

L.T. - SUNOCO - TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 1943

Canon

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

It really looks tonight as if Rommel were in a desperate trap, with fatal coils closing around the Old Fox of the Desert. The strategic situation would seem a strange one to people who have read the military history of battles of the past. The Nazi forces are backed against the sea and occupy a narrow strip along the coast -- to cut the enemy forces in two, and ~~xxx~~ separate the northern wing from the southern. The southern wing of the Nazis extends to the south beyond a bend of the coast, and there faces the British Eighth Army, which is driving from the East.

In other words, up above the Americans are hitting the Germans from the West, while down below the British are smashing from the East, Which makes

it decidedly complicated for Rommel, who at the southern extension of the line, is holding the old French fortifications of the Mareth Line.

The British are smashing through the Mareth Line by frontal assault, and with a preparation of tremendous artillery fire have driven a wedge into the fortifications -- a wedge three miles wide and a mile deep. A later report states that they are driving through against stubborn resistance.

To make things more complicated a British force has swept around Rommel's fortified front. The southern end of this is on the desert, and a wide British move has whirled around that end, outflanking the whole position. This is a spectacular affair, with the encircling force staging an outflanking drive of nearly a hundred miles. They are in the rear of the Mareth Line and are described as being within thirty miles of the key port of Gabes -- which is on the coast above the fortifications. The encircling

forces are described as being light but powerful -- speed being of the essence. It is doubtful whether they can throw any solid ring of steel around Rommel, but they can threaten to cut in and sever communications in a disastrous way for the Germans.

A report from Madrid states that Rommel's main forces are in full retreat, streaming up the coast, trying to escape from that Mareth zone. But can they escape -- with the Americans smashing toward the coast further north?

Our troops have captured the key point called Maknassy, and have pushed on beyond that place. They are now within thirty miles of the sea -- leaving only a narrow corridor of that width for any escape by Rommel.

Rommel is doing the obvious thing. Two Nazi armored columns have lunged forward with heavy counter attacks. One of these was beaten back by the United States Artillery which smashed the enemy spearhead.

The other Rommel thrust at last reports, was trying to press forward, and heavy fighting was going on.

Altogether, it would seem tonight as if we might have the Old Fox in the bag, unless he succeeds in getting his Afrika Korps north through the corridor, which the United States troops are threatening to close.

RUSSIA

The Russians are pressing their attacks in the direction of Smolensk -- most important point on the whole Russian war front. They are advancing and have captured sixty villages in the past twentyfour hours. In that central section, the Germans have tried an offensive of their own -- North of Bryansk. Moscow states that the Nazi drive was beaten back with heavy losses. And, at the same time, along the Donets River to the South, the German push has been halted. The Soviet forces, after giving up considerable ground a few days ago, are holding firm.

PERSECUTION

It was stated today in London that one of the things discussed by British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and American Secretary of State Cordell Hull in Washington is the question of doing something about the persecuted peoples in Europe. This was revealed in the House of Lords by Viscount Cranborne, Colonial Secretary -- who went on to say that Great Britain and the United States have drafted plans for calling an early conference in behalf of those who are in danger of extermination at the hands of the Nazis. This applies to the oppressed of various nationalities, but in particular to the Jewish people.

Viscount Cranborne's statement followed a suggestion made by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who proposed that Nazi Germany be asked to let a monthly quota of Jews leave Nazi controlled countries, and that these refugees be allowed to enter parts of the British Empire or other territories of the United Nations..

CHURCHILL

In the British House of Parliament today, Prime Minister Churchill retorted scathingly to criticism directed at his son, Randolph Churchill. The younger Churchill has been under attack for some time because of a letter he wrote to a London newspaper on the subject of French politics in North Africa. Randolph Churchill who is serving in North Africa, is a member of parliament and wrote as such, defending former adherents of the Vichy government who are now cooperating with the Allies, and deploring the attitude of certain French elements in London, meaning General De Gaulle's fighting French, who consider any former Vichy official to be a Fascist.

The question was raised whether Randolph Churchill, as a soldier on active service, had a right to send any such letter. His father's response is that he had the right -- as a member of the House of Commons.

And, today Winston Churchill referred to attacks that have been made on President Roosevelt's sons.

"There are," he said bitterly, "elements on both sides of the Atlantic, who indulge in this form of badinage, and the President of the United States, presents a far larger target than I do -- because he has four sons serving, whereas I have only one,"

So spoke His Britannic Majesty's Prime Minister, The Right Honorable Winston Churchill.

FOREIGN SAILORS

The House of Representatives today voted a law decreeing the deportation of sailors who deserted from Allied merchant ships. It was fast congressional action, and followed a statement by the Chairman of the House Merchant Marine Committee, Bland of Virginia, who stated that during the past twenty-four hours, foreign sailors deserted from a ship about to sail with six thousand United States troops and a cargo of munitions. This ship, bound for a war zone, was delayed in sailing because of the desertions.

The act that Congress passed shortly thereafter affects Merchant Mariners belonging to countries with exiled governments in London.

DIPLOMATS

Hereafter, United States Diplomatic relations with all of the Latin-American countries will have an Ambassadorial status. Hitherto, we have exchanged Ambassadors with some of the Republics of the South, and mere ministers with others. Today, the Minister were all raised in rank to Ambassador. And this affects seven countries, Guatemala, Ecuador Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and the Dominican Republic. Their Ministers to Washington become Ambassadors and so do our Ministers to their capitals.

SUN LAUNCHING

I attended an impressive mass ship launching today. At the great Sun Shipyards near Philadelphia, Admiral Land, Chief of the Maritime Commission mentioned in his speech that these are the largest shipyards in the world. Whether this is so, I don't know. But, I do know that I drove for miles along the Sun docks, past great tankers about to be launched. Other tankers that have been torpedoed and are in for repairs, and others half built and the kiels of others that are just being laid

The occasion ~~xxx~~ at the Sun Yards was the awarding of the Maritime M and Victory Fleet Flag.

It is always an impressive sight to see a big ship launched. We all know that from seeing them on the screen. But, to me what was still more impressive was to look down on the crowd of workmen who were crowded around the platform where the Governor of Pennsylvania, General Martin, and the two United States Senators, Davis and Guffey and five hundred more of us

were seated -- including so many of the members of the Pew family. But the crowd around us was the impressive thing: thousands and thousands and more thousands of ship workers, almost as far as the eye could ~~xxxx~~ see. Some were on top of the roofs of the great assembly sheds, directly opposite. Others were on the great cranes and hung far above us. Still more hundreds of them in fact, clung like Tarzans to the girders and other parts of the structure that is built up around ships that are being constructed. And right back of us, away up in the air the members of the Good Ship Buena Vista, leaning over the stern, looking down at us.

The shipyard workers, many of them were covered with grease and grime. Many were wearing the helmets that they need to protect them from falling steel.

When the Governor's Lady was getting ready to smash the bottle of Champagne against one of the three great ships, Senator Jim Davis whispered in my ear,

right by the microphone, and asked me to tell the crowd that he wished he had that bottle of champagne so he could split it with them instead of splitting it on a piece of steel. And that brought a roar of laughter from the throng.

All of the speaker's, John G. Pew, Robert Haig, and especially Admiral Land, Chief of the Maritime Commission who presented the Maritime M to the Sun Shipyards, referred to the tremendous job these ship builders have been doing, a job of such overwhelming importance in this war in which our soldiers ~~xx~~ are scattered all over the world, depending on us for almost everything.

We need ships and more ships. And they are coming fast from the Sun Yards. Two of them today were built for the Texas Company, The third ^{that} went down the ways at this mass launching was for the Maritime Commission.

STABBING

At Santa Monica, California, today an explanation was given of a knife wound incurred by Commander Earl Winfield Spencer, retired. Remember him? The first husband of the present Duchess of Windsor.

Last Wednesday night, the retired Naval officer was taken to a hospital for treatment of a cut in his chest. The whole thing was kept secret, and looked mysterious -- but today his present wife stated that it was an accident, all because of a bottle of ketchup that was hard to open.

"He was holding a ketchup bottle, trying to open it with a knife," Mrs. Spencer told the police today. "The knife slipped," she added, "and stuck him in the chest." She said she got some bandages and antisepticsaw the wound was bleeding badly, and called a doctor -- whereupon the Duchess of Windsor's first husband was taken to the hospital.

TAX

Today in the House of Representatives two Democratic members of the Ways and Means committee withdrew their support from the twenty percent withholding tax, which the committee had okayed. The plan for taking twenty percent out of wages, without skip-a-year or pay-as-you-go, has the support of the administration and the withdrawal of two Democratic committee members is a sign of a break in the administration ranks. They haven't switched to the support of the Ruml version skip-a-year and pay-as-you-go, but have transferred to a middle-of-the-road compromise that provides for partial forgiveness of Nineteen Forty-Two taxes.

Their action today increases the Republican claim that the Democratic opposition to the Ruml plan is breaking down, and will turn into a rout when the tax debate begins on Thursday.

INDIANS

The rights of all sorts of down-trodden people are being upheld these days, and now comes a voice in behalf of the American Indian. Congressman Carl Mundt, of South Dakota, tells us that the aboriginal Redskins are victims of maladministration and Congressional jokes.

He stated today that every time the question of Indian affairs comes up before the legislators, it is greeted with stalegags. "We have to listen", said he, "to cracks about cigar store Indians and about taking their country away from the Democrats and ~~gax~~ giving it back to the Indians." To which he added: "I deplore the tendency of my colleagues to treat the whole thing as a tempest in a tepee.

I don't know just who invented that pun about a storm in a wigwam, but it seems like one more atrocity heaped upon the poor Indian, doesn't it?

Still another joke on the Redskin was recited by the Congressman, when he said that in this country right now there are three hundred -thirty-four thousand Indians -- while the Bureau supposed to look after their interests has eight thousand employees. One for every forty Indians!

Yes, you'd think that such an abundance of welfare workers would keep the braves and squaws in a state of happiness and blissful beatitude, but the congressman states that living conditions on Indian reservations are abominable.

SENATE RESTAURANT

If somebody, upon returning from Washington, would tell you that he had luncheon at the Senate restaurant in the stately capitol building, it may sound boastful or even snobbish. But no -- not at all. There is a drive on to renovate and remodel the Senate restaurant, which today was described as "unsanitary and primitive."

And this is being opposed, but not on the grounds that the Senators themselves are "primitive." Priorities are cited. That's the rub.

The cause of the Senators and their stomach -- and some of them have big stomachs -- is upheld by former Congressman Maury Maverick of Texas, head of a division of the War Production Board. Today he argued as follows:

Many plants around the country" said he "have cafeterias far superior to the restaurant where Senators now dine under unsanitary conditions. I think," he continued, "that a Senator is as good as a laborer, and should be considered on at least the same plane as factory workers." To which we'll all agree! It's good democracy, all men being created free and equal, even Senators. and S L U T M.