

L.J. - Sunoco. Tuesday, Feb. 11, 1941.

WILLKIE

Well, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee ends the show with a climax! That's good stagecraft - reserve the big moment for the final curtain. Wendell Willkie's appearance today was dramatized all along. Rival of President Roosevelt in the November elections, then speaking in favor of the Lend-Lease Bill - with some reservations. Trip to Britain to see war conditions at close range and confer with the British leaders. Then a return just in time to be the climactic witness ^{at} ~~of~~ the Senate hearing. All of that was a build-up of suspense - what ~~will~~ would Willkie now say about the Lend-Lease Bill?

Today's events continued to build up climax right down to the last moment. Willkie's departure from New York had a news angle. He flew to Washington by plane and as the liner took off, a group of people came hurrying to the airport - and missed the plane. They had banners denouncing the Lend-Lease Bill, and their purpose had been to fly with Willkie in a demonstration against the measure for all out aid to Britain. They described themselves as members of an organization called - "The National Republican Builders." This, said they, was the first organization

to support Willkie for the presidency. But they're against his approval of the Lend-Lease Bill, with its vast powers to the President. With banners and all, they planned to accompany Willkie to Washington - but missed the plane. They said they'd go to Washington later and do a picketing job.

At the capital, the Willkie testimony was delayed - fore more than an hour. He was scheduled to begin at two P.M., but it was five minutes past three before Willkie ^{began} ~~egan~~ to talk. The Committee room was jammed. ~~xxxx~~ Never before had so many people crowded to attend a hearing. Hundreds couldn't get in, but plenty did. The room was so crowded that a number of Senators had to stand. It was a job to establish order, and that caused delay. Willkie sat waiting, as time went by. Then at last ~~order was established~~, everything was set. Willkie reached for the statement he had prepared, a statement to read to the Committee - but it wasn't there. He had forgotten it. So there was more delay, until the statement was located. Then finally the big show was on.

Wendell Willkie ~~immediately~~ produced a headline when

he made the recommendation that the United States should lend or lease to Great Britain a series of destroyers ^{--- each month} - a certain number, ~~each month~~. "If we are to aid England effectively," said Willkie, "we should provide her with from five to ten destroyers a month."

He quoted Prime Minister Churchill as telling him the three things that Britain needed most from this country; ~~were~~ - bombing planes, merchant ships and destroyers. The recent Republican candidate analyzed Britain's war-time danger as one of - sea routes. The peril was that Nazi Germany, with submarine and bomber attack, might cut the north Atlantic shipping lanes and blockade the island. Hence the recommendation that we turn over to Britain five to ten destroyers a month.

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— Sen. Bennett Clark —

A member of the Senate Committee referred Willkie to a statement made by Secretary of the Navy Knox at a previous hearing. Knox declared that the navy could not spare any more warships - we need all we have. Willkie replied that he didn't pretend to be a naval expert and suggested that ^{fleet authorities} ~~navy experts~~ should be consulted.

Another salient feature was a Willkie statement that if Britain falls, the United States would be in the war in thirty days. "We'll be in the war in one month," said he. "One month?" demanded Senator Reynolds. "I do not mean to be exact," the witness replied. "One month - or sixty days." ^{TP} ~~He~~ ^{TP Willkie} said he didn't think the Nazis could successfully invade Britain, although there is a chance - "a material chance," said ^{he, and} ~~Willkie~~ [^] He gave his opinion that the British might be able to survive in the war this coming spring and summer, but he added:- "Britain can win only with American aid."

He placed himself on record as being opposed to our entrance into the war, said he was consistent about it. His attitude was ~~xxx~~ the familiar one - that aid to Britain would help to keep us out.

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What about modification? What about the amount of power the bill would give the President? Willkie approved generally all the amendments already made to the bill; ~~Willkie~~ said he thought that aid under the Lend-Lease Bill should be limited to Great Britain, Greece and China, the countries that

are now fighting against aggression. "I believe," said he, "that Congress should retain the power to pass upon any aid to other countries which may later be subject to aggression."

He also took exception to a phrase as written in the bill. This phrase concerns the procuring of armament to be lent or leased. It states that the President shall have the right to manufacture - "or otherwise procure"1 Willkie thought that too many interpretations might be placed on ~~this~~ these words - "or otherwise procure." It is to be noted that the United States Chamber of Commerce has declared the opinion that the phrase is broad enough to cover the seizure of private property.

With these reservations, the Republican candidate who ran against the President in November, called not merely for the passing of the President's Lend-Lease Bill - but also for unanimity. He thought it should be by unanimous vote - meaning of course that he wants the Republican opposition to swing to the administration side on this issue.

WAR

In the war, two phases were dominant today - British action along the invasion coast and German moves in the Balkans.

It's "all out" for the R.A.F., striking and slashing on a schedule of twenty-four hours a day, and the purpose is obviously to forestall the invasion threat. It looks like a British prelude to the much prophesied Nazi spring offensive against the embattled island, the R.A.F. beginning the action, taking the play.

Last night the British bombers were in action. They made a particularly heavy raid against Nazi industrial areas in Hanover. Today, they smashed at the nearby invasion harbors, bombing and blasting - daylight raids. There were big battles in the sky. The Germans claim that in ^{contesting} ~~battling~~ the British offensive they shot down thirty-three planes. The British admit the loss of only a few.

There was naval action too. British warships bombarded Ostend, where in that other war the British navy performed heroic exploits in attacking the Kaiser's great submarine base. The Germans claim the naval bombardment was ineffective,

their shore batteries driving off the warships. But London claims that the deluge of shells did heavy damage and the

British ships suffered no loss.

Here's the latest! -

London reports the German radio stations all silent - more R.A.F. raids.

In the Balkans, the government of Bulgaria denies the

entrance of German troops, refutes the statement by Prime

Minister Churchill - that Nazi German forces were already in

Bulgaria. As for the report that Soviet Russia has agreed not

to oppose a German push into the small Balkan kingdom, Bulgarian

officials refuse either to confirm or to deny it. Accounts from

Rumania tell of heavy movements of German troops going southward - toward Bulgaria - busy signs of impending military action.

And Hungary reports large formations of Nazi transport planes

passing over Budapest - the sort of aerial troop carriers, such

as the Germans have commonly used in transporting soldiers.

It isn't at all clear what these signs may mean, but

they point to the supposition that we've had all along. Maybe a

Hitler attempt to rescue Mussolini from his ill-advised adventure

against the Greeks. Or possibly a more ambitious ^{expedition} ~~venture~~ down

through Turkey and towards the Suez Canal - in an effort to close the Mediterranean at its eastern end.

There's still nothing clear about the trip being made by the Spanish chieftain Franco and his Foreign Minister. The greatest of secrecy surrounds this Spanish angle. We continue to hear that Franco will confer with Marshall Petain in France with and ~~that~~ ^{with} Mussolini in Italy - possibly with Hitler too. The surmises are that the Axis powers will ^{again try to} talk Franco into the war - at least so far as letting Germany strike a blow at Gibraltar — ~~in~~ an effort to close the Mediterranean at its western end. ~~is~~ concerned.

The British continue to advance on all fronts against the Italians, and today's word tells of a captured Italian general dying of wounds he received in the battle near Benghazi. ^{IF} And ~~the~~ ^{IT} Free French forces have made another dashing advance through the desert - striking at Libya from the south, capturing Italian outposts in the Sahara. Swift action across hundreds of miles of desert.

DIES

The House of Representatives today voted to continue the Dies Committee, and a statement was stricken out of the record. It was an accusation made by Congressman Dickstein of New York, charging the Dies Committee with having Fascist proclivities. The Dickstein statement was as follows:- "I charge that a hundred and ten Fascist organizations in this country had the back key, and now have the back key, to the back door of the Dies Committee." Congress may have thought that this was backstairs gossip. Anyway, a motion was made to remove the back key to the back door impeachment from the record. And while the debate was on, Congressman Dickstein was required to remain silent - no back talk. Then the House voted to continue the Dies Committee investigation of Un-American activities - continue it for fifteen months more.

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Shortly after this action, Chairman Dies collapsed in his office. He was found unconscious on a couch. Physicians were summoned and he was quickly revived. Chairman Dies has been ill recently, but seemed to have recovered in satisfactory fashion until today's collapse. His being found unconscious had a rather

startling sound for a moment, because of his refusal to accept suicide in the verdict of the death of General Krivitsky, the one-time secret agent of the Ogpu and a power in the affairs of Stalin. The Washington police reaffirm their belief that Krivitsky killed himself, but there are plenty of loud asseverations that it was a secret murder by the Ogpu.

PHILIPPINES

And now an exciting adventure, the tropical skies of the Philippines. Away up in the blue, an airplane caught fire, and in it were high personalities of the Manila government.

Vice-President Osmena, Major General Valdes, Chief of Staff of the Philippine Army, and Senor Ranillo, Governor of Zamboanga. The pilot of the plane was an American army flyer, Major Charles Backes. Somehow or other, a blaze broke out in one wing of the plane. It burned fiercely, and was moving toward the gas tanks. Things looked bad for the Philippine Vice-President, Chief of Staff, and Governor of the Province. ~~of Zamboanga~~

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Major Backes kept his nerve. No chance to put out the blaze. The only hope was to land before the gas tanks blew up. And land he did, in a remote section of the Province of Zamboanga. The Major then put out the fire - in the nick of time. ^{Just as} ~~In a few~~ seconds the gas tanks ^{were about to} ~~would have~~ exploded.

EXPLOSION

The power of exploding gas was illustrated in calamitous fashion in Philadelphia today. Gas mains blew up - in three successive blasts, one after another, minutes apart. A whole string of houses were demolished, and all along the block the middle of the street was ripped up - a trench excavated, two feet wide and a foot deep.

The mishap occurred in the Italian section of south Philadelphia, a neighborhood of two-story dwellings. Four buildings were blown to bits and others damaged. ~~by the successive blasts. Then~~ Fire broke out - the whole block in ruins. Five persons were killed outright, and forty others taken to hospitals ~~in~~ more or less serious condition. The casualty list was the more severe because of the sequence of events.

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The first explosion brought rescue parties, and these were doing heroic work when the second and third blasts occurred. Patrolman James Clark was one of the first on the scene. He went into a house to save lives, ~~when~~ the second explosion blew the house to bits. ^{And -} He lost his life. Other rescuers were injured, and so were a number of firemen. ^{One killed.} The

whole block was ablaze on both sides of the street, and the fire fighters were in peril of falling walls. It was like a scene of bombing, when the gas mains exploded.

Chicago today also had an explosion -- rather mysterious -
in a chemical plant.

SHELTER

You've heard of somebody crawling under the table when things ^{get} ~~get~~ hot. Well, they'll be doing that in London - during ~~air raids~~ air raids. (It might not seem that "under the table" would mean any great safety ^{when} with a Nazi air bomb explosion. ^{dec.} ₁)
But here's the way it goes. >

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Today the Minister of Home Security, Herbert Morrison, announced a new type of air raid shelter that has been developed. It can be set up right in a home, any part of a building. It looks like a big dining table, and can be used as one. You sit down at your air raid shelter for dinner. It has a ~~steel~~ steel top and side walls, making a sort of reenforced cell into which people can creep. If the siren shrieks the warning right in the middle of dinner, under the table the people go. When the raid is over they can resume dining, assuming that the house has not come down meanwhile. At night they can sleep in it - room enough for four people.

"The shelter," said the Minister of Home Security, "would afford protection against the consequences of being pinned beneath the debris of a house brought down by a bomb exploding nearby."

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The air raid dining table is strong enough to support the ~~xi~~ weight of a two-story house collapsing upon it.

So London under th e bombs has a new version of -
"crawling under the table."

What about those in the kitchen who are washing the dishes? Under the table too.

And now Hugh James.