

Lowell Thomas  
October 21, 1966  
(Dallas Townsend)

ABERFAN

Good evening, everybody--The tiny coal-mining town of Aberfan--in Wales--like a page torn from "How Green Was My Valley." Its tiny houses--its gaunt, gray schools--jammed together side-by-side on the brow of a hill. In the shadow of a mountain of waste--left by a century of mining. And so the scene today--of one of the worst peacetime tragedies in Welsh history.

The mountain waterlogged by rain--crumbling under its own weight. Its base moving ominously, silently into the village--until the whole thing collapsed with a tremendous roar; engulfing all in its path.

Fifty to sixty feet high--the black glacier flattening houses like match boxes. Two million tons of slag--descending finally in a crushing heap; on a grade school--crowded with children.

ABERFAN--2

The terrifying silence that followed--broken by the anguished screams of horrified mothers and fathers. Clawing at the wreckage--ripping aside debris--groping through the black mud in search of their children. A frenzy--born of desperation; yet for the most part--sadly in vain.

At last report--more than fifty bodies recovered from the wreckage. But about a hundred and fifty youngsters--still missing and unaccounted for.

His voice choked with emotion--Britain's Minister of State for Wales asserting: "A whole generation of children--has been wiped out in Aberfan."

Congress late today arrived at the verge of adjournment-- but couldn't quite make it. The House actually did clear its calendar of business...but the Senate hit a snag on a tax bill, so they'll meet again tomorrow morning--to make up the tax measure, and a final five-billion-dollar appropriation bill. Earlier today, congressional action was completed on anti-poverty legislation, college aid and food for peace. And the House abandoned its opposition to expanded trade with the communist bloc.

## MELBOURNE

In Melbourne, Australia--another ear-splitting welcome today for President Johnson. The cheers of seven hundred thousand of its citizens--the genuine warmth they displayed--overshadowing by far what could have been a nasty incident.

The President's limousine--nearing Melbourne's Government House. The President himself--a yellow rose of Texas in his lapel--having stopped the car no less than twenty-five times en route--to address street corner crowds. When two brothers hurled a pair of paint-filled plastic bags--at the front and rear windows of the limousine. One red--one green.

The brothers quickly arrested--and no one was hurt. Nevertheless, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson--forced to walk the rest of the way to Government House; where the President was scheduled to deliver a speech--to a group of distinguished Australians. But before he could speak--the audience bursting into a spontaneous--"For he's a jolly good fellow." For once--the President at a loss for words--deeply moved.

Later, the President laughing off the paint attack--as a minor incident in a sea of good fellowship. At one point--assuring his audience: "We're going to stand shoulder to shoulder with you Australians--to work for a better world." And after the war is ended in Viet Nam--he went on--"we're all comin' back here--and have a big barbecue."

Next stop--the cit of Sydney; which has already promised to outdo rival Melbourne--in the size and warmth of its own welcome.

VIET NAM FOLLOW MELBOURNE

30

Reverse side of the coin -- in Viet Nam itself. Again the scene today -- of a seemingly senseless Communist terrorist attack.

A market place in the Mekong Delta -- crowded with about a Thousand men, women and children; when a Communist mine exploded in the center of the square -- spraying the crowd with Thousands of bullet-like pellets. At least Nine Vietnamese -- killed outright. Some Forty more -- seriously wounded.

U.S. Navy patrol boats racing to the scene -- to carry the victims to hospitals. Their mercy mission completed -- Thirty-Five of the sailors -- later donating life-giving blood as well.

## HONOLULU FOLLOW VIET NAM

A political furor brewing today in Honolulu--in the wake of President Johnson's visit there earlier this week. The result of disciplinary action--against a group of students at a private prep school; who left class without permission--to see the President.

The ringleader of the group--a candidate for the student governing body--expelled from school. Twenty-one other boys--including the president of the senior class--temporarily suspended; after which they'll have to make up--seven hours of detention periods.

Students, parents and local officials alike--calling the punishment a disgrace. The more so because two other students who took off at the same time--without any intention of seeing the President--were given only four demerits apiece.

By contrast--no problem in public schools. Where classes were suspended by order of Hawaii's Governor Burns--to encourage students to see the President.

SUGGESTED LEAD-IN FOR THOMAS TAPE

With Lowell Thomas in the Middle East--another special report tonight; on one island hot--another cold.



GEOGRAPHICS

*Although my present journey doesn't include any remote islands - such as the Maldives or the Seychelles, I am much interested in being reminded by Melville Grosvenor and his National Geographic colleagues that there was once upon a time a real live - Robinson Crusoe. His name - remember - Alexander Selkirk. An Eighteenth Century Scotsman, whose true adventure set the pattern for De Foe's epic novel. That is still read far and wide.*

*This little known bit of historic reminiscence tells of two islands off the coast of Chile, that recently have been renamed for the castaway sailor. Isla Mas A Tierra now is to become the Isla Robinson Crusoe, that is Isla Mas A Tierra from now on is to be called Isla Alejandro Selkirk.*

*Oh yes, and here's a bit about another island, far to the north in the Arctic: As you undoubtedly know,*

*we have a military base up in Greenland called Camp Century. But did you know it's buried under a thirty foot layer of snow and ice? Its underground passageways are so cold - they have to be shaved of ice once a week. A total of forty tons at a crack - taken out. While I'm headed in the direction of the Equator, for Africa and the Near East.*

*Solong,*

## WILMINGTON

On the medical front--good news today--here, there and almost everywhere, it would seem.

In New York--Dr. Eugene Fox of the University of Chicago --disclosing development of a vaccine against "strep throat;" as such, a preventative against rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease--which occur only after a "strep" infection.

In Wilmington, Delaware--the DuPont Company announcing plans to enter the commercial pharmaceutical field--for the first time. Initial product: A new oral medication--designed to combat Asian flu.

And in Columbus, Ohio--ten-year-old Joanie Pobst--reported recovering nicely at the Ohio State University Medical Center. Following heart surgery--in which the aortic valve of a dead boy--was transplanted into her chest; thereby replacing her own--defective aortic valve.

KOBE

Still another amazing medical story--from Kobe, Japan. Scientists at Kobe University today reporting an experiment--seemingly refuting an age-old theory; to the effect that the human brain is irrepairably damaged--if deprived of oxygen for even a few minutes.

The experiment itself--on the order of "Donovan's Brain." The Kobe scientists taking the brain of a cat--from the body of the cat; replacing its blood supply--with a circulating but non-oxygen carrying fluid; and finally freezing the brain--to a temperature of sixty-seven degrees below zero.

Six months later, the dat's brain was removed from the deep freexe--refilled with cat's blood; and to all intents and purposes--it came alive; even though the cat itself--was long dead.

By the way--the fluid circulated through the frozen brain --a form of glycerol; appropriately enough--the most common used anti-freeze.

## WASHINGTON

Speaking of the President's trip to the Pacific and the Far East, as we were a moment ago--a pertinent comment thereon comes today from Washington. The wife of a White House reporter --remarking on the radiant appearance and amazing composure of the President's traveling companion, Lady Bird Johnson.

The reason--says the Washington observer--the fact that the First Lady is always getting her hand kissed by some ambassador extraordinaire or an envoy plenipotentiary. The dispatch observing that where women are concerned--there is nothing like hand-kissing "for building and maintaining morale;" for creating --a wonderful "sense of euphoria."

The idea--in short--that domestic tranquility in the United States could be improved one hundred per cent; if husbands--would just start kissing their wives' hands.

NEW YORK FOLLOW WASHINGTON

Be that as it may--a related item today from the new Museum of Love and Marriage in New York. Suggesting that perhaps the ladies had better go slow--if they intend to promote a return to the hand-kissing days of yesteryear; lest their husbands--should perhaps demand reciprocation in kind.

Museum officials noting that in many parts of the world-- it is still the custom for wives to demonstrate their own love and affection--by kissing their husbands' feet.