

P. J. - Luroco. Friday, April 15, 1938

46

Last night during the President's fire-side chat, of such grave importance -- a bell rang right in the middle of the broadcast. Some of the legions of listeners-in didn't hear it, and some thought they were hearing things. ~~Some people~~ ^{Others} said -- it's odd that a telephone should be ringing right there where the President is at the mike. While ^{still} others were seized with a dire suspicion, a dreadful surmise.

Today at the White House Press Conference that suspicion and surmise was spoken -- in a question to the President. Was it the gong, as in an amateur hour? "We though^t it was Major Bowes," one Washington correspondent said to the President.

Now there was a question of national importance, which certainly deserved an official, presidential explanation -- and got it. Here is the solution of the mystery!-- it was a telephone. As the President explains it, the fire-side chat was broadcast from the Diplomatic Room at the White House. Near the Diplomatic Room is a Police Room. In the Police Room is a telephone, which is not connected through the White

47
House switchboard -- an independent wire. The switchboard operator, quite naturally, would have put no call through to the Diplomatic Room while the President was on the air. But the 'phone in the Police Room was something else again. Somebody called that number, and the telephone exchange put the call through, and the ~~xxxx~~ jangling of the Police Room bell drifted to the microphone. Who was calling the police?

Anyways
Today President Roosevelt gave solemn assurance that it was not Major Bowes and his gong. The Chief Executive added that he heard somebody surmise -- it was Mark Sullivan, political columnist, who ~~has quite~~ *is always ringing* a journalistic gong for the New Deal.

Having disposed of this vital question, we can go on to see how the country today took the fire-side ~~xxxx~~ words of last night. The President himself declared today that the response that he got was large and favorable. It was large to the extent of seven hundred communications received by about noon today at the White House. It was favorable -- seven to one.

48

The newspaper response seems to be quite different. The President is convinced that the press is against him, and this certainly seems to be the case on the subject of the four and a half billion spending and lending project. At least it is, so far as I'm able to observe ^{--- that is} on the basis of country-wide expressions of editorial opinion that come in.

I find only a couple of large northern dailies coming out with unreserved praise for the program outlined in yesterday's special message and fire-side chat. The NEW ~~YORK~~ YORK EVENING POST says editorially:- "Uncle Sam is going to fight this depression as he fought the war -- by spending enough to win." ^{Democratic} The CHICAGO DAILY TIMES expresses its opinion: "In his message to Congress Mr. Roosevelt achieved what we hoped for. His message was firm in its determination and was filled with broad liberal vision."

On the opposite side there are dozens of editorials that might be quoted in scathing dissent. Says the DAYTON, OHIO JOURNAL: "An unsuccessful experiment ^{is} ~~has~~ to be repeated." The ~~ST. FRANCISCO~~ SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE takes a crack at the pump

49

priming aspect: "Those of us know who remember pump-and-handle-days -- that only a leaky pump needed priming." And the CHRONICLE adds: "If you fixed the leak, you primed no more." The Schenectady, New York UNION STAR says: "Mr. Roosevelt is coming to recognize that we have on our hands a serious depression." And the editorial described the special message as -- "less cocky." "And some indeed are saying that the fire-side chat, while in the well-turned, telling, Roosevelt vein, had less of the usual bouyant F.R.D. confidence."

Here's one bit of comment that brings reminiscence. It's from Alf Landon. It's ~~is~~ readily to be recalled that Alf not only failed ~~to win the last election against the President,~~ but also failed to match the expert presidential style on the radio. So today there seems to be a touch of rueful admiration in the Landon expression of disagreement. "Sounded good," said Alf, "if you had heard it for the first time. But ~~thinking~~ having heard it so many times before, I cannot help thinking that there are as many unemployed today as there were when the President went into office."

50

Today's nation-wide response confirms the opinion suggested by the Congressional response we had last night -- that the four and a half billion dollars worth of spending and lending will ~~face a tough fight~~ face a tough fight.

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HELIUM

The German government today ~~has~~ put a formal question to the United States - about helium. Will our government make the sale of eighteen million cubic feet of the non-explosive gas - as arranged? With the ^{expectation} ~~expectation~~ of getting American helium, Germany has gone ahead with the construction of a dirigible for the Trans-Atlantic service. But recently the helium transaction has been held up - Secretary Ickes saying it may have a war angle. Today Germany asked the United States for a decision, saying there is no use going on with their helium ship unless they know they can get the gas to fill it.

This ties in with flying awards made today in Paris.

The International League of Aviators ~~in Paris~~ proclaimed the

world champion ^{flyer} ~~aviator~~ for Nineteen Thirteen-Seven - Dick Merrill, ^{the}

^{round trip}

~~the~~ trans-Atlantic ~~flyer~~ ^{sky traveler.}

The International Aviators likewise crowned - the champion dirigible pilot - Captain Max Pruss of the ill-fated HINDENBURG, who survived that disaster of exploding hydrogen. It's a bit of coincidence that the award to Captain Pruss is announced on the same day as the publication of Commander Rosendahl's book -

"What About the Airship?" Commander Rosendahl, America's Number One dirigible man, who was in charge of the Lakehurst field when the catastrophe occurred, pays tribute to Captain Pruss. Telling of the Zeppelin explosion, he writes:- "In the first few seconds following the initial burst of flame, there had been plenty of quick thinking in the control car. One of the outstanding incidents of the whole disaster concerned the handling of water ballast. As the blazing stern-section of the ship began to settle, even before the forward part had begun to burn, it might have seemed an obvious measure to drop water ballast aft in order to ease the contact of that portion of the ship with the ground. But in a flash of clear thinking, those in the control car decided to retain that weight of water in the stern to bring the burning portion to the ground as quickly as possible and thus afford those in the after part of the ship the best possible chance of escape from the fire."

52
~~So says our Rosendahl, and tonight the quick-thinker Capt. Pruss was proclaimed No. 1 dirigible pilot.~~

PHILIPPINES

The mystery fleet in the Philippines is more mysterious than ever tonight. ~~From~~^{From} the remote harbor of Davao, where they are so many Japanese inhabitants, comes positively stated word - that ~~the~~^{those} ships ~~that~~ⁱⁿ entered the Philippine waters out there are vessels of war, a fleet of twenty-one. An American ex-army officer ~~made a sketch of the craft and~~ describes them as a column of warships manuevring off the Mindanao coast, ~~one of the~~
~~Philippine Islands~~

The authorities at Manila have sent a couple of planes to scout the mystery fleet. ~~And~~^{And} They're still waiting for the return of the aerial scouts with a definite report.

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France

Paris announces in a late flash, full diplomatic relations resumed with Italy; - ambassador accredited to the King - Empress in Rome - meaning recognition of the Ethiopian conquest!

SPAIN

(The Spanish Rebels have reached the sea. Franco's Battalions have at last cut Left Wing Spain in two.) That's the official news tonight, and it may be decisive in the Spanish Civil War and in the course of contemporary history. The first bulletin said Franco has captured Vinaroz. That's a small seaport on the Mediterranean. Then came a later Franco wireless announcing that Benicarlo had been taken. That's another small Mediterranean seaport ^{ten miles} ~~not far~~ away. Thus Franco has a grip on the shore in two places ^{on a ten mile front.}

At last reports the Rebels were spreading out, pushing along the beach, threatening to cut in behind the more important harbor of

Tortosa. *All this is admitted by Barcelona which admits that Rebel troops are being landed from warships while terrific air battles*
So, Franco has completed his march to the sea, the major objective of the big push. Unless the Left Wing troops make some unexpected counter-attack, ^{left wing} ~~government~~ Spain is severed in two parts: - ~~There is~~ small Catalonia with its large population and great munition industries, and ~~there is the~~ ^{the} large Valencia section reaching into central Spain; ~~it has a~~ sparser population and virtually no industries - no way to make munitions.

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go on overhead.

53

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KILLINGS

A story of desperate gun play comes from Montana - with the surrender today of a rancher wanted for killing a deputy sheriff. ~~On Lee Simpson's ranch there was some~~ *There was some ranch* trouble concerning trespassers, and a sheriff and deputy sheriff drove out to investigate. As they stepped from their car, the rancher met them with rifle fire from his house. The first shot wounded the deputy in the knee. He slid to the ground, behind the car where he was sheltered.

54
The Sheriff ~~Drive~~ likewise took refuge behind the car and opened fire with an automatic pistol. Then there was a gun battle for four hours, with the sheriff and the rancher exchanging shots from cover. The shooting continued all afternoon until darkness came. Then the rancher sneaked around and got a shot at the wounded deputy, and killed him. Sheltered by darkness, the sheriff was able to get into his car and drive off - bullet holes in his hat and coat.

The rancher upon coming in and surrendering today is said to have confessed the killing of two other men. And they say he had a list of eighteen - names of those he intended to kill.

BROKERS

The Whitney case in New York has brought attention to the way a financier can get into a ^{ruinous} ~~dangerous~~ predicament, ^{Another} ~~and then~~ by the relentless pressure of his difficulties ~~he is forced to~~ the most desperate expedients - fraud, theft. ~~Another illustration~~ ^{illustration} comes from Chicago today, ~~showing how brokers, caught in a dilemma, of shortage, may resort to melodramatic schemes.~~

The Chicago authorities have arrested three members of a brokerage firm on charges of embezzlement. ~~(a shortage of four hundred thousand dollars. Today the accused men of finance tell how they tried to use the warlike state of the world in a desperate attempt to recoup.)~~

55
First, They found themselves with a shortage of twenty-five thousand dollars, and tried to get out of that by selling guns to China. They tried to swing ~~them~~ a deal for the sale of a million rifles and a huge number of pistols to be used in the China War. Next, they worked on a proposition to sell thirty-five thousand tons of sulphur to a French outfit, the sulphur eventually to be used in the manufacture of gunpowder in China. ^R ~~The~~ third deal had to do with the shipment of American-built

warplanes to Italy. Eventual destination no doubt - the battlefields of Spain. In all these warlike transactions^s, the firm hoped to clear a profit of six hundred and seventy-one thousand dollars.

But that didn't materialize, and all that happened was - that the original deficit ~~was a little larger, to~~ ^{of 25,000 grew to a shortage of} four hundred thousand.

~~dollars.~~ And today - arrests.

It might seem that finance could be listed under the heading of - "hazardous occupations."

WILD MAN

Today there was a long and extensive search for the Choccolocco wild man, a weird creature that has made an Alabama sensation.

Choccolocco sounds like a good name for a wild man.

It is used because the mysterious beings ~~are~~^{is} reported in the

Choccolocco swamp. - ~~its~~^{And that's} also a good name for a swamp. Local

farmers living near the vast extent of marsh land, tell of seeing three gorilla-like individuals:- Man, woman and child, their

bodies covered with hair, and they walked on all fours. Ape-like

~~family~~^{family} of the morass.

Today, an Alabama posse was formed, headed by the local sheriff. His name is Cotton - and that's an appropriate name in Alabama. Sheriff Cotton and his men plunged into the dim miasmal spaces of the swamp - hunting for the Choccolocco wild man and his family. They searched far and wide amid the mazes of creeks and marsh thicket. Now they've returned and reported - no sign of the Choccolocco wild man. Sheriff Cotton declares his belief - that the gorilla family has taken refuge in one of the caves found in the remote reaches of the swamp. Apparently it doesn't occur to him that the Choccolocco wild man story may be just plain loco.

NAME

San Francisco has an emphatic answer to a question so famous that it's much too often quoted. San Francisco's answer is this - there can be a headache in a name, even though it's a good name. Too good - that's just the trouble.

The metropolis of the Pacific coast is getting ready for its Golden Gate Exposition of Nineteen Thirty-Nine, and one important preliminary was - to find a suitable snappy name for the amusement section of the fair. So a contest was staged, a thousand dollar prize ~~was~~ offered for the best name, something that would vividly signify mirth and merriment, a rollicking good time all the way down the line. A big response poured in, and it wasn't hard to select the winning name for the thousand dollar prize. The judges unanimously agreed - "Gayway." Snappy, expressive, lilting, as in - strolling down the Gayway. So hand out the thousand dollars.

The only trouble is, the name is so good that so many people thought of it. It is announced today that one thousand, seven hundred and ninety-nine persons sent in that same name - Gayway. Each is equally entitled to the thousand dollar prize. Divide the prize ~~xxx~~ among them, and see what each gets. Divide

58
a thousand dollars by one thousand, seven hundred and ninety-nine, and the answer is about fifty-five cents. ~~So you~~ ^{you} can imagine the indignation of a thousand dollar prize winner when he's handed fifty-five cents; and there'd be seventeen hundred and ninety-nine indignant prize winners. So there's the predicament and embarrassment of the San Francisco Exposition officials. And they're suggesting that the only way out is to hold a Number Two contest among all those prize winners of Competition Number One, and see who can produce the best five word slogan for the exposition.

58 1/2
I don't know how it's going to work out, ~~kk~~ but there may be some cantankerous prize winner who thinks that since they all won the prize, each should get a thousand dollars, and that would stand the officials just one million, seven hundred and seventy-nine thousand dollars. Quite a prize contest!

LIGHTS

The town of Thayer, Missouri, is in darkness tonight, save for candles, lanterns and kerosene lamps. All because of a dispute over a municipal power plant. The electric company refuses to send current through its wires, while the municipal electricity is being made ready. So today all electric power was off and tonight Thayer is a spectacle of dim darkness - with one shining exception. The local saloon - it's a glow of brightness. The only place in town with an electrical generator of its own, the saloon is like a luminous beacon ^{of evil} in the darkness of ^{virtue} ~~the town~~.

And now Hugh
What from you?

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Solong until Monday.

9/14