

NORWAY

L.J. - Sunoco. Thursday, April 25, 1940.

The London war office tonight issues a denial of reports that British forces in the Trondheim area have been forced back in disorder. ^{denial quotes} The ~~report~~ ^{report} uses the expression - "cut to pieces." Not true! - ^{London} says the war office; ^{and} ~~London~~ ^{London} gives an official account of what happened in that sector. "The facts are," it says, "that an advance detachment of a large Allied force pushed forward toward Trondheim, but was threatened with being cut off by German reinforcements ^{that were} moving by water inside the Trondheim fjord."

^{London} The war office bulletin adds that the Nazi landing party was coordinated with German infantry that had advanced by land from Trondheim, ^{and the Nazis} ~~They~~ captured the place called Steinkjer, as we heard last night. The British command describes the ^{retreat} ~~withdrawal~~ of its troops in these words:- "The advance party therefore withdrew with some loss, but was not followed up by the enemy."

This official British war office dispatch is in decided contrast to a sensational story cabled by an American newspaper correspondent who is with Allied units in the Trondheim

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area. He's Leland Stowe of the NEW YORK EVENING POST. That same Leland Stowe who cabled headlines in the story of treason and secret agent conspiracy in the seizure of the Norwegian ports - the Trojan horse, the fifth column. ^{TP} Today Leland Stowe cables to the POST an amazing account of what happened to the British at ~~Fjord~~ Trondheim. He calls it QUOTE A bitterly disilluisioning and almost unbelievable story. END QUOTE. He describes the British units in that area as one battalion of territorials and one battalion of the King's own Royal Light Infantry - a total of fifteen hundred men. He says they are raw troops, with an average of only one year of training. "They were dumped," says he, "in Norway's deep snows and quagmires of April slush, without a single anti-aircraft gun, without one squadron of supporting planes, without a single piece of field artillery."

"They are faced," says Leland Stowe, "with crack German regulars, most of them veterans of the Polish invasion. These Germans," he adds, "are copiously equipped with modern weapons, tanks, artillery, war planes - mechanized equipment."

Leland Stowe reports the battle in these terms:- "After nearly

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four days of fighting, nearly half of the British expeditionary force contingent has been knocked out - either killed, wounded or captured." ~~He says they were decisively defeated.~~ "I was in Steinkjer," he cables, "just before the British lines were blasted to pieces." He tells how a battalion of territorials were torn and broken under what he describes in these words:- "The terrible triple onslaught of German infantry, tri-motored bombers, and naval artillery firing from destroyers at the head of the fjord." He quotes one of the British officers as saying:- "We have simply been massacred. It is the planes," the officer exclaimed. "We've got no planes to fight back with, and we've got no anti-aircraft guns." Leland Stowe lays emphasis on the deadly work of the Nazi flying force, which, having no opposition, flew low and shattered the troops on the snow. The war correspondent for the ^{ing} EVEN POST adds that the British soldiers have no white disguise such as the Finns wore to hide themselves. They're black figures outlined against the white snow, says he.

It is perhaps this story to which the London war office refers when it denies that British units near Trondheim have been - "cut to pieces."

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As the Norway war developed today, that Trondheim area becomes of secondary importance. The significant phase of the ^{fighting} ~~war~~ is in southern Norway, ~~near the Swedish borders~~. There the Norse army is making its defense, and has been joined by British contingents moving inland from the coast. [¶] German and Swedish sources report that the rapid advance of the Nazi motorized column is continuing. In some sectors they can't be meeting with much resistance - advancing fifty-five miles in a day. Two German columns are pushing on, one straight to the north, parallel with the Swedish border. The other - swerving to the northwest, toward the coast, toward Trondheim - trying to join with the German ~~forces~~ force there and make one continuous line. [¶] The military movements are rapid and shifting, and the warlike scene is confusing. But it's apparent that the Germans and British are clashing between two towns called Lillehammer and Domba's, the latter place being the British concentration point.

Of the fighting in this southern area, today's bulletin issued by the British war office gives the following brief account:- "In the south," it says, "increased enemy pressure necessitated the

withdrawal of Allied forces from positions previously held near Lillehammer."

From the German side, we're given a list of places bombed by the Nazi air force today. Places behind the British lines, railroad communications, transport centers. ^{TR} Neutral sources confirm this, with stories of intensive German air action striking incessantly at strategic points, with the purpose of paralyzing the communications of the Allied army. This - combined with rapid thrusts by motorized columns. A modernized, mechanized campaign in the blitzkrieg fashion. ^{TR} The Nazi units in Norway are moving swiftly, but the decisive issue of battle is still to come. For the Allies are being reenforced, with new ^{constantly} British units landing in Norway.

REPRISALS

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Once more the Germans are talking ominously about British bombing. The Nazi news agency is making statements about Royal Air Force bombers hitting towns of no military importance. Oslo is specified, the City of Heide in Schleswig-Holstein, and a bathing resort on the Island of Sylt. That island of course is a Number One Nazi airbase, but apparently it has a bathing resort too. Nazi Germany threatens - retaliation. They say that if the British keep dropping bombs ^{on places} of no military consequence, they'll respond - bomb for bomb. ^R Once more the threat of indiscriminate air raiding.

London responds with a denial, declaring that British war planes have not bombed any open towns - only places of military importance.

NAVAL

Paris reports a clash between French and German warships in the Skagerrak. ~~In Paris,~~ the Minister of the Navy told a Committee of the Chamber of Deputies that French destroyers sank two German patrol ships, and a French submarine destroyed a Nazi submarine. He said the destroyers were attacked by bombing planes, but were not damaged.

The Berlin version of this is that the French destroyers were driven away in a fight at the mouth of the Skagerrak.

ENGLAND

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It looks as if England might curb one of its most famous institutions, soap box oratory. It's astonishing how far the English will go in permitting so much freedom of speech - even in the desperate straights of war. In Hyde Park, Communists and pro-Nazis are permitted to speak their minds - and orate their heads off. It's going so far that now there's a proposal to curb them.

Today Sir John Anderson, Minister of Home Defense, told the House of Commons that it's time to crack down on the soap boxers for sabotaging the war. "These activities," said he, "have so far had practically little effect. But, nevertheless, the possible consequences of continuous attempts to impede the war effort cannot be ignored."

The Minister of Home Defense declared that stern measures will be taken against all sorts of subversive elements, enemy aliens, aliens in general, and unsympathetic Britons.

A lot of ~~them~~ them will be interned in concentration camps.

Even members of Parliament might be interned. ^{For when} Sir John was asked if the new drive might apply to M.P.'s, ^{he} ~~he~~ replied:- "We must

1. { set the same rule for all, "I think."

Great Britain is joining other countries in guarding against the danger of Trojan horse tactics, the fifth column, ~~as they are called.~~

ITALY

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The huge army which Great Britain and France have assembled in the Near East has aroused a good deal of speculation. What's it for? ^a~~The~~ very plain answer comes from Italy tonight. An important Fascist journal makes this statement: "Great Britain has carefully prepared a military machine in the Near East, which is aimed solely against Italy's African possessions." The newspaper points out that heavy units of the British fleet are in the Mediterranean, and paints the picture of the Allies being ready to take swift action against Italian power and possessions. It sounds reasonable -- safeguarding themselves, if Mussolini should jump the wrong way.

These newspaper statements are part of a new wave of anti-Ally['] pronouncements, with one Fascist Journal predicting that the war will turn into a ^{general} world-wide struggle between the have and have-no^x powers -- in which case Italy would be on the side of the have-nots.

STATE OF WAR

President Roosevelt today issued a proclamation - *that*
a state of war exists between Norway and Germany. Well, we all
knew that, but really there never has been a declaration of war
between those two countries. War is one of the things ~~that are~~
seldom declared in these times.

The presidential proclamation now gives Norway the
status of a belligerent, subject to the cash and carry provision
of the American Neutrality Law. Nazi Germany of course has been
in that category since last fall.

In Congress the anti-New Dealers won a victory today in the fight concerning the Wagner Act, the Wage-Hour Law. The lower house has before it three amendments to the act which controls work and pay. The question was -- should the law-makers consider these amendments and take a vote on them? Or should the amendments be left over? ^{TR} The administration wanted them left over. Keep the law ^{unchanged} ~~in chains~~ for another year; -- that was the president's idea. He stated his position in a letter to the Chairman of the House Labor Committee, Congress^{woman} ~~man~~ Mary Norton. And the letter was made public just before the congressional battle began today. ^{TR} Moreover, President Roosevelt made an outright declaration against one of the three proposed amendments -- the Barden amendment. This would exempt agricultural labor from the regulation of the Wage Hour Law.

There was a hot debate, a parliamentary struggle and a series of votes. The anti-administration forces ^S scored on all points, voted to bring up all three amendments for consideration -- including the Barden amendment. This inspite of the presidential opposition.

So now the business of changing the Wagner Act will be thrashed out, and today's vote is taken to indicate ^{that} the majority in the lower House is in favor of some kind of an amendment or other. However, any labor law alteration would have to go to the Senate, ^{and} ~~it~~ it isn't likely that the Senate would take any action this session. No time for it. They want to adjourn by June First - campaign summer.

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And the President today lost another congressional bout -- though this ~~was~~ one was hardly a great matter of national policy. It concerns the old affair, payments to soldiers -- Spanish-American War veterans this time. Congress voted a bill granting ~~them~~ money to soldiers of twenty-one years ago -- who in Eighteen Ninety-Nine stayed in the Philippine Island^s after peace with Spain was signed. There are five thousand of them and the bill proposed to give ~~them~~ seven million dollars. The lower house passed the bill, it went to the president. Today he vetoed it, but immediately afterward Congress overrode the White House and passed the bill over the veto by ~~more~~ more than the necessary two-thirds ~~was~~ majority.

FIREMEN

Here are two strange stories of fires and fire alarms.

At North Andover, Massachusetts, two city firemen were suspended from their jobs. On what charge? They were found guilty of setting fires. They started what it was their profession to extinguish. The reason is given as - intoxication, which I suppose can explain anything.

The other story is from Jersey City, New Jersey, and tells how eight years ago a city fireman was killed in a crash, while answering a false ~~alarm~~ fire alarm. Today, his twenty-seven year old son was sentenced to a year in prison. For what offense? For turning in a false alarm. He told the judge he couldn't explain why he did it. And I don't suppose anybody else can explain so strange a twist of the mind.

BOOTLEG

We might almost think ourselves back in prohibition days - hearing tonight's tale of the biggest bootleg ring on record. It's last minute news, however. At New York today a federal grand jury indicted a hundred and twenty-two persons, and that sets a record. It's the largest number of defendants ever included in a single indictment. The charge is: stupendous bootleg operations which during the last ten months cheated the government out of liquor taxes to the tune of one million, six hundred thousand dollars. And that's no small potatoes, either.

This alky mob is called the Manna gang, same spelling as the "manna" from heaven, but it wasn't heavenly at all.

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Federal agents declare that the Manna gang controlled the output of illicit stills in northern New Jersey, and distributed illegal hooch in five states - New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. They had three offices in New Jersey and six in New York. They stored their bootleg product on seven New Jersey farms and in seven New York garages. They operated eighty-seven delivery cars and trucks. The Manna gang

seems to have run to "sevens", may have thought it their lucky number. But their luck failed them, when the federal agents got on ^{to them} in a most complicated fashion. The sleuthing sounds like ^{some thing for} ~~something of~~ the more lurid of Hollywood films.

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The detectives used elaborate disguises, a la Sherlock Holmes. ~~They had trucks with peep holes through which they watched the alcohol operations. A federal agent ~~in~~ got himself a hide away across the street from the main bootleg garage in New York, and for nine months he snapped pictures of the huge trucks coming and going, a photographic record. So many came and went that a man was stationed in front to direct the traffic.~~ Some agents disguised themselves as messenger boys on bicycles, and pedalled along keeping tabs on the trucks, while some other agents really capped the climax. They were the youngest of the federal men, and they disguised themselves as half-grown street urchins - hitching rides. They hitched rides on the bootleg trucks and in that fashion traced them right to the doors where the delivery was made. In that way they got the goods on the Manna gang, they say - and describe it as the biggest underworld organization that ever ran an alcohol racket. Apparently we've had to wait until seven years after repeal to reach the bootleg climax. - and now for Hugh and his Nu Blue climax.

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