

L.T. - GM - BROADCAST

January 17, 1955

(CHARLES COLLINGWOOD SUBSTITUTING)

C.C.: GOOD EVENING, EVERYBODY!

BUDGET

The principal figures in today's budget message are relatively simple. President Eisenhower asked Congress for sixty-two billion four hundred million dollars less than the current budget. The message to Congress estimates revenues for the next fiscal year at sixty billions, which is an increase of one billion over the current year. The arithmetic shows a deficit of two billion four hundred millions. This year the figure was four-and-a-half-billions in the red, so as has been indicated all along, the Eisenhower Administration has been unable to balance the budget, but the deficit promises to be cut nearly in half, all of which makes it evident that there won't

be any tax reduction this year. The President is regretful; explains that we've got to put up enormous amounts of money for national defense in the face of the peril of Communist imperialism. In Congress there are expressions of disappointment from Democrats and from some Republicans. Congressman Cannon, of Missouri, Democratic Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, calls the budget deceptive and says the Eisenhower Administration intends to continue an unbalanced budget indefinitely. Economy advocates of the GOP are talking about cuts in spending, especially in the realm of foreign aid. On the other hand, some Democrats question the reductions the President proposes in money for national defense.

GENERAL MOTORS

Tonight we have an economic forecast, that American industry this year will hit an all-time high. Our national production rising to a total of three hundred and seventy billion dollars. This word comes from Harlow Curtice, President of General Motors, who spoke at a gathering of business leaders. The forecast was all the more impressive because last January President Curtice, of GM, gave a remarkably accurate picture of business prospects for 1954. What about the automobile industry? Well, today the President of General Motors predicted that a total of seven million six hundred thousand passenger cars and trucks will be turned out this year with GM doing the biggest business in its history. This picture of industrial optimism was presented as the General Motors Motorama of 1955 opened in New York.

COSTA RICA

Four American fighter planes arrived in Costa Rica today to help in quelling the rebellion whereupon the insurgent air force promptly disappeared. It consisted of three planes. A dispatch from Nicaragua states that two of the rebel planes have landed in Nicaraguan territory, fleeing from Costa Rica. They were promptly sized by the Nicaraguan Government. The charge was that Nicaragua has incited the invasion of Costa Rica, but the Nicaraguan Government promised the Organization of American States to keep hands off and to intern any rebel planes found in Nicaragua, which promise now appears to have been carried out.

ATOMIC

The atomic word from Washington reverses previous information. It had been stated, on sound authority apparently, that new great hydrogen bomb experiments would be held in the mid-Pacific, but now the word in Washington is that the Government has decided not to hold any H-bomb tests this year. We hear that the experiments last year were so informative that there's no urgent need for any at present and that the political state of the world is not favorable for new demonstrations of the super-bomb. Emphasis is to be placed instead on President Eisenhower's atoms-for-peace plan.

WEST GERMANY

West Germany has rejected French proposals for an armament pool with a control over German economy and production of weapons. Representatives of seven European countries are meeting in Paris with the West Germans giving advance notice they're against the scheme for controls as advanced by France and her Premier, Mendes-France. Aside from that, they're willing to discuss the plan for an armament pool.

One goal that Lowell Thomas had in mind in those travels of his was to visit the King of Saudi Arabia so tonight he takes us to see that monarch of the desert and the fabulous realm of oil.

L.T.: Good evening, everybody! The richest man in the world you are now going to visit lives in a light blue palace in the middle of an oasis on a plateau in the heart of the Arabian peninsula. The King of Saudi Arabia had assigned one of his right-hand men to stay with me most of the time during my visit and now the hour has come for me to have an audience and dine with the King. It was about an hour before sunset that Sheik Abdullah Bulkhair drove me through the old walled city and then along the new four-lane parkway leading to Nasereeah Palace and gardens. This I was told is now the best stretch of road in the country. A couple of miles beyond Riyadh we passed through a large, double, stone gate festooned with many colored lights. This is a country where electricity is one of the new blessings with which Allah has rewarded the faithful, doing so through his geni*u*i, those American oil engineers, so it's not surprising that they have put strings of lights in all directions. Leaving the car at an inner gate

we walked through the King's garden, past great roses, roses as large as I have ever seen. We passed perhaps a hundred guards with their scimitars, also many high officials and relatives of the King. I was taken straight to an audience chamber. There, I sat on the King's right hand, chatting with him for a while, with Sheik Abdullah, the interpreter, down on one knee before his sovereign. We talked about the things that I had been seeing during the day and drank many cups of coffee and then the voice of the muezzin could be heard nearby. This was a reminder that the sun had set so the King led me to the terrace and there for fifteen minutes he led his advisors, his sons, and others in prayer.

The King asked me to join him as we walked into a brilliantly lighted banquet hall, some fifty

by a hundred feet, the walls all a continuous mirror, the table U-shaped, large enough to accommodate several hundred, the King sitting alone at the head with his top advisor, the elderly Sheik Jamal Husseini, a few feet below him on his left, perhaps twelve feet distant, with me on his right in relatively the same position, and then along the table on both sides of the hall sat his advisors, guests, and at least twenty-five of his sons, hanging behind him a green flag with the Saudian insignia, the palm tree and crossed scimitars in gold. The table seemed spread for a banquet, but I was told that the King always dines like this, in state. When the soup was brought on my royal host explained that he himself was on a diet whereupon he proceeded to enjoy the many-course meal just as much as I did, but then, like his father before him, he is an enormous man. Sheik Abdullah stood to one side between us throughout

the dinner and I did my best to keep up a running conversation... ~~He is an enormous man. Sheik Abdullah stood to one side, between us, throughout the dinner.~~

~~And I did my best to keep up a running conversation,~~ for the King himself doesn't seem to be a talkative man.

Serving us were tall blacks, striking men, all in white - white turbans, even white gloves. Sheik Jamal Husseini, who speaks fluent English, occasionally took part in the conversation, which was mainly about Saud's forty-day trip to America during the war, when I first met him.

The King said that he saw so much and moved so fast from city to city that his impressions were all mixed up. But he added that two sights that stood out above the others were the Empire State Building and the Hoover Dam. He said he was particularly interested in the latter, because he has hopes of building dams like it.

Then he spoke of a suggestion made some years ago by former President Hoover when he flew over the Middle East.

Mr. Hoover at that time said he thought it ought to be possible to divert the waters of those two great Mesopotamian rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, and make a paradise once more out of great areas of the desert. King Saud says that he intends to do just that, if the Government of Iraq will cooperate.

As course followed course, I marveled at the food. Aside from a few exotic touches, it was a meal such as you would get in the finest American hotel or Continental hotel, plus an American home-cooking touch. Instead of wines we had a series of non-alcoholic drinks, starting with grape juice and ending with camel's milk. So even though I had just topped off the banquet with a large wedge of typical American cocoanut cake and ice cream, I now added an Arabian flourish: dates and camel's milk.

Long years ago I discovered that you should not mention a tangible wish to an Oriental monarch unless

you are prepared to have him do something about it.

At this dinner I had another example of how kings like to humor the whims of a guest. One course we had was a delicious bird. He told me it was a bustard that he had shot on the desert hunting trip from which he had just returned. Whereupon I said that I didn't believe that I'd ever seen a bustard. A half-hour later, when we stepped out onto the terrace, lo and behold, up came one of the King's men with a live bustard in his arms, a bird a bit like a wild turkey. The bearded group, Saudi Arabian sheiks, gathered in a circle, and their robes closed it completely, and then King Saud had the bustard released in our midst so I could study it.

The finding of oil and the presence of American geologists and engineers of course means that new words and phrases are finding their way into Arabia. If you ask an Arab, "what is this?", he'll tell you, "why, that's a Stilson wrench." The King was dining with some

of our top oil people one nite at Dhahran when the usual American dessert was brought on. Through an interpreter one of the ladies asked the King what they called it in his language. "Ice Cream", replied the King, adding, "what do you call it?" Puzzled over how such a dinner could be served here in the heart of Arabia, I asked if I might visit the royal kitchens; and as I did so, a man jumped up, embraced me and said, "I know you": and then he added, "My name is Bill Gross; I'm from Brooklyn" - a crack American chef. King Saud on his visit, when he was Crown Prince, had hired one of our top-flight cooks. My visit had included many shocks, of which this was the climax.

Several hours later, laden with presents, robes and even a gold watch with his Arabian Majesty's picture on the face, I left for the Persian Gulf, flying away in the middle of an Arabian nite, returning from an adventure right out of the "Arabian Nights".

C.C.: Thank you, Lowell!

Hugh, Lowell's dinner with the King of Saudi Arabia was something special.