

R.T. - Sunoco. Tues., Jan. 26, 1936.

46

A familiar phrase echoes from the flood area with an ominous ring tonight. Engineers are saying -- the worst is yet to come. The inundation of the Ohio Valley is enormous, devastating, catastrophic, but they use the words: "super-flood" to describe what will happen when the crest of water moving down the Ohio surges into the Mississippi. Army engineers predict that the flood along the Lower Mississippi will rise higher than the waters of disaster did in the floods of 1913 and 1927 -- ten feet higher. In 1927 the number of homeless mounted to six hundred thousand along that three hundred mile stretch of old man river, the Father of Waters. One feature is -- the great system of flood control, dikes and reservoirs that ~~were~~ were built after that disaster. These now await their test, as the Ohio flood rushes into the Mississippi. Will those Mississippi flood control dikes stand the trial? That will be the crux of the flood story for the next few days.

As for today, we have the broad facts in a report to President Roosevelt by Admiral Grayson, head of the Red Cross.

The number of people homeless or stranded in the upper stories

of their homes --- six hundred twenty-two thousand, five hundred. The number of counties devastated by floods -- a hundred and sixty-five in ten states. A hundred and eleven persons reported dead.)

Let's skim quickly down the Ohio River. Wheeling, ~~West~~ <sup>has been</sup> ~~Virginia, has~~ ordered evacuated, everybody to move out of the flood ruined <sup>city. A little further down, ~~at~~</sup> ~~town~~ Huntington, West Virginia, the supply of drinking water has failed. The water mains were crushed by the weight of the flood. In Portsmouth, Ohio, there's fear of fire. As at Cincinnati gasoline tanks were torn loose by the surge, thousands of gallons of gas spilled, floating on the water. Evansville, Indiana, is in the control of the National Guard tonight as the river has risen to the fifty-foot stage. At Louisville, Kentucky, the water is at fifty-seven feet. ~~It~~ If it rises to fifty-nine only a little hill near City Hall will remain above <sup>the inland sea,</sup> ~~water~~. That's how completely the inundation is engulfing <sup>that</sup> famous American city. At Paducah, Kentucky, there was a terror of typhoid. But that's been eased in spectacular fashion. A plane came winging over Paducah and a parachute

48  
jumper bailed out and landed safely in the flood with a hundred pounds of typhoid serum strapped to his back. Cairo, at the mouth of the Ohio! -- four thousand men are toiling madly to bank up a sixty foot sea wall -- the only thing that's saving the city.

If the water rises only six inches more it will surge over that tall levee. <sup>Right now has forced itself under the wall, and</sup> ~~Now~~ Let's turn back and look a way upstream --

to the headwaters of the Ohio. There's been no rain there for a couple of days -- and the flood is beginning to recede. Pittsburgh tonight is witnessing what seems to be the beginning of the end of its own inundation. ~~Beginning to subside in the~~

~~Upper Ohio.~~ <sup>downward</sup> The stupendous surge of water is moving on to the Mississippi -- to the next flood crisis.

is coming up into the town.

ODDITIES

Amid the roar of ~~flood~~ disaster comes an occasional echo of laughter -- the lighter touches that accompany the darkest things. In Cincinnati a rescue boat saw a woman in a second story window. She completely filled the window as she shouted for help. She must have weighed four hundred pounds as she begged the rescuers to take her into the boat, which was already overloaded. Yes, they saved her -- by sending a forty-five foot sea-going scow to get her.

At Louisville a relief squad rescued a woman and pulling at the oars, took her to dry land. ~~There~~ she remembered that she had left two dollars in the house and demanded that they take her back to get it. The weary ~~ex~~ oarsmen refused.

There was a dance in Arkansas and the band was playing: "River Stay Way From My Door." And the river came right in the door and in a little while the dance floor was under six inches of water.

Flood sufferers are saying: "This is fine for ducks or fish." But today the ~~Biographical~~ <sup>Biological</sup> Survey says that's all wrong. Floods destroy bird-life including the ducks, by washing them out

by flaming gasoline. The main plant he added was intact, and *the*  
*Panel Crosley plants will be in full*  
~~will be on the broadcasting job with its jobs as soon as~~  
*operation as soon as*  
the immediate flood emergency is over.

This afternoon I called Admiral Grayson, head of the Red Cross, and asked him about relief. He told me the Red Cross is operating a hundred and twenty-three camps for refugees and 39 field hospitals, with seven hundred and forty nurses, battling against influenza, pneumonia and the threat of ~~typhoid~~ typhoid. And a fleet of seven hundred and 99 boats is, figuratively speaking, flying the flag of the Red Cross.

Admiral Grayson told me that at noon today he telegraphed to everyone of his seven hundred Red Cross chapters, saying -- "Multiply your quota by five." The quota is the sum of money a Red Cross chapter is required to raise for ~~give~~ flood relief. The sums that had been assigned to each in the first place were found, not half enough, not one-fifth enough. So they've been told - multiply by five, raise five times as much cash. The Red Cross needs a total of eleven million dollars to help the victims of the water. Admiral Grayson told me today that contributions were in splendidly.

FLOOD - HISTORICAL

52  
I've been hearing people ~~asking~~ ask the question - whether the great flood can be attributed in any way to the works of civilization, the clearing away of the forest<sup>s</sup>, the cultivation of the land, interference with natural drainage, erosion. That's the sort of thing which causes the dust storms further west. What about the surging water? Is it partly caused by the doings of man?

I phoned the Weather Bureau in Washington this afternoon and put the question <sup>direct to Uncle Sam's weather man.</sup> ~~to one of the experts there.~~ And he said:

"No". He explained that the floods are solely and simply caused by the excessive rains of a strangely mild winter - rains concentrated in the Ohio valley. He said that deforestation, erosion, and so on, have little to do with it. These floods are too giant a phenomenon, he commented, <sup>to be affected by</sup> ~~the~~ the works of man. ~~to~~ ~~have much effect.~~

Floods like the present one have occurred from time to time, he told me, - maybe a few times in a century - back in the days when the middlewest was sparsely settled and a great inundation was no huge disaster, <sup>Yes, and on</sup> ~~all~~ all the way back through the pre-Columbian centuries, when the Indians roamed the valley

of the Ohio. The red-skin hunter witnessed great floods then, like the present one. The braves and squaws saw the wild rush of the waters time and again. They left no flood records, no Weather Bureau charts - only their legends.

52  
Today I looked up some Indian fables of flood, such as were current among the tribes of the Mississippi Valley. And they show in their curious, picturesque way how the present disaster of civilized man is only another repetition of an often-repeated story of rising rivers and a deluge upon land.

Here's a bit of Indian flood lore. It tells of a man who caught a frog and threw it into a fire. Another man rescued the frog from the flames. In gratitude the frog said to him: "The land will disappear in the waters. Make a raft and put a thick layer of grass underneath so the beavers can't cut holes through the wood."

So the man built the raft, and then the flood came. It swept to the tops of the hills, and everybody drowned, except the man who floated safely on the raft with his family, <sup>and his</sup> ~~and his~~ friend ~~of~~ the frog.

What does that fable remind you of? The Indian-frog  
story of flood? ~~It is~~ just another version of Noah, the Ark  
and the deluge - which seems to occur in some form or other  
all over the world. So tonight the deluge in the Ohio Valley  
takes us back to Noah.



STRIKE

54

The flood has almost washed out the news of the auto strike, but the combination of walkout and sit down is still there. We have a reminder of that in a sharp statement that emanates from the federal sanctum in Washington. Hitherto there has been a government attitude of caution and reserve about the labor battle, with a minimum of outspoken words. But today Secretary of Labor Perkins came forward with a bit of scolding. Last night I told how under the provisions of an old law the lady secretary had summoned the Union and General Motors to another peace conference. The Union accepted, but today President Sloan declined - refused to meet Strike Leader John L. Lewis, to talk things over. President Sloan declared that General Motors would not enter any negotiations, until the sit down strikers decide to stand up and walk out of the Company plants.

This turn-down evoked a sharp retort from Secretary Perkins. Her words were that General Motors - has failed in its public duty. Then she spoke Homeric words, saying that the American people did not expect the company

leaders to sulk in their tents. That puts Messrs. Sloan and Knudsen in the dual role of Achilles.

The President had his say about it too, although his words were not so Homeric. Speaking of the refusal given by the head of General Motors, Mr. Roosevelt said - "a very unfortunate decision on his part."

Another bit of labor news from the White House tells that the chief magistrate plans to call a series of conferences with moguls of business and labor - including those two Union rivals, President Green of the A. F. of L. and John L. Lewis of the C.I.O. We are told that these parleys will concern labor legislation, and that the General Motors strike is not on the calendar for discussion. It may be so, but it's hard to see how any White House conference of business and labor will be able to ignore the strike of a hundred and thirty-five thousand in the automobile industry.

( On the fighting front, the picket line, the situation seems to be developing into a crisis. General Motors announces that it will reopen more plants - not, however, the factories now occupied by the sit-down strikers. They →

intend to start work in the plants now abandoned, after walkouts.

~~The Union's answer to this will be~~ The Union's answer to this will be  
more picketing, the lines drawn tighter around the factories  
to keep non-union workers out.

JAPAN

Our own American news is so heavy tonight that something from far across the sea might appear to be - distantly irrelevant. Yet, there's a spark of the singular and paradoxical in the news - that they're looking for a general in Japan, any general with a first class pair of epaulets and a shining sword. You wouldn't think they'd have to look far, for Japan is well supplied with generals. How would you say brass hats in Japanese? <sup>TP</sup>The

<sup>Tokyo</sup>~~Japanese~~ political crisis is a deadlock tonight. The Hirota Cabinet having resigned, another political chieftain, Kazushige Ugaki, is trying to line up a new set of ministers. And he succeeded - with one exception. He can't find a Minister of War.

The Japanese Constitution demands that the Ministry of War shall be held by a general of the army, in active service, and Ugaki can't find the general. The reason is that the army command is against him. The military leaders, accused of promoting Fascism, are staging a political battle with the liberal parties of the Tokio Parliament - and so Ugaki is not their man.

Yet Ugaki himself is a general - but not the kind you

57

might expect. No proud descendant of the Samurai, ~~He~~ began life as a vegetable peddler. Yet he rose to be Governor-General of Korea and was Minister of War four times. As Governor-General he clipped the power of the army and promoted civilian rule. As the Minister of War he offended all tradition by decreeing that Japanese officers should not be trained on jiu-jitsu alone. He made them learn boxing according to the Marquess of Queensberry rules. There were repeated attempts to kill him, and he became an expert assassin-dodger.

So that's the general who comes to the front in Japan's crisis now, with the liberal parties hurling charges of Fascism against the army leaders. He's a Premier trying to form a Cabinet, a general in the search of a general!

PRISONER

58

Let's close this broadcast tonight with a happy ending. Happiness from where? Why, from the death house. That seems paradoxical, and in fact it is - the singular story of perhaps the strangest prisoner in the United States.

58 1/2

Twenty-nine years ago today, Archie Herron was sentenced to death, and he's still under that capital sentence. He killed a preacher in New Brunswick, New Jersey, a man who had had him arrested for disorderly conduct. He was tried and condemned in the New Jersey courts. The question of his sanity was raised. The judge decided to have a lunacy commission examine him, so he suspended the sentence. The next day, the judge died suddenly. At that time it was the law of the state that a convicted man could be resentenced only by the judge who had presided at his trial. The judge had gone, and Archie Herron waited to be resentenced to capital punishment. He has been waiting ever since. Because of a quirk in the law, he became a permanent inmate of the death house, a life long inmate for a long life. According to regulations, he enjoys the privileges of those awaiting their doom. He is maintained comfortably, has

59  
good food, doesn't have to work. He is seventy-seven now,  
smokes his pipe, listens to the radio, and enjoys his leisure.  
It would be a tragedy for him, if through some trick of the  
law, his death sentence were commuted to life imprisonment.  
For then he'd have to endure the hard life of an ordinary  
convict. So, condemned to the darkest doom of them all, he is  
happy, and -

9 1/2  
SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.

RELIEF

As great as is the flood, just that great is flood relief. <sup>The</sup> President ~~Roosevelt~~ has told Congress that he is ready to allot seven hundred and ninety million dollars to take care of the emergency. That's the entire appropriation for general relief, <sup>a</sup> ready to be fired at the flood crisis in one <sup>This afternoon Congress passed the bill for this,</sup> huge golden bullet. <sup>^</sup> The Coast Guard is sending twelve hundred more men for rescue work. They'll be on the job tomorrow, with two hundred boats.

The radio is doing the big job in the emergency, the ether waves laboring for relief. The giant station WLW in Cincinnati ~~is~~ has put its time at the disposal of the Army -- the machinery of powerful ~~trans~~transmission being used for the direction of relief work. All means of communication are down in many places, the ether waves are the only way of getting messages through. So Army engineers are using WLW as a central means of staff work in directing the strategy of relief. I was talking with Frank Smith <sup>and</sup> ~~of~~ Powell Crosley <sup>of the big Crosley</sup> organization today and asked <sup>them</sup> ~~him~~ whether their great plant had been badly damaged by flood and fire. No, not badly <sup>they</sup> ~~he~~ told me, with the exception of one minor ~~XXXX~~ structure which ~~was~~ was set ~~af~~ blaze