

LT at Lake
Placid for
College Week.
Dec. 29, 1938.

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:-

Instead of broadcasting from my regular studio in Rockefeller Center, Radio City, tonight, here I am once more, deep in the snowy Adirondacks. For years now I have been giving my broadcast for a wintry night or two, from the Lake Placid Club where I am at this moment.

This is College Week here at the Winter Sports Capitol of America. And College Week is right. Lake Placid is overflowing with college and prep and high school youngsters, of both sexes, crowded as it hasn't been in many a long year.

There are college ice hockey teams here from Cornell, M.I.T., Union, Hamilton, St. Lawrence, Middlebury, Massachusetts State, and Williams. Williams won the championship by the way, defeating Cornell in the finals.

And there are Prep School Hockey teams here from Morristown, Choate, Nichols, Albany, Northwood, Williston, Andover and Exeter.

One of the big events today was the girls downhill ski race, in which Vassar and Skidmore cuties, beauties I mean, and from other American colleges, were beaten by a swift flying blonde from Canada, who is sitting here beside me. Her name is Peggy Johannsen, of McGill. She came in first both in the Downhill and the Slalom. Isn't that so Miss Johannsen?

She:- "I was lucky, Mr. Thomas!"

But more about Lake Placid later on. Let's look out through the zero air and see what has been going on in the rest of the world today.

GERMANY

Grim word from Germany. Two grim words:- treason trials.

It was announced in Berlin today that on January fourth will begin the greatest series of political prosecutions since Hitler took power.

First, twenty defendants will face the dreaded Peoples Court; charged with a plot to assassinate Nazi leaders.

Accused of being terrorists who drew lots to see who would do the killings. Their leader is named as Frank Nikisch, a political leader before Hitler came to power.

In a second trial, one hundred bandits will face the Peoples Court. They too are linked with a plot to assassinate Nazi leaders. It is believed many death sentences will be imposed - in the greatest Nazi treason trials.

GOEBBELS

Berlin cojes forward with a quick denial of reports circulated in the United States about Goebbels, Hitler's wizard of propaganda. The story is printed at Greenwich, Connecticut in a paper called "Greenwich Times." Editor Wythe Williams, known for his writings on foreign affairs, declares that Goebbels was horsewhipped by the sweetheart of an actress.

German reports have been saying that Goebbels is in a hospital with an attack of the grippe. But Wythe Williams says he has word that the little propaganda magician is all wrapped up in bandages hardly appropriate for the grippe. It is said that Goebbels who has charge of employing actresses for German theatres and motion pictures, delayed the engagement of one particular actress for some reason or another. Reason enough the story goes, for the lady's boy friend to apply a horsewhip to the Goebbels anatomy with such vigor as to necessitate hospital treatment.

Such is the story which Berlin makes haste to deny.

MUSSOLINI

Italy, getting ready to start a new and ambitious air service between Rome and South America. First they say there will be a squadron flight to start things off in a spectacular way - a mass flight across the Atlantic, something like the one that Balbo made ~~xx~~ to the Chicago Worlds' Fair a few years ago. Mussolini's son, Bruno will take part -- in January.

The purpose of all this is obvious: to counteract the effect of the Lima Conference and the agitation there against the dictatorships of Europe. Meanwhile the Italian Fascists are jubilant over their new trade treaty with Uruguay - right on the heels of the Lima Conference.

SPAIN

In Spain the Franco forces continue their claims of smashing through the Barcelona line. Today they say the Republican fortified front collapsed in the ~~Barcelona~~ Balaguer sect. The meaning of this can be stated in a few words. During the last few days there have been two Nationalists drives. One on the north and another on the southern. These two drives pushed through, making big bulges in the Barcelona line. Between these two bulges was the central sector, which remained stationary. That was the Balaguer ~~sector~~ front, with the two bulges on each side threatening to outflank it. And today Franco reports that the Balaguer sector collapsed.

STOCK EXCHANGE

This morning at the customary hour of ten business began on the floor of the Stock Exchange -- and brisk and lively buying it was. Plenty of active trade in a strong market, security prices rising as buying orders poured in. This continued for exactly fifteen minutes. At ten-fifteen sharp - the sound of a gong rang out. A wave of startled attention swept across the floor of the Exchange. It's the sound of that gong that signals an announcement.

Traders on the floor could well remember the last two times the gong interrupted business on the Exchange. Months ago its clanging tone announced the scandal of Richard Whitney, and the highly respected financier and former President of the Stock Exchange was convicted of huge swindles and sent to prison.

Several weeks ago the gong rang again, and the occasion concerned securities of the drug firm of McKesson and Robbins - the strange drama of Coster-Musica. F. Donald Coster prominent and powerful president of the great drug house involved in huge frauds and exposed as the old-time swindler Phillip Musica.

So no wonder the traders on the floor gaped with dramatic expectancy, as the gong rang today. Up to the ~~x~~rostrum overlooking the floor went Edward A. Bartlett, Jr., Chairman of the Exchange, and there he made the tensely waited announcement.

He began this way: "Charges and specifications having been preferred against J. A. Sisto." Then he went on to recite the charges, which dealt with the relations between J.A. Sisto the individual and the J. A. Sisto company. The individual having financial transactions with his own company, and keeping books in a way that switched deals between the individual and the company. All this it was claimed, to violate -- "just and equitable principles of trade." The Chairman concluded as follows: "The Board of Governors having found J. A. Sisto guilty of the foregoing charges and specifications, J. A. Sisto expelled."

The financier in question has been in the news from time to time. J.A. Sisto was expelled from the Stock Exchange once before, when his firm went into bankruptcy. But it got out of bankruptcy, and he was re-instated. He testified in

the Jimmy Walker proceedings that resulted in the resignation of New York's Mayor.

An Italian, he is reputed to be a friend of Mussolini and to have handled American business for the Fascist government. His firm has few accounts. So it's nothing like a Whitney or Coster-Musica scandal.

Hence when trading was resumed on the floor of the Exchange there was no disturbance. Stocks continued active; and prices continued to rise.

MINT

Tonight we have the full story of the astonishing affair of the San Francisco Mint. The first accounts were confused, incorrect, balled up - as why wouldn't they be, with everybody so astounded and flabbergasted by the incredible event. Tonight the story is clear and complete, the episode that's a nation-wide laugh.

The San Francisco Mint is a fortress of the most formidable sort. There the United States Government coins millions in money. So it must be formidable, must be a fortress, built and equipped to withstand anything -- fire, earthquake, burglary, armed assault, bandit raids, insurrections, revolution and even perhaps enemy invasion in war; The mint is of massive construction, powerful walls; reinforced steel doors, ponderous bars, the most elaborate and up-to-date burglary-tear-gas equipment, and a veritable army of guards with ready weapons. Such is the mighty San Francisco Mint -- the renown of which is well known in the vicinity of the Golden Gate.

In San Francisco live two boys, Paul Francis and William Gallagher. They are fifteen years old -- and go to a parochial school. They knew about the United States Mint,

with its burglar-proof, attacks-proof reputation. They gazed at the frowning fortress and wondered was it really true that nobody could get in there, they thought they'd find out -- try for themselves, test the walls and bars, the burglar alarms and tear gas, the guards and guns.

"It was all fun", they said today. "We just wanted to see if it could be done. It was a breeze, just like throwing an egg into an electric fan." And, it was just about that absurd.

At night -- Paul and William sneaked along the street to the Mint. They didn't have to climb over any fence, there was no fence. The Mint was considered so utterly invulnerable that it wasn't deemed necessary to guard it with an outer barrier. The boys just went to the wall where there was a drain pipe. They shinnied up that drain pipe as any lads might do -- climbed to a ledge to a second floor. Then they made their way to a window. It was unlocked. It was even open a few inches. They pushed it up and clambered in. Any guards? Oh yes they saw a guard, but he was busy reading a newspaper never noticed them.

So there they were, a couple of prowlers inside the great San Francisco Mint. William Gallagher tells it this way: "There was an engine in the corner to our left. I hit some wrenches and knocked them on the floor. Gee, I thought they'd hear that."

The boys wandered into a big room where pennies were made. A treasure house for a couple of kids. An Aladdin's cave. But the lads hadn't broken into the Mint to steal anything. They only took a sheet of copper for a souvenir -- a plate used in the stamping of pennies. This they tossed out of a window, and it fell clattering to the pavement below. That didn't attract any attention either. They went to the window, climbed out on the ledge, and shimmied down the drain pipe. On the street they retrieved the copper plate just as proof of their adventure. They were laughing so hard they thought they'd share their joke with somebody. So they 'phoned a police station and told the astounded cops: "We've just broken into the United States Mint." And that alarm was flashed to the fortress. You can imagine the uproar. The two lads went back to the Mint to see the fun. And they saw it, guards

hunting high and low, platoons of police on the street. And so they were caught, walked right into the Hullabaloo they had stirred up. A policeman grabbed them and they told their story. And they had the copper plate for stamping pennies to prove it.

All of which has caused a lot of pain and chagrin.

Today Uncle Sam asked the two lads what suggestions they could advance for making the mint really burglar and attack-proof.

To which William Gallagher replied: "You might start by locking the windows."

ENDING

Before I end this evening's broadcast, you might be interested, or mildly amused - some of you might - to hear about the improvised studio from which I am speaking to you. Sam Packer, head of the Lake Placid Club, cleared the papers off his desk and turned the room over to the N.B.C. engineer who came up from Schenectady to put me on from here tonight. The first thing Engineer Bill Purcell noticed was that the walls of Sam Packer's office were too hard. My voice would reverberate. It would sound as though I were broadcasting to you from a barrel. So he got our hosts to pull some woolly blankets off the beds, and he hung these on the walls of this room to deaden it.

But, still the room wasn't dead enough. It still sounded like speaking in a barrel. So he sent out a hurry call for some people to come and sit in the room, so all their clothes would further deaden it. And that is how it happened that there are 25 persons sitting around me to deaden the room, absorb the sound -- but they are not 25 dead ones. Are you? These people are the liveliest group of room-deadeners you ever saw. For instance, sitting beside me are two famous and lively sports

writers: Harry Cross of the N.Y. HERALD TRIBUNE and Robert Kelley of the N.Y. TIMES. Are you here Harry Cross and Bob Kelley? "Here we are, buried in the snow!" Right in front of me helping deaden the room, is Hubert Stevens of Olympic bobsled fame. Are you here Hubert? "You bet, just in from the old bob run!" And Harry Wade Hicks, the ski patriarch of America, one of the founders of the U. S. Eastern Amateur Ski Association and the man who always plays the role of Father Time at the famous Lake Placid New Year's Eve Party. How about it Father Time? "Happy New Year, Lowell!" And Otto Schneibs, former coach of the Dartmouth Team, now head of more ski schools than anyone else in North America, including one here. Is that you Otto? "Ski Heil!"

Sitting here with me also are the ice skating champs, Willie Boeckl, and Beatrice Loughran -- she the former U.S. champion. And not ^{far} from the mike are two of the liveliest of Norsemen: Erling Strom, conqueror of Mount McKinley, explorer and skier; and Rolf Munsen, member of various American Olympic Ski Teams. Strom and Munson, are you present? And another

gentleman from Norway, a chap who has hurtled farther through the air, under his own steam, than any man who ever lived:

Ridder Andersen, the only man ever to win the Homenkolen Jump three times, at Oslo. That's the Rose Bowl of Norwegian skiing.

That longest jump, though ^{was} made in Chechoslovakia. Andersen

here plunged through space on his skis for a distance greater

than the length of a full sized football field. On that

day he jumped 332 feet. This afternoon crowds were watching

him do his dazzling leaps off the Olympic Hill here at Lake

Placid. Are you here Ridder Andersen? (Something in Norwegian.)

All present and accounted for -- so

SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.