

Lowell starts his news every night with the war and I suppose that even at New Year's that's all we can do - so here it is.

The war in the air tonight pictures Britain as giving more than Britain is taking. The latest dispatches tell that tonight the R.A.F. is hitting savagely at Nazi bases along the coast - those oft mentioned invasion ports. Last night British bombers took revenge for the fire bombing of London on Sunday. They carried out what is called the most concentrated air raid on a German city, and Bremen got the bombs, both explosive and incendiary. London accounts tell of tremendous fires sweeping the great German seaport - something like the huge sheets of flame that raged in London after Sunday's bombing. Today the British capital is busy pulling down the wreckage of ruined buildings and walls of buildings toppled with a roar - some of London's most famous buildings. The job that firemen do after a big fire is now the immediate task in London.

The Berlin high command today gave some bombing figures. The amount of high explosive rained on Britain since the beginning of the all-out air war last June - amounts to nearly a hundred million pounds. And three and a half million pounds of incendiary bombs. To that stupendous total they're adding more

tonight. British dispatches tell of an air raid on a city, the name of which is not given. We are merely told it's in Wales and has been bombed before.

It's hard to understand the Nazi bombing of Ireland, nationalist Ireland, which is neutral. Today's accounts tell of sustained air attack, with explosive dropped over widely scattered areas - several people killed. There are descriptions of huge parachute time bombs which were dropped, giant missiles which have yet failed to explode. Some stories tell of ~~an~~ parachute mines dropped at sea.

The official Dublin bulletins do not state the nationality of the planes, but it seems certain that they were German~~d~~. One is said to have ^{been} positively identified as a Nazi bomber. But why? Why should the Luftwaffe be striking at nationalist Ireland, which is persistently remaining neutral? It seems hard to understand.

The latest reports from Rome seem to indicate that the German air squadrons in Italy will operate principally against the British fleet in the Mediterranean. Probably not against Greek.

Rome remarks, with some point, that Nazi Germany is still officially at peace with Italy's enemy in Albania. Today is the first time that the Italian government has admitted that armed help has come from Nazi Germany, to aid the Fascist forces in their trouble and defeat. The Nazi air units that have flown to the Mediterranean are described as powerful, veteran flying commands that have fought in the Battle of Britain. Likewise, the Italians have ~~widely~~ withdrawn the Fascist air squadrons that were cooperating with the Luftwaffe in the British area. These too are ~~are~~ needed in the Mediterranean war. Mussolini needs a great deal to salvage his ill-started adventures across the Adriatic and in North Africa.

BULGARIA

The Premier of Bulgaria is in Vienna tonight. Official statements, both Bulgarian and German, insist that Premier Filoff is merely seeing a doctor. He has been ailing, and seeks the aid of a Viennese physician. The cynical comment from the Balkans is that the Bulgarian Premier's illness is political, and the doctor will prescribe Nazi medicine.

To this you can add the following dispatch from Sofia. It reads this way:- "Official Bulgarian sources said tonight that the government would be forced to consent if Germany demands the right of free passage for Nazi troops across Bulgaria." This official source points out that there are about a quarter of a million German troops in Rumania, just across the line from Bulgaria, and there are a few more hundred thousand in Hungary - not so far away.

LUCKNER

I don't quite know how to record one rather sensational angle in today's war news - the story that one of the sea raiders in the South Pacific is commanded by Count Felix von Luckner. He of course is a well known figure in the United States; he lectured extensively all over the country about his adventures as a sea raider in that previous World War. Lowell Thomas wrote a book about him, and thousands of Americans know Count Luckner as the jolly sailorman who certainly could spin a rollicking yarn.

The story that Count Luckner is in command of an ocean prowler comes from HongKong via London. A HongKong dispatch quotes a Norwegian survivor as saying that Count von Luckner was the captain of the raider. It is not at all clear what ship-or ships-the Germans have in the South Pacific. A dispatch from Berlin today tells of South Sea raiding, but speaks of only one vessel, describing it as - a warship. That rather sounds like a regular naval craft, an armed cruiser. But of course it might be an auxiliary cruiser, ^a converted merchant vessel. The British accounts speak of more than one raider, several.

I hardly believe that Count von Luckner would be in

command of a regular cruiser, or even of a converted steamer -
armed for war. The reason he commanded a raider in the previous
war was that the German Admiralty wanted to send out a sailing
ship, because a windjammer would hardly be suspected. And Count
Luckner, who had run away as a boy and sailed before the mast -
was the only officer of the German navy who had experience under
sail. Moreover, the Count is getting along in years - he must be
around sixty. People who knew him well over here can tell you
that he wasn't a Nazi - he was a Monarchist, an old-time adherent
of the Kaiser's.

The stories of the survivors whom the raiders, put
ashore on a South Sea Island, tell of hardships - evil conditions
while they were captives of the Germans. They also tell of being
ruthlessly fired upon. ^{Now} This sort of thing doesn't sound like
von Luckner. I knew him well, and was aware of how earnestly
he prided himself on the good treatment he gave his prisoners.
One thing made him especially proud - that during his sea raiding
exploits no one was ever killed, not a life lost.

So I wonder whether the story is true - that Count

von Luckner is commander of a German raider in the South Seas.

Maybe it's something on the order of those Lawrence of Arabia

stories - the legendary Lawrence being reported almost any

place where there was a war.

SHIPS

The problem of ships for Britain is likely to be solved this way: The United States will transfer a number of American merchant vessels to Britain. Something will be wanted to take their place. And to fill the need we'll take over neutral ships lying and mobilized in our ports - Danish, for example. The German and Italian ships in American harbors are not mentioned in the solution. Nazi and Fascist sources have indicated that a seizure of their vessels would be regarded as a warlike act.

This story, which comes from administration circles in Washington, seems the most probable likelihood tonight. In London they are talking of a plan whereby United States vessels would take over British shipping routes in the Pacific, and thereby release a number of steamers for service in getting goods ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~xxx~~ through the submarine blockade.

An air of reluctance today surrounded the announcement of the resignation of William Allen White. The Committee to Defend America by aiding the Allies did not want its chairman to step out, and they accepted his resignation only on the condition that he take the post of Honorary National Chairman. Nor did they want to announce the resignation; tried to delay. But the word got out, and then formal statements were made. William Allen White says he's quitting because he thinks the chairmanship of the Committee to Aid the Allies should be held by someone who can give his full time to the job. We are also told that the illness of his wife has something to do with it. The resignation of course instantly recalls the rift that developed in the committee -- with a flare of controversy. Many of the adherents of "Aid to the Allies" objected vigorously to the statement their chairman made a couple of weeks ago -- when William Allen White spoke out against the idea of America entering the war. He was quite pungent about it and issued a slogan -- "The Yanks are not coming." He declared himself opposed to the repeal of the Johnson Act and the Neutrality Law. This attitude gained for William Allen White the support of Colonel Lindbergh and Verne Marshal,

Chairman of the "No Foreign War Committee." These endorsements did not go well with various members of the "Committee to Aid the Allies." A lot of people are likely to suppose that these disagreements had something to do with William Allen White's resignation.

At one thirty-one P.M., Eastern Standard Time, today - the House of Representatives adjourned. That, however, did not bring the Seventy-Sixth Congress to an end. For the Senate remained in session. Tomorrow at eleven A.M., the present Senate will reconvene for the last time. Then it will immediately adjourn, and thus bring the Seventy-Sixth Congress formally to an end. One hour later, the Seventy-Seventh Congress will go into session.

The reason for the Senate sticking it out to the last hour is this - they want the Seventy-Sixth Congress to establish a record that will never be broken. They want the year's session to consist of three hundred and sixty-seven days - two more than the orthodox three hundred and sixty-five. One day is accounted for by Leap Year - Nineteen Forty having had an extra day, the Twenty-Ninth of February. By convening formally tomorrow, still another day will be added - the first day of the new congressional year. Some other Congress, during a Leap Year, may tie the record - but mathematically-it cannot be broken, - not under the present rules.

There ~~was~~^{is} one touch of irony in this record for length of session. It was made in spite of repeated advice from the administration - suggesting that Congress go home. ~~And~~ I In this year of war peril, the legislators insistently stayed on the job - and made a record.

At tomorrow's final Senate meeting, Vice-President Garner will preside. He arrived in Washington today, returning from Texas - where he had been a good deal like Achilles in his tent. The Vice-President did not approve of the third term, wanted the presidential nomination, and was not renominated for Vice-President. ~~He~~ He did not vote in the election. Today, John Garner went to the White House and almost failed to get in. He was almost turned away from the White House door. No political significance, however - it was like this: When the Vice-President appeared at the White House, a guard stopped him and said, "I don't know you." To which Texas Jack replied, "I don't blame you."

Now, when the ~~is~~ Vice-President of the United States is not recognized at the house of the President, something is

wrong. And something was wrong. Texas Jack was smoking his usual big cigar, but he was wearing a different hat. The usual vice-Presidential headgear has been a big black Texas sombrero, so famous that you'd think - no sombreo, no Garner. Today, however, he wore a grey fedora, conventional size. It looked small and prim. And so the Vice-President nearly got ~~thron~~ out of the White House. However, in spite of the hat, he finally got in and had a conference with President Roosevelt. I think he'd better report ^{with} ~~to~~ the Texas sombrero when he goes to preside at the last session of the Senate tomorrow. Some of those guards at the capital are a little nearsighted, and even hasty at times. They might give the Vice-President an old-fashioned rush.

The new Congress promises to be eventful - all signs point to that. There are a couple of additional signs today. One was a statement by Chairman Vinson, that the House Naval Affairs Committee is going to attempt a thorough investigation into national defense - so far as the Navy is concerned. The second sign is a statment by Chairman May that

the House Military Affairs Committee is going to do the same
sort of thing - with respect to the army. Two congressional
investigations into the armament building program are certain
to produce a double dose of fireworks.

FOOTBALL

At New Orleans, Policeman F. J. Aragon today turned in the following report. Yesterday he was at the Sugar Bowl Game, where Boston College beat Tennessee. Shortly before the kick-off, two men came to him with a request. Both had obviously been celebrating ^{New Year's} ~~New Year's~~ in a big way. They asked him to help them find their seats. The policeman looked at their tickets and discovered that the pasteboards were not for the Sugar Bowl Game at New Orleans, but for the Rose Bowl Game at Pasadena, California. He called this to the attention of the two celebrants of New Year's. Whereupon one said reproachfully to the other: "I told you we were on the wrong train!"

Such is the official report of the policeman, who adds that he honored their Rose Bowl tickets, let them stay and watch the Sugar Bowl Game.

and now a word from Hugh James