

L.T. P.&G. FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1949
(Given by Roy Chapman Andrews)

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

On this program the first news tonight is -- that Lowell Thomas has been injured in Tibet, and tonight lies helpless in a remote village of the Himalayas. He had already been to the Forbidden City of Lhasa, and was on his way out, when he was thrown from his horse.

The story is this. At Lhasa, the capital of the Roof of the World, Lowell did a reporting job, enquiring into the Tibetan angle of the Communist crisis in Asia; the danger of a penetration by Red China into Tibet. The Government of the Dalai Lama gave him a message to be delivered to President Truman; a scroll addressed to the President by the spiritual and political head of that fabulous country.

Taking this with him, Lowell started out by caravan, and three days from Lhasa the accident happened. They were at Karo Pass, seventeen thousand feet high - which must be the loftiest pass in the world. There, on a mountain trail, Lowell's horse took a false step, and threw the rider. It seems that Lowell Thomas' life was

saved by his son, Lowell, Junior, who is with his father on the expedition into Tibet.

The injury was such that Lowell had to be carried on a litter for six days, until they arrived at the town of Gyantze. This is a village deep in Tibet, to which the British in the old days extended a telegraph wire. So it was then possible to send a message down to India, and on over here to America.

This message, which we now have received, is brief. But it's the only information we have about the accident to Lowell Thomas in Tibet. It states that at Gyantze, they found an Indian doctor. But the diagnoses is difficult, because there is no X-ray in Tibet.

From the brief message, a few inferences can be drawn. As an old-time traveler in Central Asia, familiar with caravan trips on horseback in mountain country, I should say that a horse making a misstep on a treacherous mountain trail might probably mean a hip injury for the rider. That would necessitate a litter - slung between two pack animals. In the lowlands, litters carried by

coolies are common. But in the Himalayas, it would most likely be something made of a couple of poles and slung between two horses, or yaks.

Everything possible is being done to bring aid to Lowell Thomas, as he lies there in a village on the roof-of-the-world -- with the message from the Dalai Lama to President Truman. The U.S. Air Force has gone into immediate action, to get medical help to Lowell and bring him out. But there are no airfields in Tibet; no way of landing a plane anywhere near that Village of Gyantse. ~~The~~ jumping-off place for caravan travel across the Himalayas is a town called Gangtok, in the native state of Sikkim. There's no airfield there either, and they don't even know the topography well enough to figure if a plane can be landed even there. We are waiting for further word about all of this - also waiting for recorded broadcasts that Lowell made in the Forbidden City of Lhasa; recordings sent out by caravan.

I'll have more about this in a minute or two, so meanwhile let's go on to that atomic headline, which broke today.

But now back to the accident that has ^{happened to} ~~befallen~~

Lowell Thomas in Tibet - his fall from a horse, after which he was carried by litter to a remote Tibetan village. It is a dramatic coincidence that night before last - in one of his recorded broadcasts from the roof-of-the-world, Lowell spoke of the dangerous riding along ~~a~~ slippery, treacherous mountain trail, ~~pass~~, the danger of the horse making a misstep, ~~or~~ a plunge. Which is exactly what now has happened.

The recorded broadcasts have been brought out from Tibet by caravan, and then flown halfway around the world for this program. The latest that we have received, pictures the expedition as it began the final stage on the trip to the Holy City - and this was the most forbidden part of the whole journey. To make it, Lowell Thomas had to have something special, a document of the highest authority - and he tells about that. So now let's hear the story, as given by Lowell Thomas, Senior, and Junior, from the land of Shangri-la.

Lowell Thomas, Junior, first.

Late 9/23/49.

The latest focus of drama in the atomic disclosure was at Flushing, Long Island, this afternoon - the United Nations. There the U.N. Assembly is meeting, and Soviet delegate Vishinsky was scheduled to make his first address before the present session. This would have been interesting, in any case, and President Truman's announcement today gave all kinds of suspense - the statement that Soviet Russia had staged an atomic explosion. The President said merely - explosion. But this is taken to mean that Soviet Russia has detonated an atomic bomb.

This headline was immediately taken to all sorts of people connected with atomic and diplomatic matters, and one of these, inevitably, was Vishinsky. He refused to comment. Whereupon he was asked, did he intend to mention the Soviet atomic explosion in his address to the General Assembly of the United Nations this afternoon? He said he might - if he were in the mood.

So was he in the mood? He talked for half an hour,

But Vishinsky simply ignored President Truman's announcement of an atomic explosion in Soviet Russia. He contended himself with generalities. He called for an abolition of atomic warfare, and stated that the Soviets do not intend to attack anybody. He denounced what he described as "war preparations by the Western powers," and demanded that the Big Powers get together and negotiate a new pact, for what he called - "the strengthening of peace."

The latest is from London, where the opinion seems to be different from that over here. British military sources are represented as declaring that the explosion in Soviet Russia was undoubtedly caused by atomic fission. But they add the following: "It might very well have been set off by accident," say the British. "There is no evidence," they add, "that Russia has the atomic bomb or that she has developed the vital fuse required by the atomic bomb."

But the view emphasized in Washington is that the Soviets exploded a test bomb.

SUBSTITUTE ATOMIC

All day long hundreds of newsmen have been inquiring into the meaning of President Truman's announcement today -- that there has been an atomic explosion in Soviet Russia. The President said merely -- explosion!

This afternoon, ^{at} the General Assembly of the United Nations, Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, told reporters that he assumes that the Russians have devised an atomic weapon and have successfully exploded it.

But over in Britain the opinion seems to be different. British military sources are represented as declaring that the blast in Soviet Russia was undoubtedly caused by atomic fission. But they add the following: "It might very well have been set off by accident. There is no evidence," they add, "that Russia has the atomic bomb."

Something like this is echoed in American circles too. The Federation of American Scientists points out, in the words of tonight's news despatch, "that it is one thing

to make an atomic explosion, while to make a successful bomb is another matter."

Tonight General Omar Bradley Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff states that our defence forces have anticipated this development for four years. "And," says General Bradley, "it calls for no change in our basic defence plan."

The reaction of world Communism is typical.

Tonight in London, Harry Pollitt, Secretary of the British Communist Party, stated that Soviet development of the atomic bomb represents in his words -- "a tremendous gain for the peace-loving peoples of the world." The Reds around the world are cheering -- though not always so openly.

There is no definite word about how our government learned of the Soviet atomic explosion. But in technical circles there is a ready surmise -- that it was picked up by detection devices. There are two kinds -- one that

registers distant shocks, as a seismograph records earthquakes. The othe -- something on the order of a Geiger counter, an instrument for detecting the presence of radio active material drifting in the atmosphere. Either one or both might have given the tip-off to a blast inside of Soviet Russia.

END

That's how they set out on the most important leg of the trip to the Forbidden City of Lhasa, and now we hear how Lowell, Senior, was injured, his life saved apparently by his son. Meanwhile, we suppose that Lowell's recorded broadcasts from Lhasa are on their way - an on-the-scene report of the crisis in Central Asia, the Red menace in the land of Shangri-la. We'll be waiting for those - and for further news from Lowell Thomas, as he lies injured, while the U.S. Air Force rushes action to take medical aid to him, and bring him out from those mountains in the Lost Horizon.

And now - Nelson Case.

As Lowell Thomas would say -- so long until Monday. .