

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

Lowell Thomas is taking a few days' holiday -- and he certainly deserves one -- but he has asked me to take his place this evening and to be sure to wish you all -- a very Happy and Prosperous New Year. -- Here's a Happy New Year to you, Lowell, from all of us. By the way, before I give you the news of the day, I want to make it quite clear that I am a Cornishman, not an Englishman. My mother told me ~~that~~ never to forget that my ancestors lived in England long before the English went there. As for travel and adventure, I've lived for six years in the Malay Jungle -- I've climbed the Mountains of the Moon in Central Africa -- and I've hobnobbed with Pygmies and Cannibals -- with Laplanders and Hairy Ainus. To judge from the years I have spent in exploration, I suppose I should really be called a citizen of the world. But as a matter of fact, I am an American citizen, though I have lived over here so many years that now I never know whether to say harf passt

or haff parst. So please excuse me if I use the Broad A -- because that's the way my mother t aught me.

RUMORS

The news was full of rumors today, reports affirmed and reports denied. One states that Stalin has asked Hitler for a large number of German technicians to develop Soviet war-time industry and transport. This was later denied by both Berlin and Moscow, but surmises persist -- that the Red regime will have to have technical aid from the Nazis, if Hitler is to get any of the huge quantity of Soviet supplies that he expects.

There's another rumor that Goering, the official Nazi Number Two Man, has been shot and wounded. This report dwells on the supposition that Goering is out of favor with Hitler, is opposed to a lot of things Hitler is doing, and is in virtual retirement at his country home. Now we are told that he was shot and wounded by what are called "snipers". This gets an official denial from Berlin, with the explanation that the shooting story probably originate from the fact that one of Goering's lieutenants was injured. He was hurt in a hunting trip, fell down and sprained his elbow.

There are rumors about the departure of the British Ambassador from Moscow. He has been called back to London to confabulate with the Foreign Office. And they say he's not going

return to Moscow. The report is that the Ambassador will help to prepare a public statement outlining the British-Soviet negotiations that were going on when Stalin signed up with Hitler. We are told that this British version will include such a bitter indictment of Russia, that London and Moscow will be further apart than ever.

Meanwhile, there are persistent reports that the Italian Ambassador to Moscow is leaving and returning to Rome -- and that he, too, won't return. This coincides with what we hear more and more -- about Mussolini drawing away from the Hitler-Stalin line-up.

FINLAND

In Finland the defending armies are said to be about to achieve another smashing victory in the far north, just above the Arctic Circle at a town called Salla. There the Finns are said to have a Soviet force of sixteen thousand in process of being surrounded. If the Finns do succeed in cutting off the retreat of this large unit of the Red Army, they'll have duplicated their victory of the weekend all over again.

Reports continue to tell of the magnitude of that weekend disaster for the Red Army, -- a division of troops, virtually annihilated, with the Finns capturing huge quantities of war supplies.

And now they say the same thing is being repeated farther north at the town of Salla. The fighting there is bitter. The weather -- just as bitter. One of the worst of blizzards still snowing in and freezing the Red invaders. And here's something later/ A report of still another Soviet force being surrounded -- ten thousand away up in the Arctic.

The Finns have suffered one severe attack -- they have lost the battle of Smorgasbord. The Finns, like the Swedes, and Norwegians, like to start their festive meals with that vasy array of fish, pickled, smoked, salted, sweet, every kind of funny fish.

And sausage and pickles. You know -- that extraordinary array which they call smorgasbord. Under war time conditions the Finns have got to conserve their food supplies and today comes the news -- meals are to be as simple and frugal as possible, no more smorgasbord, not until the war is ended.

Here's a late dispatch from Stockholm. The Russians ---
several
after violent attacks on the Mannerheim Line have advanced a few
kilometers.

PLANES

There was a sharp air flight over the German coast -- and the reports are decidedly contradictory, as usual. Both London and Berlin agree that three British Bombers flying over the Bight of Helgoland were attacked by German pursuit planes. London states that the three British bombers fought with twelve Nazi fighting craft, shot down one - and possibly two others. London reports that one of the British bombers was shot down and another had failed to return -- believed to be lost. One got back to its base. The Germans claim that they shot down all three of the British bombers, without any loss to themselves.

GIRL

The strange case of the Honorable Unity Freeman-Mitford, daughter of Lord Resedale is involved in mystery tonight. She was expected to arrive in England today -- a that aristocratic British beauty, who has been in the headlines because of the admiration of Hitler. She was supposed to have been booked on a plane arriving from France, but at last reports she had failed to appear.

There are reports that she is ill, and one startling statement is that she has been wounded, shot. Hitler is said to have arranged personally for her return to England. But, all this is rumor. We only know that she was expected to arrive in England today, s quads of newspapermen waiting for her -- but no sign of the Honorable Unity Freeman-Mitford.

TACOMA

The word from Montevideo is that the Government of Uruguay will pay no attention to the German protest about the steamer TACOMA - the freighter that acted as supply ship to the luckless pocket battleship, GRAF SPEE. The TACOMA has been interned, and will stay interned -- says Uruguay.

EGYPTIAN STORY

It is less than a month since I arrived home in America after a six months' journey around the world. War was declared the day I arrived in Hong Kong, and I shall always remember the thrill of watching the sailors paint enormous American flags on the decks and sides of the boat -- and the feeling of thankfulness that I myself was an American. At night we sailed along all lit up like a Christmas tree -- but the other ships passed us like ghosts, being completely blacked out, yet clearly visible in the brilliant moonlight. I think that the most surprising sight was Egypt -- Public buildings in Cairo were protected by sandbags -- gardens and parks were ruined by trenches and airplane shelters -- tourists were gone, and even the Sphinx seemed to have a look of pained surprise -- because the desert had been converted into an enormous armed camp. Not just a temporary camp -- but splendidly equipped with permanent buildings, hospitals, large swimming pools, with running water for the men, and luxurious stables for the horses. As for aeroplanes -- tanks and armored cars -- I completely lost count of them. When I enquired for whom all these preparations had been made, I was told -- Italy. A glance at a map will show at once that Egypt and the Sudan are neatly sandwiched between Libya and Ethiopia.

PROTEST

The United States Government has protested to London because of British interference with the United States mails. This was revealed by Secretary of State Cordell Hull today. He said that in a number of cases the British Government, in its blockade of Germany, has seized and examined American mail addressed to neutral countries, mail carried aboard American and neutral ships, which have been stopped by the blockading fleet. This, argues the Secretary of State, is contrary to international law -- which forbids a belligerent nation to interfere with mail on the high seas, mail addressed either to neutrals or to nations at ~~xx~~ war. So the United States Government has protested to London, and asked for reassurances that it won't happen again.

There was an important conference at the White House today -- a preliminary to the opening session of Congress tomorrow. The President had an hour long talk with congressional leaders, among them -- Vice-President Garner. It was the first Roosevelt-Garner meeting since the Vice-President announced that he's out for the Democratic nomination.

The Garner boom was launched without any reference as to whether or not President Roosevelt might or might not have third term ideas. So there has been speculation - what's the feeling between F.D.R. and Cactus Jack? How friendly are they? What did they have to say to each other today? Well, we are told what the President said to the Vice-President. He said -- "Happy New Year to you!" This fateful statement is revealed by Speaker of the House Bankhead, who was at the conference. The Speaker adds that the Happy New Year was not of the common garden variety kind. "I never saw a more brotherly, affectionate greeting in my life," says Bankhead. "And," he added, "you can quote me on that." So here's quoting him.

There is persistent report in Washington about the vacancy in the Supreme Court. Ever since the death of Justice Pierce Butler, the rumor has been that the President will appoint Attorney General

Frank Murphy. The Attorney General himself came out with a statement that he was not a candidate for the court post. Rumor now has it, however, that the President has persuaded him, and that Frank Murphy will be appointed to the highest tribunal of the land. The rumor continues that he will be succeeded as Attorney General by Robert H. Jackson, the present Solicitor-General.

DINNER

It doesn't seem as if there'll be so many Republicans at the big Democratic banquet. The Jackson Day Dinner has always been a rousing rally of the great and near-great among the Democrats - hardly a place for a Republican to show his nose. But this time the extraordinary happened. The Democratic high command invited several prominent Republican congressional leaders to break bread at the Democratic love feast. And just to make things easy for them, the President passed word along that he would make a non-partisan address. It has been a matter of public curiosity -- would the Republicans go?

Tonight's words is that two of the prominent Republicans already invited have said "No ", Senator McNary of Oregon and Senator Austin of Vermont. The Vermont senator turned down the invitation in as discreet a fashion as possible. Here's what he writes to the Democratic Chairman -- and aren't these the discreetest of words? "I will be glad to have you say to the President," he writes, "that I regret that I cannot share in the hospitality of the great Democratic Party - because of the traditional functions of this dinner, and my high regard for the institution of party responsibility in the American political system."

That's a way of saying "No" with a lot of words - but discreet words,

COURT

The Supreme Court today handed down a whole series of decisions -- all upholding the National Labor Relations Board and its vital exercise of power. Under the Wagner Act, the Labor Board passes on elections in which employees pick the union to do their collective bargaining. The N.L.R.B. certifies the results of such elections. Is there any appeal from these Labor Board decisions? Can they be taken to court with the hope of reversing them?

The Supreme Court today decreed -- no. The ruling was handed down -- that the federal courts have no authority to review the action of the Labor Board in certifying a union election. Congress, in passing the Act, gave the Board full power and discretion. This, says the Supreme Court, may work certain hardships, but this argument should be taken to Congress -- and not the courts. So decrees the highest tribunal, with decisions handed down today in a number of individual cases.

Here's another oddity about the blackouts in Europe.

The war-time practice of "lights out" in big cities is causing curious complications. In London, people finding their way about the dark streets, frequently use flashlights, which they dim by putting tissue paper over the glowing bulb.

Today a warning was issued by the British Railway Executive Committee, telling people not to use red or green paper in dimming their flashlights. Red or green -- the colors used to start or stop trains. You can see the possibilities -- locomotive engineers bewildered by all sorts of red and green lights, apparently signals. Trains stopping and starting in crazy confusion.

Today's warning tells of a Londoner near a railroad station, his flashlight dimmed with green paper. He must have been feeling good, for he waved that emerald glowing light with carefree abandon. The engineer of the train standing in the station took it as a sign to go ahead - the train pulled out and went rattling on, to the utmost astonishment of the railway authorities!

CHEERIO!