

L. T. Sunoco - Mon. June 18 '34

EARTHQUAKES

I have just learned something new about the extraordinary number of earthquakes that have been happening all over the world in the past two years. Father Lynch, the famous seismologist of Fordham University, tells me that his instruments have recorded shocks every day almost since the beginning of the month. For instance, one in India. In South and Central America not merely one but several. And this morning there was one in Alaska.

Well, here's the thing that's new about them. Father Lynch says that it is a good sign. The fact that we have had so many in the last few days means that it will be a long time before we can expect any real big disastrous quake. It is when the earth goes along smoothly for a long period that we need to watch out. Those long periods of calm always end up in a big crash somewhere or other.

What is perhaps more serious than the earthquakes themselves is the freak weather that has been prevailing in several parts of the planet. For instance, the worst blizzard in many years is still raging in the mighty Andes. Chile has suffered a loss of more than a million dollars through storms, and there has

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been a terrific cold wave in Argentina.

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Up in the lofty parts of the Andes, police and railroad employees have been snowed in. There is danger of their starving to death if they're not rescued soon. Transportation was stopped some time ago on the Trans-Andean Railway, which crosses the mountains from Buenos Aires to Santiago, in Chile, because of the unusual severity of the storm. Of course we have to remember that south of the Equador they're now approaching mid-winter. At the same time, even in the height of winter, they don't have ^{ordinarily} such severe weather.

All this leads one to wonder whether these extraordinary conditions have not something to do with the unrest that prevails all over the world. When we look at the labor troubles at home, the political disturbances in Europe, the danger of war in the Far East, it is obvious that the human race today has a bad case of the jitters. It's nerves are on edge. Maybe the blame can be laid on those sun spots.

Now that we've blamed it on the sun spots let's see what's happening: -

FOULOIS

One day last February, President Roosevelt called in the head of Uncle Sam's Army Air Corps and asked him: "Can the Army carry the mail?"

Major General Benjamin D. Foulois, Chief of that Corps, answered promptly: "Yes, Mr. President, it can." Some say it was his chief, General Douglas Mac Arthur, head of the Army. Anyway, Postmaster General Farley promptly cancelled all the existing airmail contracts and the Army took over.

What happened subsequently is history now. There was a good deal of grief, and a storm of criticism. A Committee ~~xxx~~ of the House of Representatives was appointed to find out, "What's wrong with the Army Air Corps?" Today we have it's report and the General's reply.

The outcome of that Committee's investigation is the most amazing attack that has ever been made upon a general officer in the United States. The report not merely recommends but clamors for the instant dismissal of General Foulois from his post as head of the Army Air Corps. It charges him with being not merely incompetent and inefficient, but dishonest. In really cruel language the Committee insists that the

Secretary of War should relieve General Foulois of his command. Some of the terms of that report are enough to take your breath away.

In his reply the General does not tear his hair or show any particular excitement. He says he will welcome a public trial. His only complaint is that the Committee did not give him a hearing, gave him no chance to explain.

Naturally, this affair is the talk of the day and it has created terrific excitement in army circles. All the more because Benny Foulois is one of the few general officers in the United States Army who did not go to West Point.

He enlisted as a private in Connecticut. When the Wright brothers made their first flights, it was he who was selected by his superior officers to fly with them as official observer. From that moment on he studied, talked and lived aviation. He learned to pilot a plane after just ninety minutes of instruction from no less a great man than Wilbur Wright. In fact he was No. 1 pilot in our Air Service. Since then his promotion has been extraordinarily rapid. And no doubt this has

led to a good deal of jealousy. For this "ranker", who became an officer by promotion, was named a Brigadier-general when he was only thirty-eight. At that age most West Pointers are only majors, in many cases only captains.

Foulois was the first to command a flying squadron in our army. This was in the Mexican expedition against Villa. He also was the first to lead an air squadron over the German lines in the Great War. And today he's the mark for the most savage indictment on record.

Some say he's being made the goat.

We Americans are not any too gracious to our Congress. Whenever it gets near the end of a session, we say: "Now, you're nice cute legislators, and we don't want you to be in a hurry, but here's your hat, and your train's waiting." That always seems to me a particularly ungracious attitude to take. After all, Congress makes news for the newspapers and gives ^{a radio} ~~the~~ commentators something to talk ~~and~~ about. Of course, I sometimes get a bit tired of talking about Congress, and you get tired of listening, but if there were no Congress we might have more about the Department of the Interior or ~~of~~ the Bureau of Statistics or something like that.

Up to quite a late hour Saturday night everybody in Washington thought the curtain was about to fall on the Seventy-third Congress. But here we are on Monday and Congress is still there. It is only small groups of filibusters that are holding up the adjournment. But you don't need large groups of tireless talkers for that. A huge majority of our legislators are really anxious to go home. Many of them had even reserved railroad spaces for the journey. They are so anxious to say "good-bye" that they may even drop the Banking Bill.

HANFSTAENGL

The journeyings of Dr. Hanfstaengle, for which so many people prophesied tragedy, have turned into the broadest comedy. In fact, ^{where} this is one of those cases ~~when~~ the story is that there is no story. The joke is on somebody, but I don't know quite whom.

Dr. Ernst Franz Sedgwick Hanfstaengl, ~~xxx~~ as you have probably heard ^{loudly and often,} ~~by this time,~~ is head of the Nazi press bureau. His sole reason for ^{journeying} ~~returning~~ to these shores was to attend a class reunion at Harvard ^{and sing a few psalms with his old classmates.} A terrific storm and tempest was raised over his ^{visit.} ~~coming here.~~ Some excited columnists said there would surely be riots, battle, murder and sudden death. They demanded that he be taken off the ship at Ellis Island and promptly sent back to the Fatherland with a flea in his ear. Some excited members of the House of Representatives proposed to subpoena Dr. Hanfstaengle the minute he landed here and make him tell them what he knows about Nazi propaganda in the U.S.A. Also what ^{Dr. Hanfstaengl} ~~he~~ knows about the Black Tom explosion during the War.

Some way or other, I don't know quite how, wiser counsels prevailed. Not a single riot has occurred. Dr. Hanfstaengle has confounded and disappointed his critics by conducting himself with a

most un-Teutonic tact. He has resisted all the efforts of the newspaper men to inveigle him into talking about politics. He has not uttered a single word of Nazi propaganda, unless you count one sentence. I mean when he said: "The position of the Jew in Germany is going to be normal, quite normal before long." Everything is going to be much better."

~~So another~~ ^{Another} ~~teapot~~ ^{in a teapot} tempest has subsided. And my guess would be that a good many people who get excited too soon are feeling slightly sheepish today. If they aren't, they should be.

GERMANY FOLLOW HANFSTAENGL

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Dr. Hanfstaengl,
If Hitler's favorite piano player had not been so discreet, he could have found plenty to talk about concerning the state of affairs back in Germany. For instance, he might have commented on the rumors in France that the Nazi regime is crumbling. Of course, Dr. Hanfstaengl would pooh, pooh such an idea. But we have to remember that Paris predicted the German debt moratorium three days before it happened, predicted it with remarkable accuracy. So now, how accurate are the French prophecies that the bell is already tolling the end of the autocracy of Hitler?

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The French base their prediction on the feverish anxiety of Hitler to straighten out Germany's foreign affairs. But there are symptoms within Germany itself to bear out the rumors running around Paris. There seems to be a rift in the Nazi ranks, on which I commented last week. A clash between Conservative and Radical, old and young.

~~In Thuringia,~~ Dr. Goebbels, the Propaganda Minister, ^{has been} crying: "Down with the critics of the Nazi regime; down with the killjoys; down with the reactionaries!"

At that identical moment Franz von Papen, the Vice-

Chancellor of Germany, was saying the exact opposite. "We should have freedom," he exclaimed. We should have freedom of the press." And he added: "There should be an end to abusing as reactionaries all those who demand freedom."

Now, the remarkable circumstance about these two speeches is that Vice-Chancellor Von Papen's remarks might be read as a deliberate reply to that of Hitler's Propaganda Minister.

I suppose that we Americans have rather mixed feelings as we take a look at Cuba. There 's a feeling of relief, that with the abolition of our old arrangement with Cuba, we have no reason to interfere in the tangled affairs of the island. On the other hand there's a sense of old responsibility. We 're used to thinking of Cuba's business as pretty close to our own. And it doesn't give us a pleasant feeling to see things going from bad to worse down there.

And they're going from bad to worse. Let's look at the bearings of that latest murderous outrage in Havana. It comes as a climax to a rapid series of recent outbreaks of violence. It also comes right on the heels of the announcement that Cuba is to have a general election to select a new government. That's perhaps the most sinister part of it. What kind of election will they have with such things occurring, such things as the machine gun attack on the ABC parade?

Cuba's most prominent and active political group has been that ABC, ^{student} organization, which took the dominant revolutionary part in the overthrow of the Machado Government.

With flags and banners and blaring bands and shouts of "Viva", they were putting on an impressive political demonstration.

Their enemies put on a demonstration, even more impressive, without any flags or banners or blaring bands or shouts of "Viva". They said it murderously with machine guns. ~~There was said to have been~~ shooting ^{at the parade} from behind the pillars of a building-- and there also was an automobile. A red automobile suddenly sped by the head of the parade. Men with machine guns leaned out and blazed away at the front rank of the paraders and mowed them down. Fourteen men and women were killed and fifty wounded.

There was a wild panic, as the crowded marchers broke and ran. But they didn't all run. Scores of men who were armed, returned the fire, and then still shooting chased after the automobile. They caught it and killed the four men who were in the car. The automobile they say was registered in New York as the property of a Cuban. ^T So, it's the old story ~~tonight~~ in Havana tonight -- soldiers on guard everywhere, the military in control and the ominous mutter of revolt.

EXTORTION

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Every day or so a story appears in the news, and about the only thing you can say is: "What a plot that would make for a mystery story writer!" Today we can make that remark over and over again: "What a plot!" If I were a detective story writer I'd kick myself a few times for not having thought of it. A man is accused of murder which he did not commit. He was there when the crime was committed, but another man did it. He ~~xx~~ saw him do it with his own eyes. But this other man is innocent of the murder.

It sounds complicated, but life has arranged the plot - life in the big city.

Dominick Zerbonio came to New York, an immigrant from Italy. He worked hard, ~~he~~ saved his money, and present^{ly} was the thriving owner of a small trucking business.

One day two gangsters came to him and tried to shake him down, the old blackhand racket. He refused. They suggested he ought to come and talk it over with the big boss of the gang. Dominick said: "All right" and went.

In a stuffy east side flat he met the big boss. An argument started - between the big boss and one of his henchmen.

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Suddenly the henchman pulled a gun and shot the boss - bang! bang!
The boss crumpled to the floor with bloodstains on his face and chest.

Then swiftly the door was burst open: Two detectives, flashing badges, appeared. They grabbed Dominick. The other blackhanders nodded. Yes, they said, Dominick had done the shooting. A doctor in a white coat appeared, examined the big boss, and pronounced him dead. And the charge against Dominick was murder!

He protested he was innocent. They laughed. They started to take him to jail. Someone suggested the thing could be fixed. Dominick, scared to death, jumped at the chance. After much palaver, the policemen said they would let him go and forget about him for three thousand dollars.

He paid two thousand. He had to mortgage his store and trucks to do it. They demanded the balance. He could not get it. In despair Dominick went to police headquarters and told his story. And that's when the police raided one of the boldest and most ingenious extortion gangs in the history of New York.

The killing of the big boss was faked from one end to another. The pistol fired at him was loaded with blanks. The blood on his face and chest was out of a bottle of ketchup. The supposed

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detectives and the supposed doctor too were members of the gang,
playing their parts.

They had been playing the game far and wide, fake murders,
fake abductions of women, fake everything. But the prison sentences
they are going to get won't be any faking.

BOY

You know the delight of a boy who gets the baseball that Babe Ruth slammed out for his mightiest home-run, or Jack Dempsey's autograph on a boxing glove. Well, here's a case of a New York office boy who spent his spare time studying up on aviation. He delivered a message to Hotel Gotham, in New York, where a luncheon was being held in honor of the speed demon, Captain Roscoe Turner. They were presenting the sky-streaking aviator with one of those non-destructible wrist-watches. The office boy was having a big thrill as he watched.

As he put on the new wristwatch, Roscoe Turner took off his old one, by which he had timed those spectacular flights of his.

"Don't need this old hunk of tin anymore", he said. Then he saw the office boy and handed him the watch,

"Here, kid, you can have it," he laughed. "It has timed many a flight and maybe some day you can time one with it."

And that was the thrill of a lifetime for one New York office boy.

If he were here now, he could take a slant at Roscoe Turner's old flying watch and tell me right to the second that it's time to say:- SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW."