

FLOOD

L.T. - Sinoco, Friday, January 27, 1937.

Indians - Panther

The rising waters were the subject of a Cabinet Meeting in Washington this afternoon. And President Roosevelt gave the command to get busy. He ordered all departments of the government to do what they could in the work of flood relief. Cooperate with the Red Cross -- was the Presidential slogan.

That's the government response to the calamitous fact of water devastation in eleven Midwestern states. Army engineers announced late today that the ^{ice} Mississippi would reach a height of fifty-seven feet at Cairo, the highest on record. The United States Weather Bureau in Washington declares that the floods in the Ohio Valley are likely to exceed all previous records. A hundred and twenty-~~five~~ ^{have been} thousand people driven from their homes. Damage -- millions upon millions.

At Pittsburgh the Golden Triangle is ^{again} under water. That

• focal point of wealth is flooded for the second time in a year.

At the angle where the Ohio River joins the Mississippi, thousands of farming acres are an inland sea tonight. Cincinnati is facing the worst flood in its history. The rising waters crept above the all-time high water mark today. Caught by the

flood nine huge gasoline tanks broke loose and spread a hundred and thirty-five thousand highly inflammable gallons over the surging waters.

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At Evansville, Indiana, army engineers are working ~~frank~~ frantically to reinforce the levees to keep them from bursting. At Charleston, Missouri, army men are getting ready ~~xxx~~ to lift the flood gates, to relieve the pressure of the water on the dikes.

flood wall

Twenty-four years ago, in 1913, when great floods were sweeping the Middlewest, Dayton, Ohio, was hit hard. Dayton's flood menace is the Miami River, with a history of disastorous inundations. ~~In 1913 the Miami swept upon Dayton and worked havoc with life and property.~~

The city decided that this shouldn't happen again, ~~and formed the Dayton Flood Control Plan.~~ With a fund of thirty million dollars five great conservation dams were built, completed in 1916. Engineers said that Dayton would never again be flooded by the Miami, ~~River.~~

What's the picture today? The Miami ~~is~~ on a wild rampage. ~~It has burst over its banks at various places.~~ It has reached a fourteen foot flood stage at Dayton. But the control dams are intact and are doing their work. The valves were opened and water flowed into huge reservoirs. Right now these are filled to only fifteen percent of capacity, but they have reduced the flood, which has dropped a foot.

Another episode of flood control is found at Portsmouth, Ohio. There too a great dike was built, a flood wall to keep

out the inundation of the Ohio River. Last night they opened the valves to relieve the terrific pressure. If the flood wall has broken the rush of water would have ~~be swept~~ wiped out ~~virtually~~ the ~~whole~~ city. Tonight the wall stands firm. Yet Portsmouth is flooded. The opening ^{of the valves} didn't keep the rising waters from surging right over the great dike. And tonight the sixty-two foot flood wall is deep under water.

Portsmouth provided the comic oddity of the day -- a raucous chorus of screams -- water, water, water. People rushed to the rescue and found -- parrots, parrots in a pet ~~shop~~ shop in which the flood water was rising.

For some reason or other the birds had been taught only one word -- water. ^{So the} ~~And that~~ shrieking was most appropriate

^{as} ~~was~~ the flood crept higher toward their cages. They were rescued, ^{still hollering water.}

STRIKE

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Last night I told how (Labor Leader John L. Lewis had issued a demand that President Roosevelt should intervene in the auto strike, in favor of the Union. Today President Roosevelt's reply was given - and its a rebuff, for Lewis.)

At White House press conferences, it's a rule that the President should not be quoted directly, but today, concerning the Lewis demand, the President said: "You can quote me." So here's the quote. "I think," said the President, "in the interests of peace there come moments when statements, conversations and headlines are not in order." Those are taken to be words in reproof for Lewis, the President meaning that the Union leader has spoken out of turn.

To this John L. Lewis replied that he wouldn't try to interpret what the President's words meant. *He made another* ~~He made a~~ reply in his own fashion, by ordering a fight to the finish against General Motors. He sent one of his lieutenants to Detroit with instructions to speed up the Union activity. He has sounded the battle-cry - labor is on the march!

General Motors has dropped out of the negotiations which Secretary of Labor Perkins was promoting last night. President Sloan issued an official statement for the Company this afternoon. He begins by declaring that General Motors has only one desire, and that is to have its hundred and thirty-five thousand employees return to work as quickly as possible.

The Sloan statement says in conclusion: - "Every effort will be made to afford as much work as possible to our employees who are out of work through no fault of their own."

That carries a hint of challenge -- a determination to operate the factories in spite of the strike, a threat of war.

AVIATION ACCIDENTS

One of the principal topics of conversation from coast to coast these days is: What about these airplane accidents? I talked this over today with a man who knows a s much about the subject as any one, the former president of the National Association of Pilots Dean Smith, who flew with Byrd, and who is still one of the chief airline pilots.

Said Dean Smith: - "Accidents can be easily prevented by a stricter supervision and the imposition of extremely severe penalties. Aviation can be made safe only if its supervision, regulations and control are handled by a body composed of real aviation experts who have nothing whatsoever to do with politics, and who have the power to enforce regulations. Also, money is needed to supply the airways with up-to-date aids."

What Dean Smith andd other pilots want is to have commercial aviation take them out of the hands of politicians in Washington. Vincent Bendix, from his headquarters at the Waldorf, announces a new merger of four aviation groups. And says the purpose is to supply all types of radio equipment used by the airlines, government aviation services and civilian fliers, to turn all its resources toward solving flying problems. He announces that they already have a radio "homing" compass ready for pilots to use.

QUADRUPLETS

The case of the Canadian quadruplets makes a swift, small tragic story. Tonight, three having succumbed to injuries, little hope is held for the fourth. The doctors say - little chance that it will survive.

A French Canadian village, a simple cottage - and there was a flicker of the maternity ward kind of comedy, as the father heard the tidings. As each new arrival was announced, Monsieur Rondeau leaped from his chair, paced the floor, and exclaimed, "Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!" Four times he did the pacing and exclaiming.

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It looked as if Canada might have a set of quadruplets to match its famous quintts - but tragic fatality quickly intervened. An ambulance was taking the infants to a Montreal hospital, because they couldn't be cared for properly in the village home. Cold, icy weather, the road a sheath of ice - and the ambulance took a wild skid and crashed into a snow plow. The doctors and nurse inside were shaken up - the quadruplets injured. Three perished, the fourth is given no hope of surviving.

It is significant that this latest multiple birth occurred in Canada, which also has those five renowned little Dionne sisters. In both cases the parents are French Canadians - a prolific stock. Mrs. Dionne has half a dozen children in addition to the quintuplets. Mrs. Rondeau has ten, and then in addition the ill-fated quadruplets. Prolific stock, indeed. No wonder the French Canadians are spread^{ing} far and wide in Canada and ~~in~~ northeastern United States.

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By way of contrast, we have some statistical figures issued today, figures showing the birthrate in the United States. It's the lowest ever. Fewer children in proportion to the population than in any previous year. The calculations are given out by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. They apply to thirty-four of the forty-eight states and cover the first nine months of Nineteen Thirty-Six - not entirely complete, but enough to give a sound estimate.

Not only was the birthrate the lowest, but the death rate was slightly higher than for the past five years. ~~This is attributed to the intensely cold weather last winter and the~~

The result is the lowest rate on record. The number of people in this country went up by only five per cent.

DEVIL'S ISLAND

One of the strangest riots on record was staged today in a French prison at Rochefort. There was a yelling of convicts, a hurling of missiles and swinging of heavy blows. Nothing so strange about that, it was the usual scene of a prison riot. The fantastic element is found in the reason for the rumpus. The prisoners were rioting because of - Devil's Island, that Caribbean penal settlement of historic terror. Did they stage their uprising in protest of being sent to Devil's Island? Not at all. Just the opposite. They were storming because they wanted to go there, howling the demand that they be sent to that tropical hell, named after the devil.

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These miscreants had been sentenced to the famous penal settlement, but of late the French government has decided to abandon the Devil's Island prison and send no more convicts there. So, the sentences imposed on the men were changed to confinement in an ordinary French penitentiary. When they heard this, the trouble started. What's there about Devils Island they like so much that they'll fight for it? ~~When~~ It's the boat ride going there. ~~That's pleasant~~ Sailing on the ocean.

~~sailing on the ocean.~~

"We want the voyage across the sea," declared the leader of the rioters. "Our conviction entitles us to the trip."

Tonight those prisoners are in solitary confinement, with leisure to meditate upon the joys of ocean breezes, a cruise across the deep blue - aboard a convict ship. One may suspect there's a little more than this love of the sea. I had occasion to tell why the French government is putting an end to the exile on Devil's Island. One reason is - ~~that~~ ^{there} escape is too easy, too many convicts have been getting away. So maybe those rioting ~~convicts~~ ^{prisoners} were thinking not only of an ocean voyage, but also of - escape.

INDIANS

At Cumarebo, Venezuela, they've solved the mystery of the missing red wind indicators. These are the brilliant red tubes they use on aviation fields, hanging them out and letting them fill with wind to indicate the direction of the breeze. They're about the size of the legs of trousers, so you might name this puzzling case, "the mystery of the disappearance of the red pants legs. "

At the Cumarebo flying field of the Pan American Airways, the first red wind indicator, vanished a month ago - mysteriously. Another was put up, but soon this one was missing too. And so for a third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh. The flying officials were puzzled and perplexed by the mystery of the disappearance of the red pants legs.

Now we hear how Capt. Slim Ekstrom, pilot on the run from Maracaibo to Port-of-Spain, was flying low over the Venezuelan Indian country, when he noticed figures on the ground below, Indians -- redskins, the reddest of redskins. Ah Ha, there were the missing wind indicators from the Cumarebo airport. The Indians were wearing them. So here was the solution to the mystery of the disappearance of the red pants legs. The Indians were using them for pants

legs. Two Pan American wind indicators attached together made the gaudiest pair of crimson pants that ever made a redskin redder.

Seven had been stolen. That made three and a half pairs of trousers. One redskin was wearing half a pair, a wind indicator on one leg. Ekstrom reported his discovery and the guard on the Cumarebo wind indicator flagpole was redoubled. Because it was felt sure that the one Indian with only half a pair of trousers would be back shortly to get the other half. Any of you men will understand the mortification of having only one pants leg. Which makes me pant -- SO LONG UNTIL MONDAY.

CHINA

Some precise word comes today about that American exodus in China - the flight of American missionaries from the sweep of Communist armies in the Provinces of Tsinghai and Kansu. It all goes back to that famous tragi-comedy of Generalissimo Chang Kai-shek and Marshal Chiang. The two straightened things out between them, but the Red rebellion continued in the Shensi Province. The word now is that it is spreading swiftly into the adjoining territories, Tsinghai and Kansu, which are centers of American missionary activity.

The show-down seems to be at hand. The Nanking government has issued an ultimatum with the deadline tonight - the Red Rebels must submit, or the government army will launch an attack. With the crisis about to break, the missionaries are taking the road out of Tsinghai and Kansu - and a desperate hard road it is.

There are about thirty of them, men, women and children. Northwest China is in the grip of bitter winter and blowing blizzards. The roads to safety lead across rugged mountain country, through snow choked passes.

Reports show that several of the missionary parties are

having a trying time of it. Missionary Edward Taylor from Oregon, got out of the City of ^{Taiensuei} Tienshui in eastern Kansu -- just in time, just before the Rebels stormed in, an orgy of violence and pillage. Two missionary families escaped from Sining in the Tsinghai Province, the Reverend ~~Mr.~~ Victor Plymire ^{and wife} and son, of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, and the Reverend and Mrs. George Wood and their two children, of Jeannette, Pennsylvania. Tonight they're pushing their way on mule-back, through snows that cover the mountains. They are trying to get to Lanchow and they can't make it in less than eight days.

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Four women missionaries, alone, ~~and~~ without an escort, are fighting their way through the blizzard of eastern Kansu. Two of them are Americans, Miss Anna Madsen of New Haven, Connecticut, and Miss Jennie Wedicson of Foreston, Minnesota. They left their Chinese inland mission post, trying to get to Nancheng in the Shensi Province - but ^{they} ~~hadn't~~ been heard from since.

An odd medley of Chinese and American names - in this American missionary exodus ~~is~~ in China.