American people are being forced to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to fight the blockade. Remembering all this, he says he doesn't want any Americans under his command to mix with the Russians.

If the Soviets refuse to get along ~~with~~ with Allied countries and live like civilized people at the top level, said the Colonel, then there should be no

social relations between us anywhere. He advocated a uniform policy-top brass and army private alike, to give the cold shoulder to the Soviets who are costing us so much in life and money. It's all right, says the Berlin military commandant, for American officials who have business with the Russians to be polite. But anything in the way of getting palsy with the people who are the cause of the costly and brutal blockade, that's out.

WAR PRISONERS

In London today, the United States joined with Great Britain and France in asking Russia officially how many German prisoners she still holds. Also, why the Soviets failed to release their German prisoners on December Thirty-first last. That ~~was~~ ^{was} the deadline for the release of all prisoners - according to an inter-allied agreement.

~~A London report says that Russia is still holding nearly a million Germans. And, she may have many more who were never officially counted after the end of the war. Also, in Siberia. The Soviets are said to be holding hundreds of thousands of Japanese, using them for slave labor.~~

In April, Nineteen Forty-Seven, the Big Four foreign ministers agreed to release all German prisoners. Russia at that time admitted to having nearly a million. But, the count shows that nearly three million Germans have disappeared in Russia. Where are they? The Western allies, and the relatives of the ~~missing~~ ^{missing} men are demanding an answer.

FRANCE

The French government is investigating a financial scandal. Said to involve the misappropriation of public funds. Upon being told about the misappropriation of those billions of francs, the French National Assembly voted for an immediate purge.

Top ranking civil servants requisitioning huge quantities of liquors, ~~xx~~ costly wines, and women's clothes; police officials - members of the Surete Nationale, faking expense accounts, charging for trips by road and rail that they never made. ~~And thisxthexreportxstated~~ This going on for years. The Chamber of Deputies has now learned all about it.

The investigation was touched off after an auditing by the French Accountant General. Among other things he found that French officials had been getting a great many new automobiles. The Ministry of ~~Ende~~ Education for instance with two hundred ~~xx~~ new cars, twenty-eight of them marked for ~~the~~ the use of the Minister himself - and his personal staff. Also, a lot of borrowing of furniture. So much

furniture borrowed from the Manufacturers by French Ministry officials that the stock of furniture in France was completely exhausted - not a stick left for anyone else -- so says the dispatch. So, today members of The Chamber of Deputies were asking, why did the ministries need ornate sets of bedroom furniture? Did so many officials sleep at the office -- with expensive sheets and pillow cases?

They also learned today how other government officials had a taste of art. When General DeGaulle was head of the government, two historic tapestries were loaned to the War Ministry for twenty-four hours to ~~decorate~~ decorate the General's room when he was visited by a foreign statesman. And then they were never returned. Where did those priceless tapestries go? Investigators are now searching government offices for them -- as well as for all those expensive modern bedroom sets.

A search for the ancient and the modern -- and also for a few billion francs.

PASSION PLAY

From Oberammergau, ^{Bavaria}~~Germany~~, we hear that the famous Passion Play may not be produced next year, because of shortage of funds. Like the rest of Europe, the little Bavarian mountain village has been hit by inflation. Money buying nothing, and the market sharply reduced for the wood carvings which the inhabitants sell the tourists.

The ~~Oberammergau~~ Passion Play is produced every ten years. The actors, ~~are~~ the villagers of Oberammergau. No one else ~~being~~ allowed to take part, and ~~they get~~ no salary^{ies}. This in strict tradition with the first production of the play, in Sixteen Hundred and Thirty four. When Europe was infected by the plague, which followed the Thirty-years War, one out of ten of everyone of the Oberammergau inhabitants died. So they staged the Passion Play, the drama of the last days of the Saviour from the triumphant entry to Jerusalem to the Crucifixion, whereupon the plague ended; so we are told.

And through the years the Passion Play became an international event, drawing people from all parts of the world. At the peak of its popularity, more than a thousand players took part in it.

And today, once again the elders are worried. What money the village has is being spent on a more important project, feeding two thousand refugees, victims of World War Two, who sought shelter in their quaint village.

The word from Bavaria today is that Oberammergau has faith - faith that money somehow will come from somewhere, to pay for the production of its play and thus prevent the chain of history being broken. And, because they believe this, the young men

are starting to grow their beards to ready themselves to play their parts in the great Passion Play. Actually, the continuity of the Oberammergau Passion Play has been broken, at least once before. I know a little about it, personally, ~~and~~ and a few years ago may have told the story on the air, of how, at the end of World War One, two of us, American war correspondents, were the first to visit Oberammergau. At the time all Germany was enveloped in revolution. The Kaiser had fled. And the Socialists were battling it out with the Communists. When Webb Waldron, European Editor of Collier's and I arrived in Munich, the Red flag was flying from the City Hall, and Kurt Eisner, a small red-headed Polish Jew, was the ruler of Bavaria.

Webb and I ~~had~~ thought it would be an excellent idea to spend Christmas in Oberammergau, the home of the Passion Play. We told Dictator Kurt Eisner about this and asked if we could borrow an automobile, of which there were almost none that would run at that moment. He got us a car, but it had no tires. Finally,

PASSION PLAY - 4

we rounded up some old tires, and found some petrol. Off we started, through the snow, for the Bavarian Alps. Half way to Oberammergau our car broke down. We abandoned it, and hired a horse-drawn bob-sled, that took us the rest of the way.

 picturesque
We found ~~/~~ Oberammergau buried deep in snow.

The villagers welcomed us, the first visitors they had had in four years. In fact, until we came that Christmas Day, Nineteen Eighteen, they didn't even know that the First World War had ended.

We stayed at the home of Anton Lang, who played the part of Christ, and from him and the bearded folks who played the parts of Judas and the other Disciples, we learned how they had been unable to produce the Passion Play. Now the children and grandchildren of those whom we knew, are raising beards, getting ready to play parts in the World's most famous drama.

CHINA

In China today, the City Council of Shanghai appealed by radio for an immediate cease fire between the Nationalists and the Communists. This appeal they sent both to the Communist leader, Mao-Tse-Tung, in Yen-an, and to President Chiang Kai Shek in Nanking.

The Shanghai radio spokesman addressed Communist Mao Tse-Tung as "mister". Thus conferring on him a title of courtesy. We hear this is the first time a Communist leader in China has ever been so addressed by the opposition. The appeal asked him to order his Generals to stop fighting, hold their present lines, and wait for representatives of both sides to discuss peace. And, if there are disputes during the negotiations, the Shanghai City Council, suggests that an appeal be made to Chinese public opinion.

I wonder how the Generalissimo and his Nationalist colleagues feel about this appeal from the ~~six~~ citizens of Shanghai? It's rather like the Mayor of New York proposing peace with an enemy, when the United States is at war. That may be why the

SAN FRANCISCO

San Francisco had a bank robbery today.

And the robber -- was a woman. She's described as about forty-five, short, husky and hard-faced.

Well dressed, in a blue coat with a fur collar and dark glasses.

Just before closing time she walked up to the window of Teller John Zobel of the Bank of America, and handed him a note. The note told him he was covered by three men with guns, and that she wanted Fifteen thousand dollars. So the teller gave her a handful of currency which she stuffed into a paper bag, and left in a hurry.

The San Francisco police say it's the first time in the city's history for a woman to stage a successful bank raid.

There have been six bank robberies in San Francisco within the last six months, with the bandits using the same device -- a note handed to a teller.

MACARTHUR RESOLUTION

From Tokyo we hear that General MacArthur has made a "New Year's resolution. In Nineteen Forty-eight the General took a day off from his office - one day out of three-hundred-and-sixty-five, Saturdays and Sundays and holidays included -- only one day. What did he do on his one day off? Why he flew to Korea for the inauguration of the new Republic. Is he going to take ~~two~~ two days off this year? No! not even one! General MacArthur says that in Nineteen Forty-nine he won't miss a single day at the office! I think we ought to start a petition - to send to MacArthur's boss - if he has one - asking that he be given a week off - to go skiing on Mt. FujiYama. General MacArthur on skis! We would have our Movietone newsreel cameramen there for that!

RESOLUTION

Today of course is the first Monday of the New Year. A critical day we are told for the thousands who made resolutions. How are you doing with yours? Statisticians and other dopsters - including Dr. Gallup and Elmo Roper, I suppose, say that according to the law of averages, it stood up over the weekend -- your resolution. You are, or were, strong until today. But, today is the real test. If you swore off cigarettes, the American Medical Association says that you probably weakened - today. A quiet puff - just one! And then --.

But, if you did weaken don't be discouraged. The American Medical Association says it's human to break a resolution. But if you do want to stop smoking try rinsing your mouth with a mild solution of silver nitrate. Or, try the psychological approach. Read everything that's written about your habit, especially the biographies of famous people who have given up the weed. And, the American Medical Association makes other suggestions that you can get from them; or, look up Gene Tunney who when last seen was trudging through

Adirondack snows, alone, on his way to Mt. Whitney.
Gene has written some much debated articles on the
subject of how to escape from the wiles of My Lady
Nicotine. Or, look up Prosper Buranelli, the
crossword puzzle magician, in New York. He's an
authority on the subject.

And now, Nelson, are you an authority on
anything -- and have you any lofty resolution in mind?