

P.I. - Sunoco. Friday, Dec. 23, 1938.

HOPKINS

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Yesterday's prediction came true today. (The President appointed Harry Hopkins to succeed Daniel Roper as Secretary of Commerce,) and ~~he~~ named Colonel F. C. Harrington to succeed Hopkins. He didn't nominate the Colonel, the word is - designate. There's a distinction. The Colonel is an army officer in active service, and the President has a right to designate him for a civilian job. Appointment is a more formal thing and requires the okay of the Senate. Some say that designation needs no such senatorial okay. That is, if the Colonel, instead of getting the ten thousand dollar a year salary that goes with his new job, sticks along on his army pay.

And there's a third appointment. Aubrey Williams, Deputy W.P.A. Administrator, now becomes the head of the National Youth Administration - a branch of the W.P.A.

(The Hopkins appointment has Washington buzzing anew with rumors. They're saying all over again that Hopkins may be getting the Commerce job to groom him as the New Deal candidate in Nineteen Forty.) They say that in the department, which was

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presidential preparation for Herbert Hoover, Hopkins will be drawn away from the spending aspect of the New Deal and taken out of W.P.A. accusations and controversies. And he will have a chance to perform a few limelight exploits as Secretary of Commerce, also - he'll be in a position to cultivate better relations with business.

(The gossip says that the new Deal element is highly in favor of making the Commerce Department a road to presidential nomination - for Harry Hopkins.)

## RAILROADS

What to do about the railroads? That question was given an answer today;-- in formal authoritative and highly technical fashion. It's a report by a committee of railroads executives and labor leaders appointed by President Roosevelt. They've been trying to figure out ways of helping the railroads out of their troubles. The report is a long list of recommendations. In these the outstanding <sup>point is:--</sup> ~~explanation is~~ -- equalization, all forms of transportation to be put on equal basis. The report proposes the creation of a transportation board that will apply regulation not only to railroads but every other sort of conveyance that carries freight <sup>or</sup> ~~or~~ passengers -- all the way from busses to boats. Equalization.

LIMA

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(Today was signing day at Lima, -- ~~with one exception.~~  
Of the twenty-one republics represented at the Pan-American  
Conference twenty were putting their signatures to the  
declaration of western hemisphere solidarity.) But one ~~exception~~  
~~xxxx~~ exception was Argentina, which held things in suspense  
all day long. Yet the compromise declaration accepted was  
the Arg<sup>e</sup>entin<sup>a</sup> formula -- no pronouncement against European  
or Asiatic aggression specifically, ag<sup>g</sup>ression ~~was~~ everywhere  
outlawed including aggression by American powers. Having  
adopted the Arg<sup>e</sup>entin<sup>e</sup> formula the conference then found that  
Argentina had some more reservations to make, wanted a few  
changes. And that held up the Argentina signature, with  
everybody waiting for Buenos Aires to give the order to  
its delegates -- Go ahead and sign.

~~late~~ Late word :- Argentina  
has signed!

## FLEET

We're to have a permanent Atlantic fleet, as well as a powerful navy stationed in the Pacific. This was announced in Washington today. We've been having an Atlantic squadron, but this has been on a temporary basis. It's being made permanent now -- the order effective on January Sixth.

The squadron as it stands numbers thirty-five warships, and the permanent squadron as announced by the Navy Department, will also number thirty-five, - four battleships, eight cruisers and twenty-three destroyers.

This navy news inevitably ties in with the present tension between ourselves and Nazi Germany. We are not leaving our Atlantic front unprotected. And it's all relevant to the Pan-American Conference and the talk about Nazi-Fascist activities in South America. The relevancy increases when we note that the next United States naval manoeuvres are to be held in the south Atlantic, off the coast of Brazil. The Pacific ~~Coast~~<sup>fleet</sup> will pass through the Panama Canal next month, and join the Atlantic squadron for war games in February - the first Atlantic manoeuvres in nearly ten years.

ROOSEVELT

And now -- what about the possibility of a break in diplomatic relations between the United States and Germany? It doesn't sound so likely. Washington has had its say with its rejection of the Nazi protest, about Secretary Ickes and the Anti-Nazi things he said. Which leaves it up to Berlin, and in German Nazi circles today they were saying that there might be a break - but it wasn't likely.

The German newspapers have now turned their attention from Secretary Ickes to President Roosevelt. Angry Nazi newspapers today indulged in ugly comment about the medal that was awarded to the President today. It's the American Hebrew Medal, given for outstanding service in promoting better understanding between Christians and Jews. The announcement of the award was made in the magazine -- "The American Hebrew."

Inevitably, the Nazis are seizing upon this for some anti-American comment. Referring to F. D. R. as President Rosenfelt. The LOCAL ANZEIGER, which says - "No one is a more worthy recipient of a Hebrew medal. That's the general line of attack.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The expected has happened in Czechoslovakia. Recent measures taken against the Communist Party now come to a final act - the dissolution of the organization of the Reds. The Prague government today abolished the Communist Party and confiscated all of its property including the red flags.

SPAIN

( In Spain the insurgent report is -- the big drive is smashing through. Both sides agree that the great Franco offensive has started. It's striking with masses power of men, guns and air bombs in Catalonia, the Lerida section. Barcelona reports the attack hurled back. But Franco claims the huge drive has broken through at four points. )

DENMARK

They certainly are having a white Christmas over in Europe. A report from Denmark tells of five trains snowbound along one section of track in West Jutland. To the relief of the marooned trains and some hundreds of passengers, they sent a rescue train - and it got stuck in the drifts, snowbound. Making it six trains in all, prisoners of the blizzard.

SALE

We think of our own country as a home for great real estate  
deal<sup>er</sup>~~ers~~, but here's one in England that would make the most  
ambitious of our realtors envious. The more so - as the<sup>se</sup> British  
real estate men are noble lords of the peerage. <sup>One is</sup> His Grace, the  
Marquess of Bute, ~~for example,~~ renowned for a long time <sup>as a</sup> ~~in the~~  
fabulous possessor of property, owner of half of the City of  
Cardiff in Wales and much of its adjacent suburbs. ~~That is~~

That's what figured in today's real estate deal, with  
the Marquess of Bute selling half of Cardiff and the suburb of  
Penarth. The price is understood to have been five million Pounds -  
twenty-five million dollars. The purchasers are a syndicate  
headed by Lord Kennet. <sup>Two Lords swapping a city</sup> ~~A vast transaction for England - put~~  
~~across by~~ Their Lordships, the realtors. ~~Two~~

RESCUE

There was heroism on the high sea today. Yesterday the ~~Danish~~ Norwegian oil tanker SMARAGD flashed distress signals. A violent storm, battering seas, and the seams of the vessel opened. Water rose in the hull, the engine room flooded, the engines put out of commission. The SMARAGD was drifting helplessly. The American freighter SCHODACK steamed through the storm to the rescue.

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Night came on as she sighted the ship in peril, and the waves were too wild to attempt ~~in~~ the rescue. The SCHODACK lay alongside the Norwegian tanker all night, and could do nothing. But when day came, although the tempest was still raging, the American craft began the work of rescue. It was desperate and heroic work, hour after hour, the American sailors manning the lifeboats, toiling their way through the boiling sea, and taking twenty-two persons off the sinking tanker - twenty men and two women. The SCHODACK now radios "rescue complete", for another one of those magnificent episodes of the sea.

SAFETY

Good Christmas news on the highway - always providing that you motorists drive carefully this holiday weekend.

Insurance figures given out today show that automobile accidents took a big drop in the past year. Ever since Nineteen Thirty-Four, the figure for death on the highway has shown an increase each year - until now. (In Nineteen Thirty-Four there were more than thirty-five thousand fatalities. Nineteen Thirty-five -- thirty-six thousand. Nineteen Thirty-Six -- thirty-seven thousand. A strange similarity between the years and figures. But in Nineteen Thirty-Seven, the similarity diminishes because the fatalities increased so much - forty thousand, for a tragic death record.) For the year that now is ending, the figure is thirty-two thousand, five hundred, a large drop from forty thousand *last year.*

The states that show the greatest decrease are Michigan and Rhode Island, and right behind them - Pennsylvania, the home of the Sun Oil Company and its activities for the cause of safety.

We can reflect gratefully tonight that the drop in automobile fatalities makes this Christmas a great deal merrier in many a home.

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MUSICA

The story of Musica Coster takes a new turn today, with surmises and guesses pointing at one of the prominent figures in the famous Hines trial. The note left by the suicide President of the McKesson & Robbins drug firm made ominous mention of - blackmail, as he explained where ~~some~~ of the money went in the fraud. The authorities verified this today by announcing that they had eight persons under suspicion of having blackmailed Musica-Coster - persons who were aware of his hidden past, as the Swindler Philip Musica, and who forced him to pay them. He is believed to have shelled out sums of from fifty thousand to a hundred thousand dollars a year.

Later, all of this was amplified by a hint as to the identity of one of these alleged blackmailers. <sup>Q</sup> ~~The~~ federal authority described him in these words - <sup>A</sup> "a prominent ~~is~~ <sup>A</sup> permanent New York racket <sup>S</sup> lawyer." And he added, the lawyer <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ now disbarred. Newspaper men drew a swift inference and asked him - did ~~the~~ he mean Dixie Davis? The description might fit. Davis was the lawyer of Dutch Schultz in the twenty million dollar a year policy racket. Davis has pleaded guilty <sup>to</sup> this - accusing

the prominent Tammany politician, James J. Hines, of being the political fixer for the Dutch Schultz mob. And Davis ~~has~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~been~~ disbarred. So, was he the supposed blackmailer the federal official was referring to?

The answer was neither yes nor no. The official refused to name anybody, but he admitted the description he gave might fit Dixie Davis.

GHOST

Down in the mountains of Virginia, in the town of St. Charles, the folks are shaking their heads today. And they're saying - "seeing is believing." The mountaineers are talking about what they actually saw last night, saw the "bed-bouncing-ghost" in action - in spite of the hymn singing to chase the spirit away.

Robert Sybert's daughter Bertha has been having ghost trouble ever since November - a ghost bouncing her bed. It has happened each night - the bed jumping up and down, pushed by spectral hands. The whole community <sup>was</sup> excited, and last night the mountain folk adjourned to the Sybert cabin to chase the ghost away. They crowded in, singing church hymns, ~~a regular Virginia hoe down~~. Bertha got in bed and, lo and behold! it happened! the bed began to bounce. First one corner lifted, and Bertha started talking in incomprehensible sounds, some unintelligible jargon. Her father said - she <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ talking ghost language." And what she was saying meant - come on, shake big. And the ghost sure did shake big. Bertha's bed bounced up and down violently.

No matter how loudly the mountaineers sang their church hymns, <sup>it made</sup> ~~no difference.~~ <sup>bounced the bed.</sup> ~~it didn't matter.~~ The spirit ~~played its trick, hoe down or no~~ ~~hoe down.~~

CHRISTMAS

Christmas this year is unusual for me. It falls on Sunday, one of the two days of the week when I'm not on the air. Radio knows no holidays, and this is only the third time I've had Christmas free in eight years - ever since Nineteen Thirty, when this news program began. The other two times were in Nineteen Thirty-Two when Christmas fell on Sunday, and last year - on Saturday.

So this evening I'm saying, "Merry Christmas" ahead of time, saying it to friends in many a state and town. And I'm also saying "Merry Christmas" to Latitude sixty-seven South and Longitude seventy-six East. Where is that? A rather extraordinary location.

I had a message today from the radio station that's in contact with the Ellsworth Antarctic Expedition, the second in command of which is our adventurous friend, Sir Hubert Wilkins. The wireless dispatch reads this way: "Heard your broadcast last night. Season's greetings from Latitude ~~xx~~ sixty-seven, Longitude seventy-six East. *Wilkins.*"

That sent me to the map to find out just where that

Lstitude and Longitude might be. I discovered that the sixty-seventh parallel of South Latitude runs along the fringe of the Antarctic continent. And Longitude seventy-six East marks the point as south of the Indian Ocean, almost due south of India. Which puts it a long way around the Antarctic coast from the Bay of Whales and Little America, where the Byrd expedition had its base. That's where the Ellsworth expedition is adventuring tonight - and I hope they're able to listen in, for I'd like to send greetings to Lincoln Ellsworth and Sir Hubert Wilkins and their crew.

The same also, to Whitney Carpenter and His Moslem Majesty

Ibn Saud:- I have a message from Whitney Carpenter, the well-known traveler, who tells me that about now he'll be out on the Arabian

desert in either a palace or a tent, as guest of the King of

Saudi Arabia. He has with him an up-to-the-minute powerful radio

*receiving set. He took it to the East*

~~set~~ <sup>^</sup> ~~took it~~ <sup>^</sup> as a present to the King. And he says that he and

Ibn Saud will be listening in. I don't know what a Merry Christmas

will mean to that giant of Mohammedan orthodoxy, <sup>^</sup> *King Ibn Saud,* but just the same, a Merry Christmas to those in that palace or tent in far off Arabia.

And the same to all of you, and SO LONG UNTIL MONDAY.

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*central*  
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*short wave*  
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