

TRUMAN

P.J.-P. & S. Friday, Dec. 24, 1948.

In Washington tonight the official Christmas tree was lighted -- but who did it? The tree on the White House lawn was fixed up, ready for illumination, and a crowd of two thousand was gathered to hear a message from President Truman -- broadcast from his home town -- Independence, Missouri.

According to traditions, the President lights up the tree - and tonight that was to be accomplished by pushing a button at Independence. But something peculiar happened. The Presidential voice came over the loudspeaker, pronouncing the Christmas message, and then came a place in the script where the President, out in Independence, was to push the button. But before he got to that point, the lights went on in advance.

Just as he was about to go into the paragraph saying that he was going to press the button, the bulbs on the tree flickered, dimmed out

and then brightened in full glory -- while the Presidential voice at Independence had not yet arrived at that point.

What had happened? The chief electrician at the White House was queried. He explained that an electrician had been assigned to switch on the lighting, in case the presidential cross-country button pushing did not work. He said he thought that this special electrician, through some kind of mx mix-up, had beaten the President to the punch -- or rather, beaten him to the illumination.

BETHLEHEM

In Bethlehem, they ^{are} having an old-fashioned Christmas this year. At the birthplace of the Saviour, things have gone back to the ways and customs of times gone by. The Palestine war has cut off electricity for the lights in the church of the Nativity and other Holy Places. So, they've gone back to lamps and candles.

Well, the little town of Bethlehem had a long history before electric lights were ever invented, and tonight the hand of the clock has turned back - as they celebrate the traditional ritual of Christmas Eve. There's a light of lamps, as of old, and especially the gleam of myriads of ^{can} candles.

FRANCE

In Paris, the French National Assembly spent Christmas eve night -- or at least part of it - in passing a budget. This came as a climax to a political fight, the Premier stating that he would resign if the budget bill was not approved.

The measure calls for the appropriation of vast quantities of Francs, amounting to six billion six hundred millions of dollars - to finance the economy of France under the Marshall Plan. The government ~~is~~ at Paris ~~has~~ insisted on higher taxes, to enable France to do its share in collaborating with the European recovery program. There has been bitter opposition, the French having an acute dislike for paying taxes. But tonight, just as Santa Claus was getting ready for his visit, the National Assembly passed the budget.

U. N.

The Security Council of the United Nations has now to deal with two accusations of truce violation - Indonesia and Palestine. Which would seem to be a good deal of the same thing - the U N called upon to do something about the Dutch in Java and about the Israelis in the Negeb.

The action on Indonesia today was - a cease-fire order. It seems as if the U N were always issuing those commands - to stop shooting. The resolution adopted today was a compromise - in that it did not demand that the forces of the Netherlands withdraw to positions they held before they launched their sudden offensive against the Indonesian Republic. They are merely required a halt where they are - stop the attack.

The Dutch are showing little sign of yielding. Their attitude, as expressed today, would seem to indicate that they will not stop until they've taken full possession of republican territories. They are still pushing on both in Java and the neighboring

island of Sumatra - the Indonesians putting up little effective resistance. However, there continue to be signs of guerrilla war - Dutch troops ordered to stay close to their barracks in the invaded areas. This, an obvious precaution against guerrilla attacks.

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In the case of Palestine, the Security Council today voted to hold an emergency meeting on Monday, to consider the new Jewish offensive in the southern desert. The Arabs are charging - "Flagrant violation" of the truce. ~~In the Southern desert.~~ They are demanding angrily that the U N take action against Israel. So on Monday all this will be taken up, with the likelihood of another - "Cease fire" order.

In the Negeb, itself, there is word of heavy Jewish attacks against Egyptian forces, troops of Israel hammering away on the ground - although a later dispatch from Tel Aviv says that military action has died down.

One dominating fact would seem to be - the rains. The normally dry and desolate Negeb is ~~having a heavy~~ ^{getting more} rain than usual. *Slowing down the war.*
~~downpour the teeming tropical rain, that does, at~~

COSTA RICA

A late dispatch tells of Inter-American action in the dispute between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. The organization of American States calls upon both republics to guarantee that they will not take hostile action, one against the other.

The Western Hemisphere group has also decided to set up a military commission to police the border between Costa Rica and Nicaragua, ~~a Commission on which five nations are to be represented. The purpose, to make sure that neither Costa Rica nor Guatemala violate their guarantees.~~

This is the first dramatic action ~~All this is being done~~ under the authority of the Inter-American Defense Pact, concluded at the Conference at Rio, the treaty in which the American Republics agreed to intervene, should there be aggression against any of its members under that authorization, the League of Western Hemisphere States sent a Commission down to Central America, ^{to} ~~and~~ make an investigation on the spot. This Commission has now returned, and reports that there is no question but

that Costa Rica was right in charging that Nicaragua aided a revolutionary invasion of Costa Rican territory. The Commission states: "The revolutionary move which developed in Costa Rica was organized principally in Nicaragua."

But at the same time, Costa Rica itself, did not emerge free and clear of blame - the Committee finding that the Costa Rican Government was giving help to what is called - the Caribbean Legion. This is an outfit designed to ^{stir} up revolutionary trouble, and the Caribbean Legion has been causing alarm for months in Central America.

All of which is the background for tonight's demand - that both Costa ^{Rica} and Nicaragua give guarantees that they will not take hostile action against each other. Sounds like the Inter-American League playing the part of ^a the Western Hemisphere United Nations.

disapprove of MacArthur's Christmas amnesty - while the rest are described as ~~being~~ bewildered.

the dropping of charges against arrested top ranking war criminals. These were to have been put on trial, but now they are included in a general amnesty decreed by the Supreme Commander.

Many Japanese are said to be questioning the logic of International Justice - seven names, including Tojo, while other defendants were sentenced to prison. But now the revelations, still to be tried, are set free. Among those executed was former Premier Hirota, a high leader of the Black Dragon Society - which terrorized the Far East. Yet, among those who now gain amnesty, is an extremist named Ito, who at one time was head of the Black Dragon Society.

The Japanese are said to feel that, if the victors in war did not want to go ahead with the international trials, they might have provided the Japanese themselves to set up courts for the trial of war criminals - like the De-Sativation courts in Germany.

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TOKYO

Tokyo reports that the Japanese are giving a mixed reception to General MacArthur's Christmas amnesty-- the dropping of charges against seventeen top ranking war criminals. These were to have been put on trial, but now they are included in a general amnesty decreed by the Supreme Commander.

Many Japanese are said to be questioning the logic of International Justice - seven hanged, including Tojo, while other defendants were sentenced to prison. But now the seventeen, still to be tried, are set free. Among those executed was Former Premier Hirota, a high leader of the Black Dragon Society -- which terrorized the Far East. Yet, among those who now gain amnesty, is an extremist named Kuzu, who at one time was head of the Black Dragon Society.

The Japanese are said to feel that, if the victors in war did not want to go ahead with the International trials, they might have permitted the Japanese themselves to set up courts for the trial of war criminals - like the De-Nazification courts in Germany.

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POPE

There's a report from Rome that Pope Pius ~~the twelfth~~ tried to prevent the execution of Tojo and the other Japanese warlords. A news agency in Rome states that the Pontiff received a petition from a group of Japanese Catholics, asking him to do what he could in behalf of the condemned.

Pope Pius, says the news agency, "At once got in touch with the United States Authorities." If so, it was to no avail - as we all know.

Today, ~~Pius the twelfth~~ ^{the Pope} issued a Christmas message, in which he called for future punishment for war criminals. Recommending - life imprisonment.

DUGGAN

The Attorney General makes a statement clearing Lawrence Duggan, the Former State Department Official who jumped or fell to his death. Attorney General Clark refers to the fact that Duggan was questioned by the F. B. I., and says the F. B. I report ^{referred to} ~~called~~ him ~~as~~ "A loyal employee of the United States Government." The Attorney General did not say whether or not Duggan had been informed that he ^{been} had ~~been~~ cleared.

All of which is accompanied by new agitation against the Committee on Un-American Activities. For example, an attack today by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. And there are demands that the Committee be abolished, or, at least, its procedure changed.

Today, spy hunters, of the Committee admitted they they may have made an error. They may have made a mistake -- when, after Duggan jumped or fell to his death, they disclosed the fact that he had been mentioned in the espionage inquiry. Congressman Mundt and Nixon, give the following explanation:—
They say that, immediately after Duggan's death, they

were questioned by news reporters. They were asked - did the Committee have any testimony pertaining to Duggan? This, they said, left them in a dilemma.

They had three alternatives - they could have told the newsmen there was no such testimony, which would have been false. ~~They could have told newsmen there was no such testimony, which would have been false.~~ They could have refused to say anything, which would have given ground for surmises and guesses. Or they could simply release the testimony. This last was what they did, - giving the reporters a transcript of the statement made by the Anti-Communist editor, Isaac Don Levine, ^{who} ~~he~~ testified that the one-time red agent, Whittaker Chambers, had mentioned Duggan as one of those in the State Department who had given him secret documents. ^{Which} ~~the~~ ₁ Chambers has since denied.

In the Committee today, there was discussion about possible changes of procedure, but it was decided not to do anything until the new Congress

convenes - which will put the Committee on Un-American Activities under democratic control if it is continued.

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Later news -- a statement by Mrs. Duggan, who declares that her husband was not advised that he had been exonerated by the F.B.I. She says, however, that he was not worried in any way. Knowing that he had not been involved in the Communist Espionage ring, he was not disturbed by the F.B. I. investigation. Mrs. Duggan says he is convinced that her husband's fall from a sixteen story window ~~is~~ was accidental.

FIRE INSURANCE

Here's about a small town fire department - the kind of story that's familiar in American lore and legend. But this one really happened, as is evidenced by the financial fact that it's included in the nineteen forty-eight list of insurance claims that were paid up.

In a town in Oregon, an apartment hotel caught fire, and the local smoke-eaters started out to extinguish the blaze - only they didn't start right away. They couldn't get the fire wagon going, something wrong with the motor. Then, failing to fix the motor, they pushed the fire truck to the scene of the blaze.

When they got there, the firemen found their hose was frozen. It was rigid and choked with ice. Local citizens helped out, by stomping on the hose, and breaking the ice until the water could get through.

Then it was discovered that the firemen had forgotten to bring the nozzle for the hose - and fire fighting was held up while somebody ran back and got the nozzle.

By this time two hours had elapsed, and you can

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guess the rest of the story - the apartment hotel burned to the ground.

At this afternoon I went to attention, the news on the left hand and on the right it sounded like a procession of deadlines. Then, I noticed the rhythm, a familiar pattern - Jingle Bells; the teletype was playing that old Christmas ditty.

I looked at the news page, and there a lot of X's were being rapped out -- lines of X's, that were showing up in the form of a bell. It was a kind of Christmas card on the teletype, followed by Merry Greetings from the Boston Press.

And all the while the tinkling sound was droning out - Jingle Bells; The voice of the news saying - Merry Christmas.

TELETYPE

Late this afternoon, the bell on the news teletype began to ring - the familiar signal a bulletin.

So this afternoon I came to attention, the more so as the bell kept on and on -- it sounded like a headline of headlines. Then, I noticed the rhythm, a familiar pattern - Jingle Bells; The teletype was playing that old Christmas ditty.

I looked at the news page, and there a lot of X's were being rapped out -- lines of X's, that were shapping up in the form of a bell. ~~It was~~ ^{It was} a king of Christmas Card on the teletype, followed by Yuletide Greetings from the United Press.

And all the while the tinkling sound was drumming out - Jingle Bells ; The voice of the news saying -- Merry Christmas.

RESCUE

The Navy has ordered an icebreaker to go along with the Aircraft Carrier Saipan in its attempt to rescue ^{the} eleven stranded flyers on the Greenland Ice Cap. The carrier may need a bit of ice-breaking, pushing its way into Greenland Fjords. Five helicopters are being taken along, to go hovering down into the Glacier ^{seven thousand -} ~~seventy~~ seven hundred feet high, ^{there to} and pick up the marooned airmen.

However, the report from Greenland is that the weather ^{is} now comparatively favorable for rescue work by glider, and it may be that the castways will be taken out before the aircraft carrier arrives. But they ^{are} ~~are~~ there for Christmas - in just about the most desolate spot on this earth. All kinds ^d of supplies ^{now} have been dropped to them, ^{Yuletide} dinner and everything - to make Christmas as merry as possible on the Greenland Ice Cap.

And now to all who are marooned - and all who are not marooned on ice -- a Merry X'mas.