

WESTERN FRONT

C.I. - Sunoco. Thursday, Oct. 19, 1939.

That strange sort of warfare on the Western Front ~~has had~~ has had no more curious commentary than the official report issued by the German War Office today. Its tone is so curious, for a war bulletin, that one European correspondent is inspired to use the epithet - "The Alphonse and Gaston War."

The Berlin statement claims that in one attack, in one day, Hitler's army pushed the French out of all the German territory the French had occupied in two months of fighting - fighting more or less. Berlin says ~~there~~ there never was any real battle during those French advances, and specifies that not more than a company of soldiers on either side was engaged at any one time. Berlin adds that during the recent German push, the French retired mostly of their own free will. "The enemy has voluntarily given up the small territory," are the words used by the Berlin bulletin. This pretty well jibes with the official French war communique a couple of days ago, which stated in the face of a strong German attack, advanced French patrols had retired from German territory.

The most curious and perhaps significant statement in

today's German war dispatch is this. I'll quote it word for word, it's so odd. "At some points," it says, "contact with the enemy has been lost for the time being, since our outposts did not cross the French frontier." Meaning, advance troops could have followed the French into French territory, but refrained from doing so, not wanting to invade France. They're much too polite to do that, apparently - rather even more polite than Alphonse and Gaston.

Of course, the Germans are not normally renowned for such exquisite courtesy, especially in a war - in Poland for example, at Warsaw. There must be some Hitler trick in this business of the Nazi Fuehrer not permitting the feet of German troops to profane the sacred soil of France. So, observers are surmising - that Hitler is pursuing a policy of, all quiet on the Western Front, soft-pedalling ^o ~~that~~ _^ Western Front. At the same time, German submarines and aviation have been hitting ambitiously at the ~~French~~ English fleet - the Hitler war fury ~~is~~ concentrated on Britain. And - not at all on France, ~~XX~~ Alphonse and Gaston stuff for France. So maybe the peculiar combination is part of an

attempt to split the two allies, trying to wean Paris from London.

In other words - more politics than war.

If ~~FRANCE~~ there is any genuine significance in all this, it would certainly mean that the Allies are wrong in expecting a huge German offensive in the near future - the offensive which has been anticipated because of the huge forces massed behind the German line.

~~The ^{Berlin} German bulletin enumerates ^{Nazi} German losses on the Western Front as six or seven hundred killed, wounded and missing. A hundred and ninety-six men killed, three hundred and fifty-six wounded, and a hundred and fourteen missing, presumably prisoners. The Germans claim to have shot down ^{sixteen} ~~sixty~~ Allied planes including twelve British. And admits the loss of only eleven German warplanes on the Western Front. It adds that the aviation activity has been only observation and combats between planes - no bombing.~~

The propaganda trend of the report is obvious - belittling the battle on the Western Front, with a wooing gesture toward France.

FLYERS

Tonight in Scotland two coffins are lying in state in a church. Aviators of the Royal Air Force are standing as a guard of honor all night. Tomorrow, there will be a stately double funeral, with full military honors. In this ~~aviation~~ fashion, Britain pays its last respects to two aviators who died in air battle - German aviators. They were killed in Monday's air raid against British warships in the Firth of Forth. The way the British are treating their fallen foes is the most dramatic sign to date of that chivalry always so marked in ~~air services at war~~ *the war of the air.*

And the British today took a couple of prisoners - on an English beach. They too were German aviators, who had flown in the air raids against the British fleet. Their plane ~~was~~ forced down at sea, they had taken to their collapsible boat. Ever since Tuesday they had drifted on the North Sea, and today they got ashore. One was injured and had to be carried. The other was able to climb up steep cliffs, along with the men who captured them.

POLAND

One of the outstanding questions of these troubled days was answered today. The question: (Why has not Great Britain done something about the Soviet invasion of Poland? The Allies guaranteed Poland against aggression and declared war on Hitler when Hitler invaded.) Stalin's army also struck into Poland. Nevertheless, London and Paris continue to be on as good terms with Moscow as they can. How come? Plenty of people have been asking that.

(Today, in the House of Commons the British government gave the explanation. Great Britain did not guarantee Poland against aggression by Soviet Russia; against aggression by anybody except Nazi Germany.) And the exiled Polish government agrees this is so.

GERMANY

Hitler's Germany today formally incorporated into the Reich those formerly German territories which the Versailles Treaty gave to Poland. Of course Germany holds a lot ^{of} other sections of Poland -- this ~~is~~ conquered territory. Today's incorporation redraws the frontiers of Germany proper, puts them back to where they were, before the Versailles Treaty.

Two areas are involved -- Posen and West Prussia.

Posen is along the north central boundary of Germany and Poland; ~~while~~ West Prussia is the Polish Corridor -- ^{the} ~~a~~ strip of land between Germany proper and East Prussia.

TURKEY

All sorts of interpretations are being placed on the treaty that Turkey today signed with the allied powers. Its terms are rather complicated. They stipulate that each side is to go to the aid of the other if either side becomes involved in a war in the Mediterranean. ~~Sea~~. Also -- Turkey shall come to the aid of the Allies ~~if~~ if they should get into a war in defense of their pledges to Roumania and Greece.

However, it is ^{specified} ~~obvious~~ that in no case is Turkey to go into a war against Soviet Russia. The Turks don't want to fight

the Soviets. (Now who might be likely to attack Roumania or Greece? Italy might possibly be conceived as taking a whack at Greece. As for Roumania, it is threatened by Germany and Soviet Russia. But, if Turkey ^{want} ~~can't~~ get into a battle with ^{the} ~~Soviet~~ Russia, that leaves only Germany.)

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The general interpretation ^{is} ~~that~~ the signing of today's treaty draws Turkey away from ~~Russia~~ Russia and closer to the Allies. This is the view that Berlin is taking. The treaty has been hanging fire for ~~some~~ some time.

while the Turks negotiated with the Bolsheviks. Apparently the idea was for Turkey to sign agreements with both the Allies and Russia. The Moscow negotiation however fell through.

SCANDINAVIA

There is word from Stockholm that the Scandinavian Kingdoms have agreed to support Finland against aggression by Soviet Russia. This is ~~is~~ stated by what is described as "a high Finnish source". However, it is to be observed that the statement issued by the conference of the Kings of Sweden, Norway and Denmark and the President of Finland -- is by no means outspoken, ~~on the subject.~~ Help for Finland may ~~be~~ possibly ^{be} implied in the official declaration, which states that the four nations demand that their neutral possessions be respected. They ^{claim} ~~claim~~ neutrality ~~as~~ their right. But, there is no specific mention ^{of} ~~to Finnish~~ Finland -- ~~of~~ Soviet Russia.)

OIL

The Mexican Ambassador had a conference with President Roosevelt today and immediately after made a prediction. He said the next few days might bring a solution of the Mexican oil controversy.

Well, the elements of that controversy have taken quite a change of late. The radical government of Mexico seized millions of dollars' worth of foreign oil properties, including American - and proceeded to make a dicker with Germany. The Mexicans were disposing of the oil from the seized foreign properties and sending it to Germany under one of those barter agreements. It

was ^{quite a} ~~one of those~~ paradoxes, the reddish or pinkish ^{Cardenas} ~~Mexican~~ government supplying Hitler's Nazis with much needed petroleum,

for the mechanized German army, petroleum taken so largely from

^{and the British.} Americans. Now, with the war on, the oil trade between Mexico

and Germany is in not such a flourishing state. ^{In fact its kaput.} ~~it's out~~

~~Some little while ago, the Mexican Ambassador to Washington returned to his country and confabulated with his government. He returned last week, and today had a conference with President Roosevelt. After which, the announcement that~~

^{So now we hear} a solution of the oil problem is likely, in the near future.

QUAKE

The earthquake that shook eastern Canada and New England today is described as similar to the one that disrupted the trans-Atlantic cable several years ago. It was severe enough to shake people out of beds and smash the dishes in the cupboards. It shook the needle at the seismograph at Harvard ^s ~~yesterday~~ ^{University} so violently that the records were wiped out for twenty minutes - the needle too much of a jitterbug to mean much.

L. Don Leet of Harvard believes that the quake was centered out in the ocean, ^{near} ~~off~~ the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. Father Lynch, the seismologist at Fordham, telephones me that ~~the~~ he calculates the center of the disturbance to have been somewhere in the valley of the St. Lawrence. Nothing very serious apparently, but the quake was violent enough to startle a good many people.

WRECK

Today at Boston a fishing boat brought in a sad and lugubrious catch - the wreckage of an airplane. The fishermen told how after the recent wild storm in the North Atlantic, they drew in their nets at Georges Banks, a hundred and fifty-six miles outside of Boston. There was something strange and heavy in the nets, and when they hauled it in they found ^{an} ~~the remains of an~~ airplane. Apparently the churning of the sea in the storm had washed the wreckage into the nets. And the inevitable surmise is - one of those numerous planes that were lost in attempting a trans-Atlantic flight. ~~It was~~

It ~~was~~ ^{is} a monoplane with a sixty-five horsepower engine of the radial type - the smaller sort of trans-Atlantic flyer. The authorities are now checking with the manufacturers of the motor in an effort to find out whose plane it was - sad memento of what vanished trans-Atlantic flyer?

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Here's the answer. A late dispatch. It's Chester Eshelman's plane. Remember Eshelman, who started out over the Atlantic - on a flight to Mars? Not so tragic -- just ridiculous. His plane crashed in the ocean -- but ~~he was~~ Eshelman was ⁵ ~~rescued~~.

He never got to Mars, and now some fishermen have caught his
plane in their nets.

KILLING

Today at Falls City, Nebraska, a wild desperado tale of crime and gun-play was told. A reign of terror in those parts has come to an end with the killing of a bandit outlaw, who was on a murderous rampage.

Several weeks ago, Ralph Asendorf and an accomplice, ~~committed a crime~~ robbed a farmer of seven hundred and thirty-four dollars. The partner was arrested and ~~he~~ confessed - implicating Asendorf. He too was picked up and confessed - said he would take the police to a place where he had concealed two hundred and fifty dollars of the stolen money. He led the way to the house of a former sweetheart of his, and there indeed, in a hiding place, *he fished out* ~~he produced~~ two hundred and fifty dollars. But instead of handing it over to the police, he made a break for freedom. And ~~he~~ got away - in a hail of bullets.

Several days later, a hunted fugitive, he went again to the house of his former sweetheart. The police were on guard and once again Asendorf heard bullets whistling around his ears - but again he got away.

A relentless manhunt was after him, and he had to dodge

He had the countryside terrorized,
and evade. [^] ~~but~~ [^] he couldn't keep away from that former sweetheart
of his. Some maddening impulse drew him - and here's how the story
ends. The desperate fugitive found the girl in a neighbor's house,
got in and shot her. She was ~~critically~~ critically wounded. Her
father and brother heard the shot, and dashed to the scene -
Asendorf shot the father and wounded him fatally, ^{But} [^] as the dying
man fell he fired both barrels of the shotgun he had - and blew
the life out of the desperado.

So ends a ~~virtually~~ virtual reign of terror in the
vicinity of Falls City, Nebraska.

BATHTUB

Germany,
Here's a story from ~~Berlin~~ that has nothing to do with war - it's rather worse. The police have rescued a man from ~~the~~ a bathtub, in which he had been for a month.

Four weeks ago, Professor Siegfried Schneider stepped into the tub to take a bath - and he slipped and fell, as many of us have done, though not with such extreme results. The Professor hurt his spine in such fashion that he couldn't get out of the tub. And there he stayed for a whole month, nearly starving to death. Finally, neighbors noticed how long he had been missing. They informed the police, who today broke into the house and took the professor out of the tub. They say he'll ^{actually} recover, though he may never again take a bath.

WIGS

The movie-land of Hollywood has received a precious shipment from Europe, and it may be the last for some time to come. Three hundred pounds of human hair - and, it appears that future supplies are being cut off by the war, ~~in Europe~~ Hollywood uses hair for wigs, especially needed in costume plays, ~~which Hollywood has to import~~. It's one line of merchandise about which you can't say, "Buy American." Because American women don't favor those long flowing tresses, which she might cut off and sell. In Europe it's different, among the peasant folk there. Some are professional hair-growers, women who cultivate long flowing tresses, and sell them, one after another. But the war is interfering, has disrupted the human hair trade. Some say that in the worry and anxiety of the struggle, flowing tresses don't grow so luxuriously.

So the three hundred pound shipment announced in Hollywood today, is expected to be the final one, until peace arrives. It will last quite a long time, say the experts - unless Hollywood breaks out in a rash of costume pictures and an inordinate demand for wigs. A lot of features of the pompadour

period would speedily exhaust the hair supply - especially the red. We are told that in the human hair market, red is the hardest color to get and the most expensive.

Gentlemen may prefer blondes but red heads are more expensive.

Now Hugh tells us what you prefer.

S - L - U - T - M.