

L.T. P.& G. TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1948.

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

In a Congressional Committee room in Washington today, they began an open hearing. All was to be made public, the testimony, the evidence - in the new sensational spy disclosures. They are investigating the microfilm copies of secret government documents, produced by Magazine Editor Whittaker Chambers.

A witness took the stand, Sumner Welles, who was Under-Secretary of State at the time the spy work was done. He was asked to pass on the importance of documents of state, which had been copied to be given to Soviet espionage. Sumner Welles began by stating that he was a private citizen now and did not feel qualified to decide whether or not the stolen secret material should be made public.

With that qualification, documents were handed to him - as he sat at the Committee hearing table. He was shown one sent from Paris to the State Department in Washington, January, Nineteen Thirty-Eight. Top secret.

Sumner Welles, who is a picture of the suave,

knowing diplomat, scanned the paper with a serious face - which grew more serious as he read. Then he spoke, slowly, solemnly: "Mr. Chairman, after reading this message," he said, "it is my conviction that the publication of this document would be prejudicial to the national interest."

He was shown another, which he thought was not so important. Then a third, a telegram from Vienna, and again declared - it would be harmful if published.

There was only a brief session of proceedings like this, and then - the open hearing was turned into a closed hearing. The Committee changed its mind about publicity, and decided to continue the investigation in secret.

Sumner Welles' opinions were corroborated by Assistant Secretary of State John Peurifoy, who stated that the microfilms indicated, what he called a "systematic and surreptitious" looting of the files of the State Department This in the late Nineteen Thirties.

ADD ESPIONAGE

Tonight we hear that three or four officials in at least two government departments fed secret documents to Whittaker Chambers. The Committee investigators declare that Chambers has given them the names. We do not know who the accused persons are, except that one is Alger Hiss, former State Department official, against whom Whittaker Chambers has been bringing charges all along. Hiss is now suing Chambers for libel.

FOLLOW ESPIONAGE

We have a hint of an answer to the question - why did not Whittaker Chambers produce the microfilm copies when he testified last summer,² ~~making his first charges of Red espionage in the government?~~

Chambers today was testifying before the New York Grand Jury. He talked to newsmen and said: "The films left my possession in Nineteen Thirty-Eight. I got them back in Nineteen Forty-Eight." For ten years he did not have them; but, today he intimated that he knew where they were during that period. So the answer may be that Whittaker Chambers was not in possession of the microfilm copies when he testified last summer. But all that is clouded in secrecy - Chambers giving few details.

He says that, getting back the films this year, he hid them - because they might fall into the hands of Alger Hiss, ~~the former State Department official whom Chambers accuses of having handed over secret documents to be copied for Red spies.~~

SUBSTITUTE MARSHALL

Tonight's medical report on Secretary of State Marshall continues to be good -- no complications. He underwent a major operation, surgery of the kidneys.

Newsmen consulted civilian doctors, apart from the hospital, and they gave their opinion on the Marshall operation -- the removal of a kidney. They explained that such cases usually take from three to five weeks for recuperation. They said that, ordinarily, such an operation would force retirement from active work, when the patient is as old as Secretary Marshall. He will be sixty-eight on December thirty-first, the last day of the year.

George Marshall has often expressed the desire to retire to his Virginia farm, but it is known that President Truman would like to have him remain in office.

SOVIET FLYERS

Two voices from behind the Iron Curtain -- those two escaped Russian flyers who six weeks ago flew into the zone of liberty.

Today they were interviewed by newsmen, and stated that the vast majority of the Russian people are opposed to war, but that Stalin propaganda is drumming up hatred for the western liberal countries at a tremendous rate. But that 70% are opposed.

As for millions of Russian soldiers who saw parts of western Europe during and after the Second World War, they are immune to the Stalin war propaganda, and should be regarded as - "potential deserters." So say the two fugitives from the Soviet Air Force.

INTRODUCTION TO LOWELL THOMAS, JR.

A traveler has just flown in from far-off Persia and is in the studio with me tonight. It happens that several weeks ago I sent him a cable asking him about a great earthquake reported to have occurred in Eastern Iran. I thought he would have the facts at his fingertips. So, tell us about it, Lowell, and, a little about Iran in general.

L.T., Jr: This is an age of rapid communications, when messages circle the earth in fractions of seconds, and when a person can take off from the airport at Istanbul one afternoon, and land at La Guardia the next morning. But the first I heard about that Persian earthquake, Dad, was from you -- from your cable that came a week after the quake occurred, asking for the details. And there I was, apparently on the spot!

Some fifty villages were destroyed and several thousand people left without homes in the northeastern province of Meshed. Our air attaché in Teheran, Major Don Steele, flew his C-47 to the stricken province

shortly after the catastrophe -- after your wire came. He carried relief food and clothing that had been donated by the American community in the Iranian capital.

Shortly thereafter, those of us in Teheran were rather shocked to hear that this American donation was not used as intended, but somehow was diverted into the black market, as I'm afraid happens all too often in many countries.

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L.T.: What of Persia in general? Or should we say Iran?

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L.T., Jr.: Both are correct. Iran is of world importance now, largely for two reasons: First, because of its vast oil resources in an area where roughly one-third of all known oil deposits are located; and secondly, because it borders on southern Soviet Russia. What is Iran doing to stem that Red tide? She has just started a seven-year plan of general national development, to be financed largely by royalties from the great Anglo-Iranian oil concession.

In the Saturday Evening Post I came across an

article about Middle East oil -- also about Max Weston Thornburg, my boss. It termed him "The Mystery Oil Man of the Middle East." What he is doing out there should be no mystery. He simply is not content merely to talk and write about problems in the Middle East. He's there on the spot, solving them. For instance, he is more responsible for the activation of Iran's seven-year plan than any other man, Persian or foreign. And though it is not commonly known, it was he who sold the Persian Government on the idea of employing a group of American industrial consultants -- known as the Overseas Consultants, Incorporated -- to give guidance to that seven-year plan.

Mr. Thornburg believes that the best way to prevent these Middle Eastern nations -- Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia -- from falling victim to the aggression of a strong foreign power, is to put them squarely on their feet -- raise living standards through economic development; and that is the goal of all his efforts out there during these troubled times.

L.T.: Apropos of what the two Russian flyers said today, did you hear about Soviet matters out there at the Caspian door to Russia?

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L.T., Jr.: Yes, only recently I was chatting with a Polish woman now married to an American Army officer. Her husband is with our Military Mission in Iran. During the war this woman was forced to work in the fields of southern Russia -- gathering food for Stalin's armies -- as a slave laborer. Somehow, after the war, in rags she escaped into Iran. And here's the encouraging thing she had to say: that the majority of Russians are fed up with the Communist regime -- that more and more of them are learning what goes on outside -- learning that they are being denied many pleasures of life that people of other nations take for granted. She felt that one day the people of Russia might be able to take their destiny in their own hands -- that there might be a real peoples' revolution in Russia.

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LOWELL THOMAS, JR. -5

L.T.: Thanks, Lowell, for joining me on the air again tonight. And welcome back from Persia.

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EXECUTIONS

In Tokyo, a question was asked at General MacArthur's headquarters. Out there the Supreme Commander today ordered a delay in the execution of Tojo and the other Japanese war criminals -- a delay for at least nine days, to give the American Supreme Court time to hand down its decision in that international case.

Newsmen pointed out that the United States was only one of eleven countries represented on the international tribunal. So why might not the courts of the other ten review the sentences? Suppose the lawyers for the defense were to make an appeal in each, one after another, and be granted a hearing. That might delay the executions indefinitely.

Such was the international conundrum presented at the MacArthur headquarters. The answer? None at all - no comment on that global puzzle.

MARSHALL PLAN

It is announced that American shipping lines will not get their share of Marshall Plan cargoes, unless they cut their rates. This is stated by Marshall Plan administrator Paul ~~X~~ Hoffman, who says that the American lines charge a lot more than European steamship companies. For example, four and a half dollars more per ton of coal sent to France.

(According to the Act of Congress creating the European Recovery Program, one half of all Marshall Plan shipments are supposed to be transported on American vessels. But Administrator Hoffman explains that, at the present rates they are charging, the American lines are virtually getting a subsidy, and he doesn't think that Congress intended any such thing.)

RAILROAD STRIKE

A railroad strike has been called -- against the Southern Pacific. This was announced today by officials of the Brotherhood of Firemen and Enginemen. They say there are two hundred and ninety-six issues in dispute, -- that many points of controversy unsettled ever since nineteen forty. So the union has called a Southern Pacific strike for December fifteenth.

COLLEGES

Record-breaking figures for American colleges, which this fall enrolled the greatest number of students ever. The figures, released in Washington tonight, show a total of more than two-million-four-hundred thousand. There are more than one million seven hundred thousand men, and nearly seven hundred thousand women students,-- an increase of three percent for this year over last year.

SUBSTITUTE_ERROL_FLYNN

Today in a New York court, Errol Flynn said -- "This is the worst appearance I ever made." He was up before the judge, accused of kicking a cop in the shins.

It all began when the movie hero, together with a press agent of the films, took a taxi in New York. A couple of cops, in a police car, thought the cab driver looked too young, and demanded to see his license. This turned out to be all right, and that would have been that -- save for the fact that the movie press agent was indignant about the whole thing. He got into an argument with the cops, and they arrested him. During all of which time Errol Flynn was calm and collected. The star of rambunctious he-man parts on the screen - he just stood there, dignified and serene.

They all went around to the police station -- where the press agent was booked for disorderly conduct -- Errol Flynn still a picture of reserve and restraint.

Then something happened, something surprising - a

SUBSTITUTE_ERROL_FLYNN_-_2_

reaction to be figured out, perhaps, ~~by~~ by movie fans who go in for psychological screen dramas, the kind that explore the recesses of the human soul. Suddenly, according to the story, Errol Flynn kicked the cop in the shins.

The reaction of the policeman was equally emphatic. Errol Flynn placed under arrest, tossed in among the assorted characters the cops pick up on an average night, rescued finally by the proprietor of a fashionable night club, who put up five hundred dollars in bail.

Today the case was put off until tomorrow. After what Errol Flynn calls his worst appearance.

And now, let's have a good appearance. Meaning -- time for you to appear, Nelson.