

*L. J. Seneca Fri. Jan. 16, 1942.*

## CONFERENCE

The word from Rio de Janeiro is that a number of the South American nations are saying - "You will have to do something for us before we can break with the Axis powers." One military observer is quoted as saying; "We want to know first how and when we are going to get the weapons to defend ourselves before we embark on such a dangerous step." They are afraid that, if they get in to a state of war with the Axis, their shipping and communications will be attacked. So they want armament, defense material. And of course they want these from the United States.

Argentina, as we've known all along, is the nation most unwilling to break off diplomatic relations with the Axis powers. But now it appears that Chile is almost as reluctant. Paraguay too. And Peru is trying to drive a bargain.

This seems to be the state of affairs tonight at the Western Hemisphere Conference, which has before it a set of resolutions pledging all the American Republics to support the United States. The principal resolutions call<sup>s</sup> for a declaration that whoever attacks any American nation attacks them all. Therefore, since the United States has been attacked, they should all sever diplomatic ties with the Axis. *That's the resolution.*

## PACIFIC WAR

The War in the Pacific continues according to its daily pattern - - tense action in widely separated areas of the great island world *off* ~~of~~ Southern Asia.

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The wildest violence of war is blasting at the defense lines held by General MacArthur's Americans and Filipinos across the head of the Batan Peninsula. Today, for the second day in succession, the war department communique uses the word - - infiltrate. The Jap attack is largely one of infiltration, trying to get through in small parties, detachments of jungle and mountain fighters seeking to slip by the strong points and penetrate to the rear - - there to cut communications and disrupt supply lines. These infiltration tactics are designed to cause disintegration of <sup>the</sup> ~~a~~ battle line.

At the same time the Jap enemy is attacking from the air, blasting with dive bombers to support the ground attack. The fighting is intense, with General MacArthur's men under heavy and violent pressure.

From the Jap side we hear that the American lines are camouflaged in what a Tokyo dispatch calls - - "A new manner" something novel in the way of military disguise, an innovation in camouflage.

Moreover it appears that General MacArthur is receiving excellent

18 ✓ information from behind the enemy lines. He must have established a first <sup>rate</sup> system of intelligence among the filipinos in the territory overrun by the Japs. This is indicated by today's dispatch, in which our far Eastern commander makes the statement that the enemy in the occupied areas is behaving in outrageous fashion - - with systematic looting and devastation.

In Malaya - - the Australians are striking. That's the dramatic turn of the news from Singapore. Hard fighting units of the men from down-under hit <sup>another</sup> a Japanese tank column and smashed it to bits - a score of enemy tanks put out of action. The Australians were held in reserve, kept back - - while the Japs were driving so swiftly down the Malay Peninsula. The hard - bitten warriors from <sup>of the Australian Never Never Land</sup> the Back blocks are described as expert guerilla fighters - - used to the rough wilderness of their own sub-continent and especially trained to the kind of warfare that is raging along the fringes of the Malay jungle. They were held in reserve until the critical moment - which is <sup>now</sup> now. They've <sup>^</sup> been released against the Japs and are doing what is called - - "a magnificent job". <sup>And</sup> They've checked <sup>^</sup> the enemy along the entire western front in Malaya.

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TP It isn't clear that the new units of Australians are establishing a permanent defense line - - or even trying to. Word from Singapore indicates that the British may draw back still further toward the island of Singapore. ~~great~~ fortress. There is some indication that the Japs ~~may be~~ <sup>now be</sup> within fifty miles of Singapore, and that the crisis ~~of the fight~~ will come when they reach the deep defenses that guard the approaches to the great naval base for a long way - - defense in depth.

TP Once again Burma crops up most significantly. A dispatch from Rangoon states that British - Burmese troops are in contact with the enemy. In other words, <sup>that</sup> a battle of Burma has begun. We are given no details and we don't know whether the fighting consists of a British drive to cut in to Malaya, smashing at the rear of the enemy invasion.

TP Perhaps the Japs are doing some attacking. We don't know. The Jap invasions of Boreno, celebas and other islands of the Dutch East Indies are continuing. These are of the utmost strategic importance, and I wish I could make the georgraphy clear. But that very matter of geography is one of the largest difficulties in the business of telling the war news these days.

TP During the past couple of years, in describing military campaigns in Europe and North Africa it was often possible to convey in words

a fairly clear picture of the geographical elements. After all, a solid land mass is a fairly simple thing, - - but this war of <sup>a</sup> myriad island<sup>s</sup> is something else again. And there are so many of them, disposed in such fantastic patterns.

So when words fail<sup>why</sup>, what is left? The map. We've simply got to go <sup>^</sup> to our maps to get an idea of the geographical elements of the war of the Pacific. A good, vivid and clear map, ~~something to treasure~~

And that points to our new Sunoco map, about which Hugh James told you a few minutes ago. It's an almost necessary adjunct to this news program, and we can all use it - - I, by referring to it, and you by consulting it. The Sun Oil Company offers the maps to us, and let's each have one - - and use it to understand <sup>this vast world</sup> ~~the~~ war that is <sup>^</sup> our war.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



## JAP SUBMARINE

The Navy reveals that a Jap submarine tried to ram a lifeboat in the course of the enemy submarine activities ~~of~~<sup>off</sup> our pacific coast several weeks ago. At night a coastguard life boat went to the rescue, when an American freighter was torpedoed. A Jap submarine approached, dimly seen in the darkness, and from its movements it was evident that the undersea craft was trying to ram the rescue craft. It failed, however, and the ~~life~~<sup>life</sup> boat changed its course and got away in the darkness.

## LONG ISLAND SHIP SINKING.

After twenty four hours of confusion about another ship sinking

off Long Island, the matter was finally cleared up today. Yesterday

the affair was no more than vague and perplexing rumor, ~~then this~~

*and for that reason I didn't mention it last night. Then*

*this* afternoon the Navy came out with the announcement that a ship had

indeed been found sinking a hundred miles east of New York. It

is identified as the Tanker Coimbra, flying the flag of a foreign

ally of this country. ("The cause of the damage is unknown," says

the Navy Bulletin, "but it is assumed to have been torpedoed by

an enemy submarine." Survivors have been picked up, just how many

*we are not told.*

~~it is not known~~ This follows the torpedoing of an American

Merchant Vessel day before yesterday in those same waters east of

Long Island, and the Navy announces that enemy submarine activity

off our coast is becoming increasingly serious.)

NELSON

The President today issued his executive order granting authority to Donald Nelson as Chief of War Production<sup>W</sup>. This has been awaited with lively interest - - because the amount of power that the war production chief would have depended on the terms of the executive order. So now what do we find? Its one man control all right. The authority conferred on Donald Nelson, as boss of the Armament building program, is comprehensive indeed.

Today's executive order sets up the new war production board, of which Nelson is Chairman. The President enumerates the functions of the board in detail - - under a series of headings. The scope of the job is succinctly described in the first heading. "The board shall," it says - - "Exercise general direction of the war procurement and production program."

The members are vice President Wallace, OPM Directors Knudsen and Hillman, Secretary of War Stimson, Secretary of the Navy Knowl<sup>x</sup>, Secretary<sup>of</sup> Commerce Jesse Jones, Price Administrator Leon Henderson, and Presidential Advisor Harry Hopkins, <sup>with</sup> ~~and~~ Donald Nelson as Chairman.

<sup>11</sup> The authority conferred on the Chairman is embodied in one clause of the executive order. It directs that all departments and agencies shall, in the words of the order - - "comply with the policies,



plans, methods and procedures in respect to war procurement and production, as determined by the Chairman." Which does seem like one man control over the stupendous task of building armament to win the victory. We are told that the production chief himself drafted the terms of the order that grants him the authority.

BASEBALL.

President Roosevelt today gave an answer to a question that is being asked a good deal - - what about baseball during war time? ~~He's for~~

~~it. He thinks it's for the best interests of the country to keep~~

~~professional baseball going during the war..~~

The Czar of the diamond, Judge Landis wrote to the President, pointing out that the time was approaching when the big league ball teams, according to their usual routine, would be heading for their spring training camps in the South. So he asked the President for his opinion about baseball in war time.

The White House response today points out that, because of our giant armament schedule, the people of the nation are working longer and harder than ever before, and they need recreation - - something to

take their minds off their war labors. The President remarked that

the three hundred major and minor teams of the nation and the five

or six thousand ball players that they employ are a recreational

asset for twenty million people - - the baseball public. A ball game

normally lasts between two and two-and-a-half-hours, writes the

President, and the tickets don't cost much - - baseball is not an

expensive luxury. And the President adds a bit of advice. He tells

Judge Landis that he thinks there should be more night games, because

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this would allow more day time war workers to see some baseball.

All of which can be summed up in two words , the Presidential voice  
calling - - Play Ball.

## PROHIBITION.

In the Senate today a familiar old theme appeared - - prohibition.

That is, a limited form of war time prohibition that would outlaw alcoholic beverages in Army and Navy areas. The Senate <sup>today</sup> took a vote on the subject.

<sup>And</sup> The legislative proceedings had an element of drama. Today was the anniversary of prohibition. It was just twenty four years ago that demon rum was legally abolished in this country - - in nineteen eighteen, that previous war time. The national ban on John Barleycorn began as a war measure, and was later put in the constitution as the eighteenth amendment - - giving to this nation that fabulous and fantastic era of prohibition.

Now we have war time again, <sup>and</sup> today was the first anniversary of <sup>the entry of</sup> prohibition since this nation ~~got~~ into <sup>war No. 2.</sup> ~~the world wide conflict.~~

<sup>TP</sup> The author of the eighteenth amendment was the late Senator Morris

Shephard of Texas - called the Father of prohibition. His successor

<sup>57</sup> ~~Pass-the-Biscuits Pappy O'Daniel. And it's~~  
is Senator Lee ~~O'Daniel. And now it's O'Daniel of Texas who has~~  
~~Young Pappy O'Daniel of Texas who has~~  
introduced the bill for a new and limited prohibition - - to be

<sup>Moreover his</sup>  
applied to the Army and Navy. ~~His~~ bill to create a war - time  
dry era for the soldiers and sailors ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> favorably reported

on by the Senate Military Affairs Committee, <sup>and</sup> came up today.

TP During past years the anniversary of prohibition was celebrated in the Senate in one invariable fashion - - a bone dry speech by the Father of Prohibition, Senator Shephard of Texas. Throughout the years of bootleg and rum running and then after repeal, he never failed to make January sixteenth a ringing occasion for an oratorical blast against the curse of liquor and the beauties of the dry law. This year the Father of Prohibition is no more, but his established custom was continued - - by his successor. Senator <sup>Pass-the-Biscuits</sup> ~~for~~ O'Daniel delivered the anniversary oration, and ~~he~~ pressed for an immediate consideration of his bill to dry the camps.

- and voted No!

8 TP So what happened? The Senate voted <sup>^</sup> - ~~no~~. It was a standing vote, no official count. But to the newspaper men in the press gallery it appeared that twenty three Senators opposed the limited war time prohibition, and eleven supported it. This decision was on the question of whether or not to consider the bill at once, and does not mean necessarily that the Senators will not take up the measure again later on. They may - - there is nothing final about it.



FOLLOWING CONFERENCE.

58 1/2 The State of Illinois wants to do its bit for Western Hemisphere solidarity and plans to do it with a wooden leg. This as a gesture of good neighbor policy toward Mexico. To which one might ask - - what has a wooden leg got to do with Hot Taamales?

The answer refers back to our war with Mexico nearly a hundred years ago and to general Santa Ana - - who was <sup>then</sup> ~~the~~ President of Mexico.

Santa Ana had a wooden leg, and in one battle with the Americans he retreated so rapidly that he left his artificial limb behind - - and

*Perhaps that's where*  
it was captured by soldiers of an Illinois regiment. ~~They brought it~~  
*that old army saying came from: - Boys, I'm a little lame so I think I'd start now. Anyhow our*  
*de brought it*  
back to Illinois as a battle trophy - - and it has been there ever

since. So now they want to give it back to Mexico as a gesture of

"hemispheric solidarity". A resolution to that effect was passed in

the Illinois legislature today. But suppose Mexico doesn't want the

wooden leg? *What then Hugh?*

*9 1/2 Hugh: - / onive got me stumped, Lowell.*