

FLOOD

The threat of flood--compounded by the threat of fire and explosion tonight--in La Crosse, Wisconsin. The rampaging Mississippi River--bursting through one of four dikes that guard the north side of that city. The resulting pool of water--a mile to a mile-and-a-half wide--spilling over into a cluster of gasoline tanks.

One of the tanks--containing more than a hundred thousand gallons of gasoline--tilted precariously by the rushing waters. Nearby residents reporting "a strong smell of gasoline"--and twenty-five homes evacuated as a precautionary measure. Smoking also banned--while fire and flood control experts get busy.

Elsewhere, the flood front stretching nearly five hundred miles--along the nation's mightiest river. The main crest--already past. But a second crest sweeping down from Minnesota and Wisconsin--due later this week. To meet it--dozens of cities hurriedly reinforcing existing levee system with earth and sand dikes. So far--more than thirty thousand persons driven from their homes. Death toll--at least 13.

CARSON

In Washington -- a belated Congressional report today -- on that controversial best-seller of a few seasons ago -- "The Silent Spring", by the late Rachel Carson. A House Sub-committee asserting that Miss Carson alarmed the public "unnecessarily" -- over the dangers of pesticides.

The Sub-committee declaring that if Miss Carson had limited her case to the misuse of pesticides -- her position would have been "unassailable." Adding, however, that Miss Carson -- "extended her conclusions to supposed ill effects of minute amounts of pesticides on human beings." In this -- said the Sub-committee -- Miss Carson "repeatedly drew faulty conclusions from unrelated facts."

PRESIDENT

President Johnson ended his Texas holiday today -- with a flight to Columbia, South Carolina. There to pay his last respects -- to the late Senator Olin D. Johnston. Senator Johnston -- who died yesterday -- an old Senate colleague of the President -- as well as a close friend. The President later to return to Washington, where tomorrow he will meet with Italian Premier Aldo Moro -- for the start of two days of state talks.

VIET NAM

Defense Secretary ~~Robert~~ McNamara ~~is~~ ^S flying to Honolulu tonight -- for ~~top-level~~ strategy meetings with top U.S. civilian and military advisers in the Pacific. The one-day meeting called officially to discuss plans for expansion of South Viet Nam's armed forces -- in order to ^{step} ~~boost~~ up the Vietnamese war effort. Unofficially, the meeting expected also to signal a further build-up of American military forces in Viet Nam.

Meantime, Communist North Viet Nam today rejected ^{once and for all - that} ~~A~~ plea for peace ~~in Viet Nam~~ put forth by the so-called neutral nations of the world. Radio Hanoi reiterating its demand for withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Viet Nam -- before there can be any talk of peace.

In the fighting itself -- nine Americans killed today -- when Viet Cong guerrillas shot down two U.S. Army helicopters and damaged a third. The downed helicopters escorting Vietnamese troop-carriers -- into a jungle battle near Qui Nhon. The death toll -- one of the worst suffered by Americans -- since the start of the war.

INDIA

India and Red China played a baiting game today -- in the field of foreign diplomacy.

The original thrust from India's Home Minister -- who charged that Red China had fostered a ring of saboteurs among India's pro-Peking Communists. Next, a Chinese retort labeling the charge -- "completely groundless -- sheer fabrication and slander." India's Socialist opposition party calling this a grievous insult -- and ~~thereupon~~ demanding an immediate break in diplomatic relations with Red China.

Now the latest -- Indian Prime Minister Shastri -- lashing the Chinese for what he called ^S "undesirable activities in India." Adding that he will look into the Chinese insult -- and "consider how to deal with it." But as for breaking relations with Red China -- the Shastri government emphasizes that it plans -- "no such drastic action."

POPE

In Rome -- Pope Paul cancelled all his appointments today -- after an exhausting Easter weekend schedule. This action immediately touching off some concern for the Pontiff's health. The sixty-seven-year-old Pope -- said to have looked somewhat drawn -- during the traditional Easter rites.

Vatican sources later reporting, however, that the Pope is in excellent health. Not sick -- just a little tired. The Pope said to need just "a bit of rest" -- before he resumes his official duties.

MARINER

That Mars-bound Mariner-Four space craft -- under increasingly heavy bombardment today from tiny meteorites -- as it hurtles through space. The revelation and a possible explanation -- offered by space officials at a Washington meeting of the American Geophysical Union.

The tiny meteorites said to come apparently from a belt of asteroids -- or tiny planets -- that orbit the sun between Mars and Jupiter. Part of an all-encompassing field of what space scientists call -- cosmic dust -- which for some reason is greater outside the earth's orbit than it is within.

Why? That remains -- one of the many unsolved mysteries of space.

SPACEMEN

Six Pseudo-spacemen emerged today from a pseudo-space flight of thirty-four days' duration -- apparently none the worse for the ordeal. The Navy and Marine flyers -- sealed in an air-tight, earthbound chamber ~~at~~ at Philadelphia -- in this -- the longest and most arduous space test to date.

The men confined in a single room -- wearing pressurized space suits -- and breathing nothing but pure oxygen. Nor were ~~he~~ they permitted to bathe or shave.

Perhaps as a result -- scientists noting that the germs -- which each man took into the chamber with him -- had since "spread to everybody." However, no one got sick. Indeed a spokesman for the spacemen remarking that -- they "never felt better." Maybe that's what we need, Dick, pure oxygen -- or more oxygen.

EGGS

At the White House today -- the traditional Easter Egg Roll. But by dusk --the tradition a bit battered.

In previous years -- tens of thousands of children have turned out to roll their Easter eggs on the White House lawn. This year -- there were barely two thousand egg rollers in all -- and never more than a hundred at a time.

The main reason -- a day-long drizzle that turned the White House lawn into a soggy, muddy mess. ~~The occasion further dampened by the presence of a collection of rag-tag college students -- protesting American involvement in Viet Nam.~~

Also, the President and his family -- far, far away.

Reaction to this year's Easter Egg Roll -- perhaps best expressed in the comment of one mud-splattered mother to her rain-drenched daughter. Said she: "Come on, child. Roll your egg and let's get out of here."