

The new boss of the nation's railroads is Lieutenant General Somervell, Commander of the Army Service of Supply. He was named tonight by Secretary of War Stimson, who took over the railroads in behalf of the Army -- and by the order of the President.

All this came suddenly ^{as} during the day the earlier railroad strike news had been optimistic. First, the non-operating unions called off their part in the strike scheduled for December thirty-first and two of the five operating unions had already agreed to have the President arbitrate the question of wage increases -- the engineers and trainmen saying okay. ~~They~~ ^{That} left only three operating unions still holding out. [The switchmen, firemen and conductors. ~~But~~ ^{They} continued to reject the President's offer to arbitrate, and stuck to their decision to

strike. It was the unbending attitude of these three remaining unions that provoked the President's order for the government seizure of the railroads, The order issued to Secretary of War Stimson.

General Somervell, appointed by Stimson to do the actual job of running the railroads will have able assistance. The responsibility for train operations will rest with Major General Gross, Army Chief of Transportation. And the military directors will have an advisor in the person of Martin W. Clement, President of the Pennsylvania railroad Company. Also, they will have the assistance of the American Railway Association. And in labor matters they will have a counsel of union officials.

Coincidentally with his seizure of the railroads the President made public his decision in the wage dispute. As arbitrator he announces the

pay raises to be granted. These are first, an increase of four cents, an hour, as was recommended by the Labor Board to begin with. And secondly another five cents an hour to be the equivalent of the over-time which the President said he thought the railroad workers should have. This makes nine cents an hour in all, while the unions had demanded a boost of Three Dollars a day.

Such are the terms, which, we may suppose, the Government will offer the railroad workers -- the government as the employer. The administration of the roads by the Army will be in many respects an affair of formality and paper, with little prospect of uniformed men playing any part in the operation of the trains. General Somervell, as the representative of Uncle Sam, will simply take the place of the railroad owners in dealing with

the union. ^R This is the second time in American history that the government has taken over the ~~xxixxxx~~ railroads. The previous occasion having been in World War Number One when President Wilson seized the lines. At that time the reason was that the railroads were in bad shape in point of equipment and management.

And now to that other angle of strike crisis - steel. Tonight the union ordered the steel workers to return to their jobs. They were directed by C I O President Philip Murray to end their walk out. This union action ~~followed~~ followed immediately upon an order issued by the War Labor Board, an order of -- return to work. And all that remains to be seen is how well the workers will observe the injunction of their leaders, especially -- with as many as one hundred and fifty-five thousand steel

employees involved in what amounts to a strike, although they don't call it that. All day long the work stoppage spread, with shifts failing to report on the job and with workers turned back by picket lines. The walk-out of steel workers which began today was so serious that President Roosevelt cut short his Christmas vacation and hurried back to Washington to deal with the labor crisis.

COUPONS

Today at the Pittsburgh headquarters of the Office of Price Administration they had one of those knock[^]out telephone calls. A lady on the wire inquiring in a bright voice:-

"I want to know the price ceiling of C gasoline coupons", said she.

"The price ceiling on gasoline coupons?" Demanded the astonished O.P.A. official on the wire.

"Yes", she responded smartly. "You see, I've been offered some at eight cents, a coupon, and some at ten."

"You've been offered coupons for sale" asked the outraged ~~official~~ official.

"Yes" ~~and~~ she added conscientiously: "And I want to know^w the ~~entire~~ right price to pay because I don't want to violate the law by paying over^{the} ceiling!"

That's the story from Pittsburgh!

SOUTH WESTERN PACIFIC

The landing of the Marines at Cape Gloucester in New Britain promises to give the United States forces a firm and complete hold on the tip of that island -- the tip nearest ~~to~~ New Guinea. (Cape Gloucester ~~is~~ is fifty miles ~~southward~~ southeastward along the coast from the Arawe Peninsula, where the Marines landed so successfully just eleven days ago.)

The newest landing at ~~Cape~~ Cape Gloucester was virtually unopposed. Our Navy and Air Forces had blasted the Japs on the beach so ~~ix~~ intensively that enemy resistance was reduced virtually to nothing -- the defenses flattened out by shells and bombs.

The landing made, however, the Japs swarmed to the attack by the air route. Powerful forces of enemy planes tried to bomb the newly landed Marines; ~~ix~~ but were heavily defeated. Sixty-one Japs ~~were~~ shot down by Allied fighters -- thirty six enemy bombers

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and twenty-five fighters. ~~were lost.~~ Only seven

Allied planes are missing.

MACARTHUR

Today an appeal was issued to General MacArthur urging him to declare his attitude toward the Nineteen Forty Four presidential campaign. What is his attitude toward the moves that are being made to nominate him on the ~~R~~ Republican ticket? Is he or is he not willing to be the Republican candidate? The interesting thing about this appeal to MacArthur is that it is not American but Australian -- an ~~expression made by~~ the morning Herald of Sydney, the Australian metropolis.

All of which follows an American newspaper statement that General MacArthur plans to return to the United States in March, possibly to accept the Republican nomination. To which a MacArthur spokesman proceeded to reply that there ^{is} ~~was~~ no truth ^{in the report} whatever that MacArthur intends to return to the United States in the near future. ^{TP} The Australian

concern lies in the fact that the General is the
Commander-in-Chief of all the United Nations forces
in the south western Pacific including the troops of
Australia. The Sydney Herald, ^{Sydney, Australia,} refers to him in these

words: "The man on whose shoulders the ultimate
responsibility of our country rests". So the people
of the island continent feel that they are entitled

to know (whether the American Commander-in-Chief
of their forces has ideas of going into American
Presidential politics.)

SCHRANHORST.

The dramatic story of the end of Germany's great battleship, the Schranhorst, was flashed today by Berlin. London merely announced the sinking of the Nazi battleship in a general statement, with few details. Presumably the British naval squadron that won the battle is still in action, and is keeping radio silence -- to report the full story later. So, we are ~~very~~ dependent on the German accounts, which seems to be forthright, and paint a graphic picture of the death of the Nazi sea giant.

Yesterday, German reconnaissance planes based on the northern coast of Norway spotted a big allied ^Aconvoy steaming eastward in Arctic waters, an Allied convoy bound for the Soviet Arctic supply ^Aport -- Murmansk. Whereupon there was quick ^AGerman action, a naval force sallying forth to attack the convoy.

The assailants were destroyers, light cruisers,
and the twenty-six thousand ton ~~S~~^{TR}chranhorst. The
German ~~plan~~ plan was a surprise -- covered by a fog.--

The scene of action, ~~was~~ Barents Sea, above North Cape -
the ~~at~~ northern-most tip of Norway. And those are ^{foggy} frosty

waters. It isn't clear just what made the Nazi
plan go ~~away~~^{away}, but it's apparent that British naval
units guarding the convoy were on the vigilant look

out. ^{TR} Light British naval units got into a tangled
fight with the Sch~~ran~~^{ran}horst which was protected by
its escorting of destroyers and light cruisers.

Likely enough, the Commander of the German battleship
felt it was a golden occasion for polishing off some
smaller British warships. ^{TR} But he could have hardly
expected things to develop as they did -- the lighter
~~plan~~ British units hanging on, until British battle-
ships came racing into the fight. And they maneuvered

with swift and clever tactics while the German giant was battling with all its guns.

~~got around,~~ got between the Schranhorst and its line of escape -- and the Nazi sea giant was encircled,

in a net, ~~in~~ a trap; and couldn't get away. ^{TP} The

German story puts it in these words:- After several hours of heavy fighting the Schranhorst was encircled.

R According to the Germans, the battleship fought to the end, until the gunners had exhausted their last rounds of ammunition. The whole thing lasted for eight hours ~~xi~~ with the Schranhorst sinking at about ~~YixxRxMx~~ seven-thirty P. M.

The Nazi account claimed^S that the doomed giant before plunging to the bottom, inflicted heavy

damage on British warships. But ~~does not claim that~~ tonight the London

Admiralty denies this. ~~any British vessels were sunk in the fight. On the~~

~~other hand, Radio Algiers reports that the British also damaged the speedy 10,000 ton Nazi pocket battleship Lutzwitz.~~

~~The destruction of the Schranhorst recalls~~
~~the previous sinking of the still greater Bismark~~
~~earlier in the war. The Bismark, though under~~
~~circumstances quite different, was surrounded and sunk~~
~~by British warships.~~ *TP* *So now* the Germans have lost
the last of their great battle wagons and have none
left fit to go into action. The Nazis have ^{of} ~~no~~ course
the ~~Tirpitz~~ Tirpitz, sister-ship of the Bismark; and, the
Gneisenau, sister-ship of the Schranhorst. But the
British declare that these two battleships have been
so badly damaged by air attacks that they are virtually
useless and the only two craft of any consequence
left in the German Navy are two pocket battleships,
~~which are really heavy-cruisers~~ with insufficient
armor; and one of these, the Lutzow, may
~~have been damaged in this latest great~~
~~sea battle.~~ *TP* This large elimination of Nazi sea power
releases more British warships for service elsewhere --
against the Japs - for example.

RUSSIA

Germany reports the most violent kind of Soviet attack before Kiev. The Nazis declare that the Russians are hurling thirty infantry divisions ~~and~~ and seven or eight tank divisions.

TP
Moscow describes the Red troops as sweeping forward on a fifty mile front against the railroad connecting Jitomir and ~~Korosten~~ Korosten, -- those two important points which the Germans captured in their counter-offensive. The Russians during the past three days are said to have regained almost two thirds of the territory they lost ~~to the~~ ⁱⁿ five weeks of German counter attacks.

ITALY

In a deluge of rain along the west coast of Italy American troops have captured two more strategic heights overlooking ~~on~~ the town on the plain -- that road junction called Cassino. On the opposite ~~side~~ of the peninsula, the Canadians are completing the capture of Ortona, which the Nazis have defended so stubbornly that it is being ^{called} ~~captured~~ "little Stalingrad".

~~There seems to be no great cause for alarm about the epidemic of typhus in Naples. The malady has spread at only a moderate ~~■~~ rate; ~~and has been~~ confined to civilians. No allied soldiers have fallen ill of typhus, although Naples has been declared out of bounds -- as a precautionary measure.~~

BOWL GAME

Out here in Southern California, the native habitat of the Rose Bowl game, folks will be interested to know that still another bowl game appears in the news -- in addition to the Cotton Bowl, the Sugar Bowl, the Orange Bowl and other versions of the Rose Bowl. And don't say that such a ~~xxxxxxxx~~ theme of sports has no place in the middle of the war news. ~~and~~ For this newest classic of football is - - the Arab Bowl Game, a New Year's Day event overseas in which two crack service teams will compete for the gridiron championship of North Africa.

And people here in southern California needn't think proudly that they have a monopoly of picturesque trimmings for a bowl game. Let's take a look at the stunts that will accompany the Arab Bowl Game. These are ~~referred~~ revealed by Corporal Zeke Bonura, who used to be a star big league baseball'

player, but now is a protagonist of ~~Army~~ ^{in Africa.} football,

"There
~~It~~ will be plenty of color" said Zeke today. "Between

the halves Arab troops will parade. Crack Army

paratroops will bail out and land on the field.

And, he added, Texas cowboys will give roping

exhibitions from Arabian horses. Not only that but

the Arab Bowl Game will be ~~preceded~~ preceded by a

camel race down the street ^{to} ~~of~~ the stadium". Well,

I hope to go to the Rose Bowl Game in Pasadena

on Saturday, but I don't suppose we'll be lucky enough

to witness a camel race.

NINETEEN FORTY FOUR

~~This coming year which is so close at hand gets prominent mention in the news today. Nineteen Forty four~~ The mention comes from two prominent sources.

One -- Secretary of State Cordell Hull, ~~who~~
He told a news conference today that the war in Europe can be ended in Nineteen Forty-four. ~~The Nazis can be crushed into final defeat during the coming year.~~
The secretary ^{however,} ~~added a qualification that~~ that this happy prophecy will come true only if the people of the United Nations will redouble their efforts and work in complete unity. ~~He gave us the customary and salutary warning against over confidence,~~
~~But~~ ^{he said} ~~said that~~ he agreed with General Eisenhower, ~~For it was Eisenhower~~ who, earlier in the day, had made the first mention of Nineteen Forty-four.
The new Second Front Commander for the United Nations

was talking with a group of war correspondents and as he was about to leave the Mediterranean theater and start on his way to Britain -- there to take command ~~of the United Nations forces~~ ^{for} the launching of the Second Front assault.

General Eisenhower ^{today} stated: " We will win the European war in Nineteen Forty-four. ~~And he added that the only thing necessary was for the Allied peoples to do their full duty.~~

~~Eisenhower made some comment on events in the war in Italy. He stated that if the ^{Italian armies} ~~had~~ had done their utmost against the Nazis the Allies would have all of Italy right now. ^{But, as} ~~As~~ things happened the capitulation of Italy did not bring all the results ^{that} ~~they~~ had been hoped. ^{However,} ~~But,~~ he added, it resulted in a great deal -- enough to make the Italian action well worth while. ~~said he.~~ And he pointed to~~

MONTGOMERY

Today we have some philosophy of war propounded by the General who is to command the British forces in the Second Front invasion of Nazi controlled Europe. General Montgomery, of the British Eighth Army. In an interview with U.P. correspondent Frank Fisher he stated that his recipe for winning battles lies in the coordination between the ground and the air. That ground troops must have the greatest degree of confidence in the air forces and vice versa. To illustrate he spoke of what he called "inevitable accidents" such deplorable mishaps -- as when soldiers are bombed by their own bombers.

Whereupon the new British Commander for the Second Front invasion came forth with a new word; at least it sounds new to me. "Cockaboop!" What does it mean?

He was talking about the morale of the German soldiers and conceded that the Nazi troops

captured in Italy were well trained and first class. The younger of them, he explained, had been raised under the Hitler youth movement and were full of Nazi arrogance and confidence. "Very cockahoop", he called them. And to this he added "the ^{older} ~~soldier~~ ones are not so cockahoop." "But then, perhaps" he went on, "they have ~~been~~ begun to wonder why their ^{army} ~~armies~~ of supermen, which was sixty miles from Alexandria a year ago is now about the same distance from Rome".

Which reflection certainly is something to make them not so cockahoop.

And Terry O'Sullivan, a Hollywood announcer whom I met only a moment ago, but who looks decidedly cockahoop.

STRIKE

The strike peril was lightened today, when the non-operating railroad unions ~~was~~ called off their walk-out, scheduled ~~to~~ to begin Thursday - December Thirtty-first. The non-operating unions made their decision known in a letter to President Roosevelt in which they stated they had reached a general wage ~~ag~~ agreement with the railroad companies and would leave details in this to the decision of the President.

The December thirty-first strike-order now applies only to operating railroad employees -- and not all of these. Two of the five operating unions ~~that~~ had scheduled to strike called it off, leaving only three still pledged to a walk-out and it^{'s} believed in Washington that these ~~will~~ are likely to follow in line and cancel their strike.

The labor crisis, however, is still at a danger point, because of -- steel. The C.I.O. union of steel workers is threatening to strike and ninety-two thousand men are already out. They ~~went~~ went on strike as the Christmas holidays closed and the walk-out seems to be spreading. ^R The ~~main~~ complaint of the steel workers is to be found in the term retro-active pay. Their contract with the companies expired December twenty-fifth. And their demand is that any raise of pay under a new contract shall extend back to December twenty-fifth -- and be retro-active. ^{TR} The walk-out of steel workers which began today, is so serious that President Roosevelt ~~walked~~ cut short his Christmas vacation, and hurried back to Washington to deal with the steel ~~crisis~~ crisis. ^R And along about now, the Labor Board is gathering in Washington to review the question of

retro-active pay raises. These were voted down by the board, which will go into session at seven P.M. Eastern war time, to talk the matter over again.

COMMANDOS

A story from London suggests that preliminary operations for a second front may have already begun. This is based on a German communique stating that a party of French and British Commandos ~~landed on~~ ^{landed on} the French Channel Coast last Friday, and ~~tried~~ tried to penetrate German positions. The Nazi claim is that the Commandos were wiped out. ~~and~~ ^π there is no official British confirmation of this minor landing, but, ~~it~~ it is generally known in London that ~~the~~ Commandos have made a number of hit-and-run landings that have never been announced. And so, the one reported ~~by~~ today by Berlin may ~~it~~ well have occurred;

~~The London view is that a second front invasion would most likely be preceded by a series of Commando raids for the purpose of reconnaissance, getting information, feeling out the enemy defense positions. And so, the German report might indicate~~

the beginning of reconnaissance operations leading
to the zero hour for the second front.