

L. J. Suroco - Wednesday, Jan. 15, 1941

DEFENSE

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The Navy is on the doorstep of Congress asking for still more warships, <sup>and</sup> better anti-aircraft defenses. Rear Admiral Robinson, Chief of the Bureau of Ships of the Navy, was talking to the Naval Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives today. He told the Congressmen that the navy is going to want even more money than it has asked for, ~~as yet~~, plus authority to build two-hundred-and-eighty submarine chasers, mine sweepers and motor torpedo boats. Most of these, said the Admiral, could be built this year on the Great Lakes.

He told them many other things. Our naval experts are taking Hitler's dive bombers **very** seriously. Robinson told the Committee that they look upon the dive bomber as a grave threat to the fleet. So he wants Congress to authorize the spending of three hundred million dollars to improve anti-aircraft defenses on our men of war. Even with that large sum it will take the navy two or three years to do the job.

Among the things our fighting ships need are armour ~~shells~~ for top-side gun and signal crews, and a heavy equipment of rapid-firing pom-pom guns.

Robinson admitted that the navy experts have not yet been able to solve the problem of protecting destroyers from air bombers. Any additional armament would make them too heavy.

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The committee lost no time in doing what Rear Admiral Robinson had asked. They promptly okayed the spending of three ~~hundred~~ hundred millions for that purpose.

In another part of the capital, Secretary of State Hull was having an interesting time with the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House. The Secretary told the Congressmen something that several experts have scouted as ridiculous. Germany could easily cross the Atlantic, said Hull, if Great Britain is defeated. A sensational statement that, coming from a man with Hull's reputation <sup>as a conservative.</sup> ~~for conservative conservatism~~, and it sounded all the more spectacular because of the quiet manner in which he said it. <sup>Secy. Hull</sup> He was appearing as the first witness in behalf of the Aid to Britain bill. One congressman asked him whether he considered that measure ~~absolutely~~ absolutely necessary to the defense of the United States, and he replied that he'd been unwillingly compelled to believe that it was.

Another thing he said was that the ~~War~~ War Aid bill was not a violation of the Johnson Act, the act forbidding any loans or credits to governments in default of their debt to the United States. He admitted that the bill would involve a violation of the Hague Convention, but he claimed that the Hague Convention ~~didn't~~ would not apply in the present European war. He explained that

Article Twenty-eight of the Convention provides that it does not apply unless all the belligerent countries are a party to it.

Germany and Italy, said the Secretary, are not parties to the Hague Convention. He said further that Germany and Italy have paid no attention to such principles of International Law, but have at will and without notice occupied many countries. "It is idle for us," he said, "to rely on the rules of Neutrality for safety. We have to recognize that Germany's program is a world movement of conquest, and that only the law of self-defense can be invoked from any practical viewpoint. It is the only course to follow," he added, "if we are to learn anything from the disastrous experience of those countries which have been swallowed up and are now under the heel of an aggressor." Then he used these words, "I could not in good conscience advise my fellow citizens to follow the suicidal course of Holland, Belgium, and those other peoples <sup>who</sup> ~~that~~ followed the rules of neutrality to their everlasting destruction."

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At <sup>and</sup> another point, he said: "We are still clinging to the form and tatters of neutrality, but we are not going to let that chloroform us into a sense of mistaken security." <sup>and see</sup> Somebody raised the question of appeasement. <sup>A</sup> Hull ridiculed the notion that Germany, Italy, or Japan could be appeased.

Congressman Ham Fish asked him whether he would object if the Committee rewrote the bill to bring it within the Constitution. Hull's reply was that he would want to say something about ~~ix~~ what the Constitution does provide. Fish then said he disagreed with only one part of what Hull had said, his prophecy that Germany could easily cross the Atlantic. How could that happen ~~ix~~ when our Navy is at least six times greater than the Germany navy? Hull replied that any power which got control of the seas in a movement of world conquest would attack.

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The party became exciting when Republican George Tinkham of Massachusetts got into the discussion. <sup>The bearded Tinkham</sup> ~~He~~ read a statement <sup>in</sup> which criticized <sup>in it</sup> the bill, <sup>He</sup> severely charged that it would set up a Dictatorship in the United States. <sup>To this</sup> Hull's reply was caustic. "The citizens of Holland and Poland were reading just such statements, and they are now on the chain gang," <sup>said he,</sup> Then the bearded Congressman Tinkham declared that Secretary Hull was evading the point. Congressman ~~Sol~~ Bloom, Chairman of the Committee, came to Hull's rescue, rebuked the bearded gentleman from Massachusetts, to which Tinkham replied, "But the Secretary doesn't answer my question."

Then a Texas representative wanted the Chairman to compel Tinkham to ask specific questions instead of making speeches. Tinkham replied, "I am asking questions." Tinkham then wanted to know whether we would rush to the help of Russia if she were attacked by the Axis. Hull replied that the question was too theoretical for discussion. To which Tinkham <sup>responded</sup> ~~replied~~ that he didn't think it was theoretical at all. Thereupon Chairman Bloom ~~got into the fight~~, rapped his gavel and ruled that the Secretary had answered the question.

The Democratic members of the committee were obviously ~~sixteen~~ irritated by their bearded colleague from Massachusetts and tried to shut him up. Secretary Hull intervened and said he had plenty of time <sup>and</sup> ~~he~~ didn't care if Tinkham talked twenty or even thirty minutes. Thereupon Tinkham asked whether <sup>the</sup> ~~that~~ bill meant that we have abandoned all neutrality. <sup>Sec.</sup> Hull's reply was interesting. He said ~~that~~ the United States Government had tried and failed to uphold International law by agreement, and that the law of self-preservation has begun to assert itself.

The Secretary <sup>a state</sup> then said that his door had been

open for eight years, <sup>that Cong,</sup> but <sup>^</sup>Tinkham never once had darkened it to seek information. To which Tinkham said he'd been disturbed by the way in which the Hull and Roosevelt policies had developed. To which Hull replied, <sup>said he! -</sup> "Frankly, I thought you wanted to be <sup>^</sup>disturbed." At that everyone in the committee room roared with laughter.

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One point made by Tinkham was that the War Aid bill would give the President authority to ~~commit~~ an act of war. To that Hull made a biting reply: "The President has all the authority he needs now," said the Secretary.

ADD CONGRESS

Secretary Hull wasn't <sup>the</sup> only Cabinet Minister before the Committee today. Secretary-of-the-Treasury Morgenthau followed him and showed the Congressmen a statement of Great Britain's financial standing. It tended to show that the British would be unable to pay for all the war orders placed in America this year. Exclusive of Canada, the Empire would need three billion, nineteen millions. Its total available assets in dollar exchange are no more than one billion, one-hundred-and-seventy-five millions. In other words the British would be shy one billion, four-hundred-and-sixty-four millions on their munitions bill to the United States for the current year.



STRIKES

Strikes, walk-outs, Labor disputes East and West.

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In Detroit James F. Dewey, United States Conciliator, <sup>is still</sup> ~~is~~ trying to settle the argument at five plants of the Eaton Manufacturing Company, four of which have been turning out ~~principally~~ airplane engine parts.

At San Diego, California, <sup>at</sup> ~~the men of~~ the Ryan Aeronautical Company <sup>the men</sup> are asking for more wages. What's more, they've authorized a committee of United Automobile Workers to call a strike if the company doesn't ~~get in~~ <sup>give in</sup>.

<sup>And-in</sup> ~~Now we come to~~ Cleveland. One thousand employees of the Weatherhead ~~Manufacturing~~ Company ~~in that city~~ will vote <sup>on</sup> tomorrow <sup>to</sup> whether ~~they shall~~ strike or not. They are asking for a ten percent raise, and ~~the~~ company officials declare they have already offered concessions. <sup>+ plant</sup> ~~The factory~~ has contracts for a million dollars worth of ammunition parts.

In Providence, Rhode Island, one thousand employees of the Narragansett Electric Company have been called out, the strike to begin at seven O'clock tomorrow. The Mayor of Providence is trying to arbitrate.

<sup>also</sup>  
The International Harvester Company has been

threatened with a strike, by <sup>threatening to go out in</sup> farm equipment workers <sup>in all its</sup> ~~in all its~~ <sup>all their</sup> plants, all over the country. ~~The company has offered to discuss~~ ~~the matter in two of its factories.~~

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In Pennsylvania there are outlaw strikes <sup>even</sup> not <sup>^</sup> authorized by the Union, in three coal mines.

In Bayonne, New Jersey, the employees of a company making boilers for Uncle Sam's navy have been out ever since January third.

And that, we hear, is just a cursory glance at the labor picture throughout the country

## BATTLESHIPS

Here's an interesting opinion from the military experts in Soviet Russia. They seem to find the naval war in the Mediterranean particularly valuable as a contribution to knowledge. The principal lesson from those Mediterranean operations is that the heavy battleship still is boss. That's what the Soviet experts think. Of course by itself this opinion wouldn't amount to much since the military exploits of Soviet Russia do not exactly tend to make the world at large entertain a vast respect for their Generals and Admirals. But it happens that this view concurs almost literally with that of our own <sup>experts.</sup> ~~sea lords who are admittedly some punkins in their professions.~~ The Soviet observers go on to point out that the Mediterranean ~~war~~ war has proved that mastery of the air cannot secure command of the sea and that sea command depends primarily on heavy battleships.

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The Russians also point out that when Mussolini attacked Greece he <sup>really gave</sup> ~~gave decided~~ help to the British. <sup>By</sup> ~~he~~ enabled them to <sup>(get)</sup> ~~have~~ new naval and airplane bases. Originally Foreign military authorities believed that British operations in those latitudes were intended only to ~~if~~ defend Egypt. But now there

can be no doubt that the British are trying to knock ~~out the~~ <sup>stally out,</sup>  
~~African enemy~~ <sup>and do it</sup> decisively.

Our own military observers point out a new meaning for the latest phase of that <sup>e</sup> Mediterranean war. ~~It is~~ <sup>founded</sup> on a report that emanates from Budapest. The report is that Hitler and Mussolini are going to have a conference with the Chiefs of the French army and Navy, General Huntziger and Admiral Darlan. And the rumor goes on that the object of this conference is to persuade the French to let the Axis powers have Toulon as a naval base in France, and Bizerta in North Africa. Also what is left of the French fleet, the Dictators would like to have.

The principal immediate purpose of Hitler and Mussolini right now is to close the bottleneck between Africa and Sicily. From Cape Bon in Africa to Cape Granatola <sup>in</sup> Sicily, ~~is~~ a stretch of only eighty-five miles of water. ~~Almost~~ <sup>And</sup> right bang in the middle of it is Mussolini's island of Pantellaria, ~~It has~~ <sup>with</sup> fortifications of <sup>vast</sup> ~~huge, extra~~ strength. With Nazi dive bombers and ~~visiting~~ Fascist submarines operating out of Tunisia as well as <sup>from</sup> Pantellaria and Sicily, the closing of that eighty-five mile stretch of water might be ~~accomplished~~ <sup>And</sup> accomplished. That would shut off the British from

Egypt, break communications between the Western and the Eastern British fleets, and compel the British to give up supplying their forces in Northern Africa through the Mediterranean. *So some experts think. All of which is mere,*  
~~We *xxx* have to remember that all this is~~ conjecture, *based on the*  
~~it is founded on that as yet unconfirmed~~ rumor from Budapest that Hitler and Mussolini are going to meet the heads of the French military establishment. *H* So far the Axis powers have not been able seriously to interfere with the British in the Mediterranean. Even though three important British fighting vessels were damaged by Hitler's dive bombers, the merchantmen they were convoying reached Greece in safety, a distance of six hundred miles from the scene of the battle. Which means that the British communication lines in the Mediterranean are still operating.

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GREECE

The report from Athens is that the Greeks are getting closer to Valona, the Albanian seaport on the Adriatic. Fighting in a terrific <sup>blizzard</sup> ~~snowstorm~~, Greek soldiers have taken by storm still more Italian positions. The Fascisti are falling back slowly, <sup>So</sup> says the spokesman for the Greek army.

And here I have a telegram from Spyros Skouras, Chairman of the Association for Greek War Relief. He wires me that the committee in Athens has ~~xx~~ just cabled him that they are in desperate need of surgical instruments, any kind of surgical instruments. All the available instruments are already being used for the troops, and there are not enough left over to take care of injured civilians. *Send instruments to Harold Vanderbilt; 730-5th ave, N.Y. at once.* ¶ The American Red Cross today sent fifty thousand serums by clipper to Lisbon, half these for use against gangrene, half against tetanus.

CONTRABAND

The British are concerned because many things are reaching the Nazis by way of Russia. There's a rumor that the Soviet Government is undertaking to round up a merchant fleet of two hundred ships to carry American products to Vladivostok for re-export to the Axis countries. The British don't believe that; but they say there are grounds for uneasiness. For instance, more United States cotton was shipped to Russia in two months of Nineteen Forty than in the whole of Nineteen Thirty-Nine. The explanation to that is obvious.

RECORD

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A new transatlantic record -- ~~and~~ by an American air plane! ~~Not, however,~~ <sup>But not</sup> by an American flier. The ~~new~~ new speedster is Captain Pat Eves of the British army. He established this record ferrying a new American bomber to London. We haven't ~~any~~ details ~~about~~ the actual time. But, we can get some idea from the ~~fact that~~ <sup>fact</sup> that Captain Eves had breakfast in America and tea in London. The previous record over the ~~that~~ northern route was made by Howard Hughes, (who flew from New York to Paris in sixteen hours and thirty-five minutes, in July Nineteen Thirty-eight.

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Last April the Atlantic Clipper flew from New York to Lisbon in eighteen hours and thirty-five minutes.)

Eves was an airline transport pilot for Imperial Airways on the India service before the war.

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Now Hugh, you tell us about a record.