

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

The first major news from Vichy in weeks, came today.

Admiral Darlan , Vice-Premier of France, executive head of the Petain Government uttered a threat which, if carried out, will bring France back into the war, fighting against the British.

The Admiral says he is going to feed the forty million people for whom he is responsible in France, even if he has to use force. He will bring wheat from abroad, even if he has to ask Marshal Petain to allow him to use warships. Then he implied these words:- "We will not allow the

French people to starve." To which he added the charge that the British are stopping ~~the~~ French ships even when they have nothing to do with Britain's war ~~xx~~ with Germany, even ships on their way to Indo-China.

If Britain continues <sup>that</sup> ~~the~~ general attack on the shipping of the French, says the French Vice-Premier, he will ask the necessary powers to escort ships. Then he made <sup>the</sup> ~~an~~ extraordinary statement that the Germans have been more generous than the British, <sup>in that</sup> ~~because~~ they have released two million quintals of wheat to feed the French population. <sup>This was indeed an</sup> ~~It was a statement quite~~ extraordinary <sup>statement</sup> for a logical Frenchman to make, considering that the wheat in question was French wheat to begin with. In other words, the Nazis are giving back to the French two million quintals of French grain which they had seized. A quintal, <sup>being</sup> ~~by the way, is~~ two hundred and twenty pounds.

Contrasting the British attitude with that example of German generosity, Berlin pointed out that the Royal Navy has just seized its fourteenth French ship, an empty freighter bound from Dakar to Madagascar.

All this, <sup>Admiral</sup> Darlan said, he told our Ambassador Admiral Leahy, last night.

It is pointed out that this threat from ~~Admiral~~ Darlan fulfills a prophecy made by a pro-Nazi French statesman three weeks ago. Presumably that pro-Nazi French statesman was Pierre Laval. Whoever it was, he gave out the information that the Nazis were bringing pressure to bear on the Vichy Government to use French men-o-war to convoy food ships. If the Vichy Government yields to that pressure, it will inevitably bring France into the war against Britain.

However, <sup>this</sup> the menace of ~~that~~ threat <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>rather</sup> ~~a trifle~~ discounted in Washington. There was no comment on the utterance of the French Vice-Premier by the State Department or any other government official, <sup>But</sup>, practical-minded observers put the question: Where does ~~he~~ Darlan expect to buy the food which he proposes to convoy with French warships? He can't get it in this country because our government, unofficially but virtually is cooperating with the British. Then there's the question of cash. The French have large amounts of gold and other assets in

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*the United States.*

~~this country~~ But they're all frozen. The Vichy Government

can't spend a dollar of ~~either~~ that gold or <sup>of</sup> the other assets

without the permission of the United States Government.

BALKANS

*Th*ere are two conflicting statements from the Balkans! ~

One comes from Sofia, ~~the~~ capital of Bulgaria, where ~~the~~ newspapers are now under Nazi control. There it was published today that the Balkan troops called to the colors will soon be demobilized because of what is called "the recent clarification of the Balkan situation." That's a ~~typical~~ typical bit of Nazi phraseology. The implication of that is clear, that the Greeks are about to surrender to the Nazis.

On the other hand, here is a definite official statement from Athens. Premier Korizis has gone on record against giving up a single foot of Greek soil to any aggressor. A military communication from Athens today claims that the Greeks have been attacking in Albania four days and are pushing back the Italians with staggering losses.

## MUSSOLINI

The Greeks today are putting out a story which hints that Benito Mussolini is a jinx. Hitler's Assistant Fuehrer, as we heard, paid a visit to the Albanian front last week. And now the Greeks declare that they've wiped out the two Italian battallions with which Il Duce spent most of the time.

That jinx business, if properly publicized, could become insidious and effective propaganda in Italy. Many Italians today still firmly believe in the evil eye; and are firmly convinced that the possessor of the evil eye brings bad luck. I am told this ancient belief is held even by quite well educated Italians. Individuals have been ostracized and socially ruined in Rome because the story ran around that they were evil-eye jinxes. If this idea ever gets around about Mussolini's among the great mass of Italians. Well, it might affect Il Musso's authority.

## BRITISH AID

In a couple of days Congress will receive President Roosevelt's first request for an appropriation of money to help the British. He's waiting until the Lend-Lease Bill is brought to him to sign. It will probably be completed tomorrow.. The act ~~xxx~~ as passed by the Senate will be considered by the House tomorrow in order that the Representatives may approve all such differences as the Senators put into the document. There'll be very little talking, just two hours of debate, after which the House will vote. Thereupon the bill ~~has to be engrossed and goes to the White House for signature, by Mr. Roosevelt.~~

There has been some fantastic guessing about the first sum <sup>for which</sup> the President would ask. Some people predicted he would request ten billions to start with. But Senator Barkley, the majority leader, <sup>called</sup> declared that ~~was~~ wild. The ~~actual amount would be much less.~~

Senator Vandenberg of Michigan pointed out that actually, eighty-nine out of the ninety-five members in the Senate voted for heavy help to Britain. Many of those who voted against the British Aid Bill as passed, voted for Senator Taft's

measure which would have given the British a loan of two billions. Vandenberg mentioned this to illustrate that on the basic issue, there is unity in Congress. Only six of the Senators voted against both the British Aid Bill and the substitute of Senator Taft.

Another of the Senators who had opposed the bill spoke about it in the Senate today. Republican Senator Wiley of Wisconsin told his colleagues that we must now accept the bill as the law of the land. We must unite and see that it is administered sanely with the least possible dangers to the country. Now that the debate is concluded, Americans must close their ranks.



ITALY FOLLOW BRITISH AID

And here's a bit of foreign comment on the passage of that Lend-Lease Bill. It comes from ~~our old pal~~, Virginio Gayda, the mouthpiece. The Senate's approval of that bill, says Gayda, was the equivalent of open intervention by the United States, open intervention in the war against the Axis. That, <sup>adds</sup> ~~says~~ <sub>1</sub> Gayda, will finally bring about abrogation of the three-power pact, <sup>adds</sup> ~~that is~~ <sub>1</sub> the treaty between the Axis and Japan. And, <sup>adds</sup> ~~says~~ <sub>1</sub> Gayda, that will create unpleasant surprises for England and especially for the United States in the Pacific.

BULLITT

Congressmen listened today while Ex-Ambassador ~~Bill~~ Bullitt gave some graphic details of the fall of France. Graphic and indeed terrifying, <sup>for it</sup> ~~since that~~ was Bullitt's <sup>endeavor to drive home what</sup> ~~intention~~. He has been saying for weeks, that we aren't <sup>not yet</sup> ~~sufficiently~~ on our toes with our defense program. He appeared today as a witness before the Judiciary Committee of the House which has been studying the ~~question~~ whether a new law should be passed to stop labor unions from hampering <sup>(defense)</sup> production of ~~defense material~~.

<sup>Ambass.</sup>  
One thing Bullitt told the Committee was that our attitude here in the United States today is woefully like that of the French before they were destroyed. France, he said, had a wonderful war production program mapped out for Nineteen Forty-Two. But France was destroyed in Nineteen Forty. In one month, the production of airplanes in France was two and a half times greater than it had been in any previous month but that was the month when the Germans were already inside the French borders. At the time when France ought to have ~~been~~ been producing with every energy to meet the German menace, there was a block of long ~~and~~ overdue labor reforms, of strikes and Communist sabotage, which slowed

down production.

*Ambas.* Bullitt then expressed the opinion that we are producing well and producing honestly, but also that we are building a twenty-foot ~~roof~~<sup>rope</sup> to do a thirty-foot job. ~~Bullitt then~~<sup>He also</sup> pointed out that many workers who don't want to strike are compelled to against their will. To which he added that for two years before the war, loyal Frenchmen also were involved in strike after strike. Then he threw out the ~~warning that, as he put it,~~<sup>following</sup> "you don't know what this thing is until you've had your nose rubbed in it," *said he.*

*Ambas.*  
French Communists, Bullitt said, realized when it was too late that they had been sold down the river through following the orders of a foreign dictator, meaning Stalin, of course. Then he added that when the German air and submarine attacks against Britain begin in force next month, we will probably begin to realize our danger.

Congressman Sam Hobbs of Alabama suggested that Bullitt's experiences in France might have made him gun-shy. The Ex-Ambassador replied that he had seen bloodshed and death from one end of this planet to the other, and that he doesn't get excited unless he thinks this country is in danger.

STRIKE

New Yorkers ~~had cause to grouse and grumble today.~~

~~They~~ New Yorkers are notoriously the most docile and long-suffering

of Americans. But they had a double grievance today. First of all,

that spectacular blizzard which started last Friday. With the snow

~~from that~~ still lying on the streets in heaps, the bus drivers <sup>today</sup> went

on strike and produced the most <sup>complete</sup> exasperating tie-up in fifteen years,

and

One million people who normally travel by buses had to find some

other way of getting around the city.

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DIES

Congressman Martin Dies is calling for ~~a drive~~, a nationwide drive to sweep all Communists and Nazis out of ~~the~~ government service and out of ~~the~~ labor unions. *In fact he is* ~~And he's~~ going to call on President Roosevelt to take the initiative, *and* ~~He~~ will make this request of the President either in person or by letter. ~~And~~ *He* explained that Mr. Roosevelt has the authority to bring this about through his power of letting out contracts and the spending of public funds. *Cong.* Dies adds that he is convinced it is imperative for the P<sup>r</sup>esident to take this course at once in order to save the national defense program from sabotage. *If Mr. Roosevelt will not act,* *Cong.* Dies will introduce a law in Congress to kick out *all* Communists and Nazis.

## TAXES

For the last few days Uncle Sam has been taking in money at a record rate. Yes, income taxes, the biggest returns in history. In case anybody has forgotten, the deadline is midnight, Saturday, and by that hour Uncle Sam will have taken in the record sum of three billion dollars, contributed by a record number of sixteen million citizens and residents.

It seems also that many people in the lower income brackets are contributing to the treasury when they don't have to. Some returns on which no tax was due have come in accompanied by checks. Yes, checks with letters asking that the contributions be applied to national defense.

The record number of people filing returns is of course due to the fact that exemptions were lowered both on the married and the unmarried, the just and the unjust, the wise and the foolish.

## FIRE

The people of Brockton, Massachusetts, have just seen a fire so tragic that it was pronounced the most deadly in the history of New England. Death took a terrific toll of Brockton's fire fighters.

One of the buildings was a theatre. The columns that supported it were weakened by the flames, whereupon the weight of the snow and ice on the roof caused it to cave in while more than twenty firemen were still inside. The latest is that at least twelve Brockton firemen are dead; twenty more injured.

SCHECTER

q Every so often things get a bit hectic on this program-- some bit of last minute news causing a rush. But any program with a set time like this is sheer tranquility compared with other branches of radio news. This comes prominently to mind with a book just out, a volume called "I Live On Air". The authors are Abe Schecter and Ed Anthony. Ed Anthony is an old friend who has scored some fine successes in the world of books. He collaborated with Frank Buck in - "Bring Em Back Alive." Abe Schecter has been a colleague of ours for years here at N.B.C. He's in charge of Special Events, that branch of radio which gets the microphone on the job when important things are happening. The rush can be frantic, the tricks they use can be ingenious. Here's one taken from the book - "I Live On Air".

Just before the war broke out President Roosevelt sent to heads of European nations a plea for peace, a number one event of the day. The radio people had notice in advance that the text of the Presidential plea would be handed out by the State Department. And immediately the competition was on - plans for putting it on the air first. The question was -- how to get the text of the message to the radio studio in an absolute minimum of time.



Abe Schecter told one of his men to get a lot of nickels. a bulging pocket full of nickles. Then go to one of the telephone booths in the State Department, and plant himself in it, stay there. Call the broadcasting station, and keep the wire open, making call after call, dropping in nickel after neckel. The telephone company got a lot of nickels at that particular place on that particular day.

When the State Department Officials handed out copies of the President's peace message, two N.B.C. men were there to grab each a copy. One dashed to a taxicab - to rush the document to the station. The other ran to the telephone where the N.B.C. man was stationed - dropping nickels. With the wire open, he immediately proceeded to read the diplomatic message. On the other end of the wire, was an announcer, his ears glued to the telephone, a microphone in front of him. As the message was read to him, he repeated it, putting it on the air. The relay system was a bit awkward, but it worked - until the copy, sent by taxicab, got to the station. Then the announcer continued from the printed text.

"Scoop" - the N.B.C. boys shouted. On the air first with the President's peace message. First, by only a few minutes, to be sure, but that to them was like a century, for it was a scoop.

FARLEY

The Honorable James A. Farley is home, smile, baldhead and all. He's back from a trip to Central and South America, showing the neighbors below the line what it was that makes us call him "sunny Jim".

In one respect his return was a disappointment to reporters. They had expected Jim would spring some baseball news. For months we've been hearing that Jim Farley's future was to lie largely in the ball parks. But this he contradicted saying the future of James Aloysius Farley is in the laps of the gods, where baseball is not necessarily played, or is it -- let's ask Hugh.