

L.T. P.& G. MONDAY, JULY 18, 1949

xx

(New York)

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

Right after this program tonight, I'm on my way - starting on that radio adventure in which I hope to reach just about the most unusual spot a radio newsman ever dreamed of -- to say nothing of broadcasting from. The whole business of getting there is so complicated, both in arrangement and in travel, that I still think it wise not to say what that destination is. So tonight I'll just note that I'm flying westward to San Francisco, and then still farther to the West. Reminding one of a line by Lord Byron, in the poem "Childe Harold."

Yon sun that sets upon the sea,  
We follow in his flight.

But now, for a while, let's leave Lord Byron and this radio adventure - and take a look at the news.

CHINA

There's word from China - that another huge Red offensive is sweeping on. This emanates from Communist sources, and pictures <sup>an advance on a</sup> ~~a sweep on the~~ four hundred mile front - <sup>the obvious purpose</sup> intended to bring the rest of China into the control of the Reds.

After the big push that engulfed Nanking and Shanghai, the Communist armies paused - and everybody believed that this was a merely breathing spell to muster forces for a new offensive. Which offensive is now being launched, according to the Communist news, which tells of three Red columns driving southward. One directed by a mysterious commander, General Liu Po Cheng, called - "the one-eyed dragon." The column under his command is reported to have captured the harbor of Ichang, on the Yangtze - two hundred miles west of Hankow. That's the gateway to the rich province of Szechuan.

The Communists also give a figure for their war losses during the past three years. Ordinarily, the Reds don't say anything about their casualties, but now they release a

figure - nearly a million and a half. (That many casualties since they began their ambitious campaign to seize all China. A million wounded, nearly a quarter of a million killed, a hundred and eighty-nine thousand missing.)

But the ~~war~~ woes of China are not only those of war.

There are floods now - vast inundations in the southern part of the Yangtze Valley, twenty million people reported ~~to be~~ homeless, fifty-seven thousand lives lost in the swollen waters. Hardest hit of all is the province of Hunan, called China's "rice bowl." And there's a threat of a great famine.

Sudden cloudbursts hit the country, one river reported to have risen fifteen feet in a single night, water covering everything, in all directions, except pagodas on hilltops.

~~The magnitude of the inundation is illustrated by the mishap~~ of a river pilot, Directing a steamboat, he lost his way, because he could no longer tell - which was river and which was land.

## CZECHOSLOVAKIA

News from Czechoslovakia tells of six Cabinet Ministers flying to Moscow today. No explanation is given why so important a part ~~export~~ <sup>at Prague</sup> of the Red Government is going to the Kremlin. But report links this trip with the defiance of the Roman Catholic clergy - the weekend action by the priests of Czechoslovakia in proclaiming their allegiance to Archbishop Beran. This in the face of a Communist attempt to break the clergy away from the Archbishop and the Vatican.

## DEWEY

In New York there was a roar today - the roar of the Lions. The Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Lions Clubs opened at Madison Square Garden, with an address by Governor Dewey. The Governor, recently returned from a trip to Europe, gave his opinion that the economic salvation of the old continent lay in an economic system of free trade and exchange between the various countries, now divided by tariffs and economic blocs. But, said Governor Dewey, the way is difficult, because some countries insist on keeping their own systems of industry and commerce, isolated and apart. Which, in Western Europe, would apply chiefly to Great Britain - and the Labor Government policy of closed in Socialism.

## UNIFICATION

President Truman has presented a plan of his own for tighter unification of the armed forces. He sent it to Congress today, saying he'd prefer the legislators to pass their own bill. But, just in case they don't - here's what the President himself will do. His plan will go into effect in sixty days - unless Congress takes action by that time.

The President proposes an increase of authority for the Secretary of Defense, and denies that this would imply a threat of dictatorship. He says it would mean better civilian control, tighter unification, and a probable saving of money.

## HAWAIIAN STRIKE

In the Hawaiian strike, the statement that the walkout, which has lasted for seventy-nine days, could be settled immediately, if President Truman were to appoint an impartial board to arbitrate. The declaration was made by Australian born Harry Bridges, the West Coast Union leader - who is under indictment on charges of concealing his Communist affiliations when he applied for nationalization as a citizen. While under this indictment, Bridges is in command of the Hawaiian strikers.

The statements were made today to a Senate Committee, which is considering legislation to enable President Truman to intervene. The Bridges proposal was rejected by a spokesman for the employers out in Hawaii - he contending that the real motive of the strike is, not wages, but an attempt to establish Union control.

The latest -- both sides have agreed to meet with Federal Mediator Cyrus Ching.

ROBINSON

A Congressional Committee heard a baseball player today - a second baseman. But he didn't talk about lashing out home-runs or fielding hard hit balls. Jackie Robinson, the first negro to play in Big League baseball - giving his answer to the Communistic statements of Actor and Singer Paul Robeson, who <sup>has</sup> told the Committee that, in case of war with Soviet Russia, the American negroes would not fight for their own country. <sup>It</sup> Jackie Robinson's reply to this was that he didn't pretend to speak for the negroes of the United States as Paul Robeson did in his deep voice, famous for Old Man River. Whereupon the ball player gave his own opinion, with some neat phraseology. "I've got too much invested for my wife and child and myself in the future of this country - and I, and other Americans of many races and faiths, have too much invested in our country's welfare, for any of us to throw it away because of a siren song sung in bass."

~~(He said he would not defend the loyalty of the American negroes because, in his words - "any loyalty that~~



~~needs defends cannot amount to much in the long run."~~

Jackie Robinson told of his own experience with the Reds in their attempts to enlist support among the negroes.

"They used to send out young ladies," said he, "but we had enough intelligence to realize what it was all about."

He urged that a sharp and distinct line be drawn between the problems of minorities that we have in this country, and the pro-Soviet propaganda of the Communists.

## FOUR STATES

A stately ceremony was held today, stately is exactly the word, suggesting the question - at what point in this country do four states meet? Can you name the four?

Well, they are Colorado, Utah, New Mexico and Arizona, and the meeting place is in one of the wildest parts of this country. It happens to be, at the same time, the junction point of two Indian reservations, the Navajos and the Utes. The nearest town of any sort is Durango, Colorado. On our trip to the west last Spring, we drove through that remote and <sup>almost</sup> empty territory, and I gave this program from Durango. So I can tell you from immediate experience that the point where the four states meet is truly the Wild West.

Today, four motor caravans went rolling, each with a Governor. Proceeding to the junction point, where there was a unique ceremony - enacted by Governors Knous of Colorado, Lee of Utah, Mabry of New Mexico, and Garbey of Arizona. With each one standing on the territory of his own state, the four Governors shook hands - at <sup>the</sup> ~~point~~ point where the four states meet.

## PILOT

An exploit of aviation was performed today at Portland, Oregon- when a pilot cracked his neck in such fashion that he couldn't turn his head and look at the instrument board of his plane or see where he was flying, as he made a landing. He was chaperoned in by two comrades.

~~He is~~ Lieutenant John Haley of the National Guard, who was flying <sup>in</sup> formation - when his Mustang Fighter stalled suddenly, with a violent snap. The pilot blacked out for a moment, and when he recovered he found his neck and head were twisted, and paralyzed - the sudden snap of the plane having dislocated a vertebra of the neck. So there he was, rigid and distorted - in a speedy fighter plane. There were two Mustangs flying in formation with him, one piloted by Captain Carl Brose, the other by Major Gordon Doolittle - no relation, apparently, to General Jimmy Doolittle. They saw that something was wrong with Lieutenant Haley and his plane. They got in touch with him by radio. He was able to talk all right, clear of mind. He told them about his twisted head

and paralyzed neck, unable to see where he was flying.

So they gave him instructions, guiding him as he worked the controls.

They virtually flew his plane, and brought him down to the airfield, where he made a perfect landing, then immediately fainted, blacking out into unconsciousness. Taken to a hospital for the treatment of that dislocated vertebra of the neck.

## WIFE

At Burlington, Vermont, the Yankee neighbors are helping a French war bride who had a peculiar misunderstanding of American ways. Facing eviction from a poor home, the Salvation Army has paid her back rent, <sup>and</sup> the local folks chipping in with furniture and provisions - after that curious idea she had.

Mrs. Kenneth Gaboree was a girl in France who met an American G.I., and came over here as a war bride. They set up housekeeping at Burlington, and mighty poor housekeeping it was - the husband, a plumber's helper, spending his wages on drinking and frolicking around. The French bride endured it all, making no complaint. Two children came, and she was hardly able to keep them alive, - the way her husband squandered his pay. But ~~she~~ still she made no complaint. Today she said - she thought that American wives were usually treated that way. A foreigner, isolated - she thought it was a custom of the country.

But, finally, with starvation near for herself and

her two children, she went to the neighbors and told her story.

Whereupon her husband's own brother took her to the State's Attorney, and had her put in a charge of non-support.

So now the judge has sentenced the husband to ninety nights in jail. He is to work on the job during the day, and go home to a dungeon cell every night - handing over his pay check to his wife.

And, to tide things over, the Salvation Army stepped in - together with the Yankee neighbors.

## INSECT

Today gives the details of a fantastic event that occurred in a theatrical performance last night at Dallas, Texas - the star actress going into sudden wild shrieks, going half mad, when a flying insect struck her in the face and dropped down inside her dress. Which certainly would be disconcerting - but it takes the story today to explain why the mishap was a thing of such frenzy.

The actress is Nanette Fabray, well known in Broadway musicals - and we are told how, in childhood, she had a weird fright. A small girl in the country, she was beset one day by a swarm of locusts - the grasshoppers that so often plague the west. A cloud of locusts descended upon the child, covering her, creeping all over her - throwing her into agonies of terror. From then on - Nanette Fabray had a morbid fear of insects.

This summer she went to Dallas for an outdoor season there -- and, if you've ever been in Texas, you know about the nightly swarms of insects. There are June bugs, lightning bugs, crickets, moths, beetles, not to mention the Texas mosquitos. Bugs are attracted by a

light, and you know how a stage is lighted. The play, an operetta called "Bloomer Girl," and during her solos the spotlight is on the soprano star -- turning her into a beacon for the bugs.

Other people in the theatrical troupe marvelled at the courage of Nanette Fabray, as she played night after night in Bloomer Girl - six performances. Then the last performance, last night - and early in the show, as the spotlight played upon her, it was noticed that the actress reached up and brushed a beetle out of her hair. Which must have been unnerving, but she went on.

Then later in the play came the catastrophe, when she was singing in the full glare of the spotlight and a big bug, a fast flying insect, struck her in the face, and then dropped down into her bosom.

She let out a scream, turned her back to the audience and yelled, "I can't go on, I can't go on." Members in the cast helped her into the wings. And then for three minutes the audience heard her screams - the wild terror incited by the nightmare of the locusts in early childhood.



## ACTRESS

At Princeton, New Jersey - another case of theatrical trouble. Harold Kennedy, who operates an open air playhouse, files charges against Actress Joan Blondell. Also - her husband, Broadway Producer Michael Todd. He alleges assault and battery, including a crack over the head with a silver handled mirror, wielded by the star.

Princeton is the site of the venerable university, but the uproar in show business was not at all in the academic tradition. The play on the boards - called "Happy Birthday." Well, it might have been a birthday, but it was not so happy.

Broadway star Joan Blondell was displeased with the style of acting of her supporting cast, and Manager Kennedy claims she used strong language. The climax came with a dressing room scene to beat anything on the stage. One story says there was fighting with fists and chairs. Punches were landed and chairs were thrown, and Manager Kennedy claims that Joan Blondell landed on him with an ornate mirror. He claims she grabbed the looking glass

by the silver handle and smacked him over the head.

Michael Todd, husband of Joan Blondell, denies this. He says the actress may have thrown a wad of kleenex at the manager. Nothing harder than kleenex.

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One of the peculiar things about this trip I am making, is the spot on which it has placed Lowell, Jr. He is scheduled to come <sup>along,</sup> ~~me,~~ the idea being <sup>for him</sup> ~~to~~ join me somewhere on the route. So all I had to do was - tell him. But the whole thing broke rather suddenly - and where was he? You'd think a father might know the whereabouts of his son. <sup>P</sup> But, for the past several weeks, Lowell, Jr. has been in ~~Persia~~ Iran, - Persia - which is a long distance away. I sent a cable, hoping to find him in Teheran - the remote capital of Persia. All I told him was to travel several thousand miles, and join me in about a week - involving a journey over some of the most exotic seas and lands of this earth. <sup>P</sup> But I got a message back that Lowell, Jr. was not in Teheran. The last heard of him he had gone to Ispahan, still more remote - romantic Ispahan, celebrated by Omar Khayyam, Ispahan of the Rubaiyat. <sup>Which</sup> ~~That~~ made it difficult - for time was flying.

At the American Embassy in Teheran, they said they would try to locate Lowell, Jr. at Ispahan - and they did.

END -2

I got a message from him saying -- hoorah, I'll be there. Several thousand miles away from Persia.

One odd thing is this. When he left for Iran, Lowell Jr. planned to make a trip through Persia and on through Afghanistan. Which, he thought, would be the height of adventure romance. But he didn't know the half of it. He could never have guessed the kind of jaunt it has turned out to be - the one I am starting tonight.

I will broadcast from stops along the way, giving news reports from one place or another. The whole series will be one of increasing strangeness, broadcasts from points more and more surprising.

Whenever I am out of touch by radio, Charles Collingwood will take my place, doing his usual fine job. Sometimes, I'll be cutting in on his program, speaking from places along the route of the wildest and wooliest radio adventure of them all.

Now -- so long until the first stop from which I can get through on the air.