

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

As for telling about the war tonight, I don't suppose I can do it half as well as Winston Churchill. Today the Prime Minister gave the House of Commons a report. As for the conflict in North Africa, Churchill said:- "The battle in the Libyan desert is still proceeding. We are attacking the fort and town of Bardia with strong and increasing forces."

While he was saying that, reports from Cairo indicated that the Italian base of Bardia is more or less isolated and about to be captured.

From Rome there were statements confirming this -- and more. Informed Italian comment was that the Fascist forces might make their main line of resistance at Tobruk-- which is far along the coast of Libya, a naval base eighty miles from the Egyptian frontier. And that would mean an eighty mile

withdrawal by the Italians.

Prime Minister Churchill in the Commons spoke about the losses on both sides ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ the Battle of Libya. Said he:-
"I figure that thirty thousand prisoners even at the present moment, is a considerable understatement." What have been the British losses? An amazing figure - given by Churchill. A thousand men killed, wounded and captured. In the House of Lords it was said the number of British lives lost was ^{even less} ~~less~~ than one hundred.

Churchill told a story that sounds almost fantastic - a cavalry charge in this era of mechanized war! He put it in these words:- "It happened as an incident - that an Australian cavalry squadron charged, sword in hand, and gathered both guns and transport as trophies." To which one can only wonder - what's the matter with Mussolini's army? ^H Churchill made some implication of a thing that is widely surmised - that the Italians don't like the war on the side of Nazi Germany and have no heart in the fight. The Prime Minister made this observation:- "One cannot say," said he, "that the Italians have shown a high fighting spirit or

quality in this battle. In other periods of Italian history," he noted, "we have known that they have shown great courage. And," he added, "I certainly am not going to frame a charge against a people with whom up to this time we've had no quarrel."

As for the German side of the Axis, Winston Churchill spoke rather grimly ~~xx~~ of Britain being, what he called, "half armed." Hitler's realm, on the contrary, ^{is} ~~was~~ saturated with armaments, ^{said he.} That disparity of weapons, he indicated, would be overcome - with the help of the United States. During Nineteen Forty-One, he estimated, Britain will face Nazi Germany on something like equal mechanical terms - and he looked forward to British armies fighting the Nazi hosts on the continent of Europe.

Winston Churchill painted no rosy picture of the U-boat war combining ^{ed} ~~ing~~ with air attacks on British shipping. He said the increase in the number of sinkings is cause for what he called "disquietude." He hoped, he said, for an increasing effectiveness in fighting against the Nazi U*boat and air blockade.

Churchill repeated recent British warnings about the peril of - invasion. The danger of invasion still exists. To

assume that it does not exist any more would be, said he -
"a disaster. Remember," he cried, "that Hitler has great need
of doing something now or soon." And that's a reflection of
the British apprehension that a supreme attack on the Island
may be launched ~~soon~~, by spring, ⁱⁿ ninety days, some are saying.

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They call it "invasion jitters" in London, and these
jitters have produced a paradoxical state of mind. For so long
a period as a couple of days, Britain has had the strange
experience of not being bombed. London has had no air raids for
what seems to Londoners - an amazing length of time. It gives
the people a feeling of strangeness and unfamiliarity - odd how
the human organism adapts itself to the most terrible conditions,
and can be even uncomfortable when things grow better. ^R Moreover,
the British are inclined to put a suspicious interpretation on
the recent absence of Nazi bombing. Maybe ^{Hitler is holding} ~~the Nazis have held~~
back ^{his} ~~from their~~ air fleets because ^{he is} ~~they're~~ mobilizing every
^{ounce} ~~inch~~ of air power for some tremendous attack, wanting to make the
assault with a single blow - perhaps the long ^{talked} ~~attack~~ of landing
on the British coast. So the quietude, no air raid siren, no

uproar of anti-aircraft batteries, no thunder of bombs -- this sweet tranquility tends to give the Britons "invasion jitters."

I don't know if there's any comfort -- and this seems a bitter thing to say -- to talk of comfort because of bombing. But tonight the Nazi warplanes are over Britain again. Today there was daylight raiding with bitter dogfights high in the sky. And tonight the bombers came over. Relieving the "invasion jitters" - perhaps.

BRITISH AID

Events are moving fast in the Aid for Britain program.

Today we hear of a British list calling for armament to the amount of three billion dollars. This follows President Roosevelt's proposal that we should take over British war orders, pay for them and deliver the armament to Britain, under what is being called -- "a gentleman's agreement." An agreement -- that it's a loan or lease of war material on a rental basis. The British to give us back what they have left of it when the war is over and replace what has been used up or lost.

The London representatives in this country have responded promptly, and today they completed the list of war orders they need. Total -- three billion dollars. One prominent item is twelve thousand war planes, bombers mostly. Cost -- one billion, two hundred million. Guns, tanks, and so on, one billion, seven hundred million. Sixty new cargo vessels, to replace ships sunk by the U-boats. Cost -- one hundred million.

We're told that the administration has advised the London representatives to go ahead and negotiate with American concerns for the placing of these huge orders, but not actually award them -- until Congress has taken action.

The U-boat crisis is reflected by a proposal that the United States shall take over thirty-seven Danish vessels in American ports. These ships have been tied up ever since Nazi Germany seized Denmark. The administration is studying the suggestion that these Danish ships be acquired by the United States and then turned over to Great Britain.

In actual armament production the latest is the plan to create a three-man^{defense} commission consisting of Secretary of War Stimson, Secretary of the Navy Knox, and Defense Production Coordinator Knudsen. The present National Defense Commission is merely advisory. One complaint is that it's lacking in power. The new proposed three-man committee will have a lot more authority -- delegated to it by the President.

CONGRESS

Congress is to stay in session. Administration leaders hoped to get the lawmakers to go home and adjourn until the new session after the holidays. But no there was Republican opposition and so the attempt for adjournment was given up. Congress will take some brief recesses during the Christmas and New Year's season, but will remain in session.

Today in the lower House there was some official elucidation ~~of~~ of the attitude of our Former Ambassador to Great Britain, Joseph P. Kennedy. Representative Ludlow, a Democrat of Indiana, read a letter from former Ambassador Kennedy.

"As it stands today," wrote Kennedy, "our production for defense is nowhere near adequate for protection of our own situation, let alone aid for Britain. Therefore our first obligation is to speed up defense with all our might. It would be suicidal," the Kennedy quotation concludes, "for our country to get into the war in our present state of unpreparedness."

FEET

In the army the command, "Forward march!" is getting a larger response than it did when the A.E.F. of the World War was trained. That is - the feet that do the responding are larger. ~~The men drafted for the new army are more doggie than the rookies of twenty-three years ago. That is, their dogs are more ample and copious.~~

This is indicated by news from Fort Dix, New Jersey, where they are fitting shoes to thousands of draftees. Today Captain George Danker, the property officer at Camp Dix, gave out a set of figures. These show that in the camps, seventy-seven men out of every ten thousand wear Number Twelves. *And* Number Twelves are of the canal boat order. When the A.E.F. was trained, only six draftees out of ten thousand required size Twelve. There are more than ten times as many now. All of which, I suppose, helps to put the country on a war footing.

FINLAND

Today in a dramatic coincidence the Republic of Finland selected a President and lost its ex-President. Former Premier Rytö was chosen to succeed President Callio, who had resigned.

A mere few hours later, the retiring President died. He was Finland's political leader in the war with Soviet Russia last winter, staunch, simple, determined -- what we think of the character of the fighters of Finland. He resigned the office of the Presidency at Helsinki because of ill health, the malady that brought about his end today,

a few hours after ^{his} successor was elected. While reviewing a guard of honor he collapsed.

CHRISTMAS

The Christmas spirit hit a court in Brooklyn today.

Judge Franklin Taylor was passing sentence on a long string of offenders. The cops ushered in one young fellow who had helped ~~to~~ rob a grocery store of fifty dollars' worth of merchandise.

listened to the testimony and then
His Honor [^]pronounced sentence in these words:- "I am convinced that urgent need drove you to this. I believe you will not

break the law again. Go straight. Sentence dismissed - and here's five dollars." The Judge dug into his pocket, handed a five dollar bill to the defendant, and sent him home.

Up came another youth - this one charged with swiping twenty dollars' worth of jewelry from a private house. Judge Franklin Taylor listened to the story of the crime, and said to the prisoner: "You deserve another chance, here's five dollars - and go home to your sick mother."

Prisoner Number Three was an eighteen year old negro girl. The testimony against her developed that she came to New York from North Carolina a week ago, got a job as a maid in a home, and proceeded to steal some clothing and jewelry.

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In her defense, the negro girl related that she found a bottle of whiskey in her employer's pantry, and took a couple of ~~drinks~~ ^{swigs} of ~~it~~. That's what made her swipe the clothing and jewelry.

Later she wanted to return the articles, but she was afraid.

His Honor, the judge, said to her: "Would you like to go home, back to North Carolina where you know people and have friends?"

"Yes suh, boss," said the negro girl.

Judge Santa Claus
Whereupon ~~His Honor~~ gave her a suspended sentence and a bus ticket home.

Altogether, the judge passed sentence on seventeen ~~prison~~ prisoners today, and sent not a one of them to jail. Instead of prison terms, he gave good advice - and sometimes money. Twas Christmas in the court-room - to paraphrase an old and Oh so solemn song.

JOKES

I had an idea today that I'd scan through the news and try to find something funny - some humorous kind of story. But then I thought I'd better not. The thing that changed my mind was one particular news dispatch, which jumped up and hit me between the eyes - so to speak. It tells of some court proceedings in New York today.

A man named Koprowski was brought before the judge, charged with trying to choke Mrs. Koprowski. The reason was - he didn't like his wife's jokes. The testimony related that Mrs. Koprowski has a great sense of humor, and likes nothing better than telling a funny story. Mrs. Koprowski is such a comic that it was her habit to keep Mr. Koprowski awake at night, telling him jokes. She'd think of one while he was snoring, give him a good shake, and then proceed ^{to tell the} humorous wheez - laughing and laughing as she came to the side-splitting point. "And so," she testified today, "he tried to choke me."

His Honor, ~~the~~ Judge Ramsgate, ^{sought} ~~tried~~ to arrange a reconciliation. He turned to Mr. Koprowski and explained that jokes and humor have their place in the world - and help to make life a little less grim.

To which Mr. Koprowski merely replied, "I don't like jokes."

His Honor persisted, "Aren't your wife's jokes any good?"

Mrs. Koprowski interrupted. "Sure they are good - they're just so funny," and she laughed heartily.

"Her jokes are no good," said Mr. Koprowski.

The magistrate decided that he'd pass judgment on that point and so he asked Mrs. Koprowski to tell one of her jokes. She was only too willing. Mrs. Koprowski, as you may surmise from her name, is Polish, and she tells her jokes in Polish. So she ~~rept~~ rattled one off in that melodious language, laughing her head off as she related it. The judge doesn't understand Polish - so he laughed. Mr. Koprowski, however, understands Polish only too well - he didn't laugh at all. His face grew longer and more lugubrious, as his wife related her funny story.

The judge's verdict was a compromise. He told the Koprowkis to go home - enjoining Mr. Koprowski not to choke his wife again, and bidding Mrs. Koprowski not to tell him any more

jokes.

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So that's the bit of news that stopped me from looking through the press dispatches for a funny story to tell tonight. In telling a joke to you folks, I might score as flat a failure as Mrs. Koprowski. And you might ~~for~~ feel about the same as Mr. Koprowski - ~~and~~ want to choke me. So let's close this broadcast with something lugubrious - and even grim.

At Montreal today, a wife went to court asking for a legal separation. She is seventy-nine - her husband is eighty-six. The judge looked the old girl over and asked, ~~how long~~ "How long have you been married?"

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"Sixty years," she replied.

Whereupon the justice expressed his surprise - why should she want a separation after being married for so long?

To which she responded - "Enough is enough."

And so it is. ~~I had my say,~~ Enough is enough, and

9 1/4
here's Hugh. ~~James.~~