

COAL C.I.-P.H. Dec. 23, 49. Fri.

The Federal Government has ordered a part of the national supply of soft coal to be set aside for the railroads. This, because of a shortage of fuel. Which draws a prompt blast from John L. Lewis who states that coal is not scarce. Lewis claims that big business pretends there is a ~~me~~ shortage -- as a move against the union policy of keeping coal miners on a three-day week.

CLEVELAND

It looks as if Christmas in Cleveland might witness the end of the transit strike that has turned Cleveland traffic into a nightmare. Today the city ordered the strikers back to work, with Mayor Burke declaring that, if necessary, he will ask the National Guard to move streetcars and buses. In the face of this attitude by the indignant city, the president of the union announced that he may call a meeting of strikers tonight with a view to ending the tie-up. Which leads to be belief that a settlement may be at hand.

SOVIET

The Moscow radio announces that twelve Japanese, former Army officers, are being put on trial for what the Red radio describes as -- "preparing and ~~app~~ applying a bacterial weapon." The story, given ~~xxx~~ briefly, is that during their occupation of Manchuria, the Japanese set up a laboratory to make military use of deadly germs. They laid plans for bacterial warfare - and actually put these into effect, in some degree. The Moscow phraseology is -- "partly did apply criminal means of mass extermination."

It is to be noted that this indictment of prisoners of war comes as the question is raised more hotly -- what has happened to several hundred thousand Japanese prisoners taken by the Soviets? This is asked insistently by General MacArthur - and the problem of the prisoners is becoming a large international issue.

HUNGARY

The Red Government of Hungary made public today the accusation against Israel Jacobsen, American director of a Jewish welfare agency. Jacobsen has conducted Jewish relief in Hungary for sometime, and returned to that country after a brief vacation home. That was eight days ago; - and he vanished, missing ever since. Today the Red Government states that he was arrested as he entered Hungary, and is being held on a charge of espionage. The belief is that he may be suspected of some connection ^{with} of the escape of Jews from Communist Hungary -- immigrants to Israel. The Red regime forbids Jewish immigration -- but a number of Zionists have been able to flee from that sector of the Iron Curtain.

So now the case of Israel Jacobsen, charged with espionage, is added to that of Robert Vogeler, American telephone official, who is being held in a prison - incommunicado.

Three days ago the United States put in an angry protest against the arrest of Vogeler, and took

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steps to keep Americans out of Hungary. Today the State Department explained that the protest applies to the case of Jacobsen as well.

SHIPS

The U. S. Government is in still another tangle - this time with the Isbrandtsen Steamship Company. That maritime concern has been in the headlines because of trouble its vessels have had in sailing to the Red port of Shanghai -- running a blockade declared by the Chinese Nationalists.

The Isbrandtsen people demand that the U. S. Navy give them protection, and convoy their steamships into the Communist port. But it was disclosed in Washington today that the government has threatened to revoke the licenses of the ship captains, if they continue trying to put into Shanghai.

The company argues that the United States has denounced the Nationalist blockade as illegal -- which is true. But the State Department points out that last week Secretary Acheson proclaimed Shanghai to be -- a zone of danger. And -- advised American ships not to go near the Red harbor.

Moreover, United States maritime laws require that ship captains use reasonable skill and prudence

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in protecting their vessels. The Flying Cloud and the Sir John Francis, were shot up by Nationalist gun-boats. That sort of thing endangers the passengers -- and, under maritime regulations, the captains are liable to have their licenses revoked.

So that's what the government has threatened -- but the Isbrandtsen Company is defiant, insisting on the right of its vessels to trade at the ports of Communist China.

FRANCE

In Paris the National Assembly has just given a vote of ~~x~~ confidence to the Governor of Premier Bidault. The session went on all night, debating the budget proposed by the cabinet, the largest budget in the history of France. The budget fight has been bitter all along and the vote tonight was narrow -- three hundred and three to two hundred and ninety-seven. But it is a vote of confidence for the Premier.

ROME

Ordinarily, Pope Pius Twelfth would have delivered his Christmas message on the eve of the feast -- tomorrow. But this is also the beginning of holy year, and Christmas eve is the traditional time for the ceremonies inaugurating the jubilee. Tomorrow the pontiff will preside over the opening of the "mystic door" of St. Peter's -- which is closed ~~at~~ ~~the time~~ except during holy year.

So the Papal Christmas message was delivered today, a stately address to the Catholics of the world, in which Pope Pius summoned Christians to a battle against militant atheism. Pope Pius never once mentioned Soviet Russia, but it was only too clear that he was referring ^{to} the world-wide struggle between Christianity and the Stalin-worshipping cult behind the Iron Curtain.

In one passage the pontiff dwelled on the way words are perverted nowadays; and we have only to think of the way, Communism abuses the word - ~~the~~ "Democracy". The Papal Christmas message uses an apt

classical quotation, a passage from the Roman
historian Sallust, who wrote: "We have lost the true
meaning of words -- for the giving away of another
man's goods is called liberality, and audacity in doing
evil passes for courage." Which may be a thing most
ancient -- but it's equally modern.

TIERRA DEL FUEGO

Today brings word of cataclyms of nature in an area so wild and remote that months might pass before we hear of what's going on. The news comes via *that farthest south city* Punta Arenas, ~~a harbor~~ in the straits of Magellan. Which gives the tip that the land in convulsion is *What has happened? Why,* Tierra Del Fuego, at the tip of South America. *There's* a weird, frightening crisis *at* a camp of refugees. *The* *place is* besieged by wild cats. Human beings in a battle against packs of savage ~~beasts~~ *cats* raging with hunger and terrorized by a series of earthquakes and volcanic disturbances.

Tierra Del Fuego was first seen by Magellan, when his ships passed through the straits that bear his name -- on their way for the first circumnavigation of the world. And today there is *not so much* ~~more~~ more down there than in the days of Magellan - except for *— and a little oil. These are* scattered colonies raising sheep, *They are largely* *largely* in the section of Admiralty Bay, an arm of the sea that reaches far inland -- and there for days

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earthquakes have been disrupting the land. The earth was opened with great fissures gaping wide, and hot water spurts ^{ing} out with clouds of sulphury fumes.

Sheep growers have had to take refuge in a camp, and there the wild-cat seige is on. Packs of savage felines that prey on arctic birds have been driven out of their haunts by ^{the} earthquakes and the volcanic eruptions of hot water and sulphur. ^{And} They ^{have} ^{been} ~~swarming~~ ^{ing} attack the refugees. Today's dispatch tells of forty people in a camp, ~~where they have to defend~~ themselves with every weapon they can lay hands on, in a battle against wild cats ^{at the bottom of the world.}

ESCAPE -- FOLLOW JAILBREAK

~~There is a similar embarrassment over in~~

See
Denmark ~~where~~ a champion escape artist has broken out of jail for the eleventh time. His name is Lorentzen, but he says -- "Call-me-Houdini". Once he broke out of a policecar by making his way through an emergency exit at the bottom.

All of which annoyed the Danish police no end, and they locked "Call-me-Houdini" in an escape-proof security cell which was the pride of the Danish State Prison. Impossible to get out of that cell -- until "Call-me-Houdini" did. Today's news tell of how he dug a tunnel sixty feet long, using nothing more than a chunk of wood he pried from a cupboard. After burrowing underground for sixty feet, he made a clean getaway. So now they don't call that cell "escape-proof." *And they marvel at the escape-ability of that fellow* ~~but it is still~~ "Call me Houdini."

ROBBER

There was a spectacular gun battle in Seattle today - when a holdup man shot it out with two detectives. Bullets flying amid Christmas crowds. The police had a tip that a loan company was to be robbed - and, when the gunman held up a woman cashier, two detectives walked in. But the bandit swung around, shooting - and dashed out. One detective was wounded, but he gave chase -- with his partner. As police guns blazed, the robber fled across the street and into the swank Olympic Hotel. He raced through the lobby, the dining room, the kitchen and out a back door - where he lost himself in crowds of Christmas shoppers, and got away. The wonder is that none of the innocent by-standers were hit by bullets.

SHIP

The news today develops a picture of narrow escapes by the wholesale. Explosions and raging fire aboard a Norwegian steamship just as it was about to sail from Boston -- and the sweep of the flames was so fast and sudden that scores were trapped in the cabins, forty-two members of the crew, including two ~~men~~ stewardesses. Most were asleep in cabins -- all preparations for departure having been made.

The Norwegian captain had just about the narrowest escape of all. Flames burst into his cabin, as the fire went racing down a corridor with explosive violence. The skipper was just able to get through a porthold, and take a plunge for thirty feet into the water. The same thing for the chief steward, likewise trapped in a cabin. ~~and~~ ^{he went} out through a porthole.

The burning freighter had to be towed out into the river before the firemen could control the blaze -- after a five-hour battle. Except for good luck, the story could be a maritime horror at

Christmas time. *But ~~it~~ it turns out to be* just a pageant of wholesale narrow escapes.

END

Just to be different, let's close with the year's most -- "un-merry Christmas". Which is being celebrated by two New York doctors, two brothers, Dr. Herman Zurrow and Dr. Milton Zurrow. To them, the name of Santa Claus is - a pain in the ear.

The most "un-merry Christmas" goes back to the fact that a year ago a New York department store had the bright idea of installing a Santa Claus telephone number for little kiddies to call. They got from four to five thousand calls a day last year, and figured it was too much of a good thing. So they dropped the idea for this year - and, during the intervening months, the telephone company assigned the number to somebody else. The unfortunate party was the medical office of Doctors Hermand and Milton Zurrow -- they inherited the Santa Claus number.

The telephone company never suspected the kiddies would have such a good memory, but thousands of them recalled the phone number that Santa Claus had last year. So you can imagine what happened to

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the two doctors -- as Christmas time approached. Today Dr. Herman Zurrow said: "Little voices at all hours of the day and night. Little voices asking for Santa Claus, Santa Claus. I thought we'd go crazy."

The two doctors put in a complaint -- and the telephone company assigned them a temporary number until after the holidays. But a lot of people, patients and would-be patients have that unlucky number -- and something had to be done to distinguish between them and the little ones calling Santa Claus. So the telephone company assigned an operator to screen the calls and let only the calls for the doctors get through. But that meant asking questions, the operator inquiring: "Do you want Dr. Zurrow - or do you want Santa Claus?" Which astonishes a lot of patients and would-be patients.

Today Dr. Milton Zurrow said: "Patients call and wonder at being asked whether they are calling me or Santa Claus. They demand explanations, naturally. Other people are curious about the Santa Claus

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business, and call the doctors, asking them about it."

Both of the doctors exclaimed in a duet: "Woe the day we got that unlucky number."

So now, I wish you all the kind of Christmas that Dr. Herman Zurrow and Dr. Milton Zurrow are not enjoying -- A Merry Christmas.