

C.I. - Sunoco. Friday, December 20, 1940.

ROOSEVELT

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The new Defense Board is a definite thing tonight. President Roosevelt announced it late this afternoon, and it is somewhat different than had been predicted. All the stories were that there would be a three-man board to press and coordinate the building of armament. The ~~three-man~~ three men named were the Secretaries of War and Navy and Defense Coordinator Knudsen. But no, it's to be a four-man affair; - the same as <sup>in</sup> previous reports, but with one personality added. He's Sidney Hillman of the C.I.O. ~~He~~ <sup>Hillman</sup> has been labor representative on the Advisory Board, and now takes an associate position in the new four-man super-council. That's what they're calling it - and rightly so. President Roosevelt announced that he will delegate to this super-council all the power that he can under the Constitution. The four-man council will exercise all of the vast <sup>authority</sup> ~~power~~ the presidency possesses - this to push the work of building national defense and aid for Britain.

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~~In Congress, complaint was voiced today - complaint that the defense program is lagging. And one Congressman argued~~

BASES

There's talk that the British and Americans are not in complete agreement about <sup>those</sup> ~~the~~ sea and air bases which the United States acquired in the fifty destroyer deal. ~~At what exact location shall these American bases be located? There's said to be some controversy about that.~~ Today President Roosevelt gave us some information on the subject. <sup>the</sup> United States acquired eight naval and air bases from Great Britain. Of these eight all are satisfactory -- except three. So said the President. One of the three is Trinidad. President Roosevelt remarked that Trinidad is a large island. Meaning -- on what part of the island shall the American stronghold be? The second is Bermuda. The President was a bit facetious on the subject of Bermuda -- with <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ remark about the amount of work that has to be done in the construction of a naval and air base. He said the only problem at Bermuda was to do the work while it would interfere least with the sleep and happiness of the American tourists.

The third site where all is not satisfactory is in the Bahamas -- the Island of Mayaguana. There the trouble is the depth of the water. The island is like a cliff rising out of the

sea, and the water off shore is too deep for a good anchorage.

President Roosevelt remarked that on his inspection trip aboard the cruiser Tuscaloosa they tried three times to lower the anchor and get a good hold on the bottom -- and failed each time.

BLOCKADE

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The British are looking in the direction of German and Italian merchant ships tied up in the harbors of the United States. This was stated in London today by Shipping Minister Ronald Cross. He said that the British had already bought the bulk of American merchant ships that were available. New ones are to be built in the United States, but it will take time to get them.

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Meanwhile, the German submarines are sinking ships at that same alarming rate. Ronald Cross told the House of Commons that British construction could not possibly keep up with the rate of U-boat destruction. So British eyes are ~~seeking some source of supply of vessels already built~~ ~~and that means particularly~~ the German and Italian steamers which have been in American harbors ever since the war began. Britain is looking with what the Shipping Minister called a "covetous eye."

The war headline today was -- the British fleet in the Adriatic. That narrow body of water has been called - "Italy's back yard." It's so easily defensible, almost entirely closed in, with <sup>a</sup>~~the~~ narrow entrance, the Strait of Otranto. So forcing the Adriatic is a major exploit for the British fleet. The war ships were preceded by mine sweepers, which swept the mines away.

Then the British <sup>s</sup>quadron steamed along the Albanian coast. It was not molested -- no sign of Italian warships or even of merchant vessels.

Then the British Naval guns <sup>proceeded</sup> to bombard Avalona,

a principal port for the Fascists in Albania. <sup>It</sup> It is not at all

clear why the Italians <sup>did nothing!</sup> ~~made no attack~~ perhaps with <sup>sub</sup> ~~marines or~~

~~motor torpedo boats~~. It may be that the Fascist forces are on the

other side of the peninsula. The British fleet, after bombarding

Avalona, steamed back to Alexandria. The episode does not of course

mean that the British are now in control of the Adriatic. But the

mere fact that their big ships went into that narrow water at all

is significant. <sup>P</sup> There's still a lot of doubt about <sup>the</sup> help that

Hitler may be giving to Mussolini in his troubles. There's no real

indication that <sup>German</sup> ~~Berlin~~ troops have gone into Italy -- though it is

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stated that Nazi technicians are there. What does become clear is that Berlin has sent large transport planes to Italy, and these transports have been ferrying Italian troops into Albania. In large numbers, they say. The Greeks are still hammering on and still reporting advances.

In North Africa, the Italians continue to hold their fortified base at Bardia. The British are pressing their attack, and say that Bardia is likely to be isolated. The Italian forces there are trapped -- unless they succeed in retreating.

There's a late report that Ireland was bombed today - by planes believed to be German. At various places - including near Dublin.

SMIGLY-RYDZ

In Rumania, there's a manhunt on tonight by the secret police - the Rumanian police and the German Gestapo. They're looking for Marshal Smigly-Rydz, who was the strong man of Poland when the war began - and the Nazis conquered Poland. Marshal Smigly-Rydz has escaped - and this is the second time we've had that sort of headline about him. Some months ago, Bucharest announced that he had been caught, attempting to get away from his place of internment. ~~The story was that the British had supplied him with a passport.~~ After that, the word *came that his* ~~was that the~~ internment would be close confinement.

Today's escape story, however, states that Smigly-Rydz was in the loosest kind of custody in a Rumanian village at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains. He was allowed to go in and out of the village as he pleased. And now he has vanished - with the Rumanian secret police and the Gestapo hunting for him *tonight.*

## EARTHQUAKE

The very mention of earthquake and New York City in the same breath is a startling sort of thing. The imagination is staggered by the thought of what would happen if a violent and destructive shock such as they have in so many parts of the world, where to hit the skyscrapers of Manhattan. The comforting thing is the assurance given us by the geologists that the New York area is not of the earthquake kind. Nevertheless, last night's quake did shake New York City. Most people were asleep and didn't feel it, but many did.

There's comfort in a telephone call this afternoon. It's from Father Lynch, the seismologist at Fordham, who told me that his observatory instruments indicated that the quake was - superficial. It was not one of those deep dislocations that cause earthquake havoc. It was up near the surface -- the least harmful kind. Nothing to be alarmed about.

The center of the disturbance was up in New England. Also at Albany windows were broken; and a woman was shaken out of bed. Another one who was on her way home from a dance, had to grab a tree to keep from falling down. At various places people fled in a panic - out into the open. They were in their pajamas, and it was freezing weather.



DeTRISTAN

There has been a flood of rumors on the Pacific coast about a supposed extortion attempt made against Count and Countess Marc De Tristan. They are the parents of the little lad who was kidnapped under sensational circumstances some months ago.

Today officials at Santa Rosa, California, said - yes, there had been an extortion attempt against the Marc de Tristan family. The Count and Countess received a series of blackmail notes. The first arrived shortly after the rescue of the kidnapped boy. Others followed. The extortionist demanded twenty thousand dollars, and threatened that some member of the family would be killed -- if the money were not handed over.

The menaced family appealed to the F.B.I. and a trap was laid based on an extortion note received ten days ago. This one directed how the money was to be paid. The family was told to put twenty thousand dollars in a cigar box. This was to be sent by an emissary, who was to be dressed in a certain way. He was to appear at a given time in front of the Santa Rosa post office. The instructions in the letter were followed with one slight exception. The emissary was a G-Man.

The G-man, they say, kept the rendezvous in front of the Santa

POST OFFICE. After several minutes of waiting, he was approached by a small girl, a kid of thirteen. She handed him a note. And this note instructed him to go to a farm two miles west of the town. There the kidnapper would be waiting to get the money.

The G-man followed this direction. The farm was remote from the highway, and on it was a cabbage patch. The burning theme of the west coast rumors concerns events that happened in the cabbage patch. One version is that in the darkness a man stepped up to the F.B.I. agent and reached out his hands for the cigar box. The G-man gave it to him. And as he did, the extortionist swiftly whipped out a pistol and stuck it in the G-man's ribs. "Handover your gun!" - the words were growled. The F.B.I. agent was helpless. The extortionist took his pistol and fled -- vanished in the darkness.

Such is the most sensational of several accounts. The F.B.I. denies today that any G-man was thus disarmed in the cabbage patch. And another version states it was a Santa Rosa police officer who had his gun taken away. Still a third says the extortionist escaped without any pistol dramatics.

## METAPHYSICIAN

The authorities in New York are moving against the Royal Fraternity of Master Metaphysicians - a society of cosmic thinkers who have a mystic control over the forces of the infinite. ~~So what's a mere material matter of a couple of diamond rings worth in terms of paltry money - a thousand ~~xxx~~ bucks?~~

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The authorities tell of a widow, a devout believer in the cult, who lived at the esoteric shrine maintained by the metaphysicians on Long Island. There her two rings, worth a thousand dollars, vanished. And she was earthly minded enough to inquire about them. The Number One master metaphysician had an answer. "Nothing," he assured the widow, "is lost in the infinite." Therefore - the two diamond rings were really not lost. "You can think them back in your experience," proclaimed the master metaphysician.

There was one bit of curious confusion that drew attention to the mystical brotherhood. Its members sent a huge lot of mail back and forth - all of the most cabalistic

sort. In this wholesale mailing of messages, the cult had a special central address. In a cryptic and symbolical way they called it - the Blue Network. <sup>R</sup> Now it happens that the two radio systems operated by the National Broadcasting Company are called the Red Network and the Blue Network. So, the innocent post office sent a big batch of the cabalistic communications to N.B.C. There they were opened, and caused a profound puzzlement in the N.B.C. mailing department. A broadcast official was summoned to view the mysterious <sup>manifestation</sup> <sub>1</sub> <sup>2</sup> metaphysics. He couldn't make any sense out of it either. There was wonderment and inquiries, and then it was revealed that the letters were meant, not for the N.B.C. Blue Network, but for the cosmic, planetary and astral Blue Network of the Master Metaphysicians.

TUNNEY

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~~Here's something appropriate~~ - Gene Tunney today joined the Navy. The last time Gene enlisted it was as a marine - in that other war. And he certainly is one man who can answer a question often asked nowadays:- What can military service do for ~~you?~~ <sup>you?</sup> What can a fellow get out of the army - or the navy? Gene Tunney joined up as a private, served in France, and there won the ~~big~~ lightweight championship of the A.E.F. That army boxing title, in turn, sent him on the road to the heavyweight championship of the world - and a million dollars. So that's what the army did for one man, making Gene the nation's number one example of the benefits of military service.

Today in Washington Secretary of the Navy Knox conferred the rank of Lieutenant-Commander on the former heavyweight champ. Gene Tunney is joining the navy to work up an athletic program for the naval aviation training camps. He explains to me that the education in flying, ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> the cadets get is so intensive that there isn't time enough for regular military training, physical training, ~~to keep the men fit. So Gene Tunney's job will be to organize athletics, a concentrated athletic program for the busy student pilots in naval aviation.~~

JILLS

Here's something that almost has the cheery Christmas spirit - almost. It's almost jingle bells - but not quite. Instead, it's jingle jills. Something new in the feminine world, also in the religious world. That is - in a fraudulent way.

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Today the Attorney General of New York State brought charges against an ostensible religious and charitable organization, ~~which he claims is strictly a private business~~ ~~out to make money.~~ ~~In other words, a phoney charity.~~ The accusation is that the outfit has been collecting sixty-one thousand dollars a year, and has never spent more than ten or fifteen dollars in any week to help the poor and needy. How is the sixty-one thousand a year collected? Here's the way the New York Attorney General explains it. "The solicitors," he says, "are not volunteer workers for a religious or humane cause - but jingle jills." They go about making an appeal to mercy and collecting coins - hence the jingle. They're selected mostly for their looks - glamour girls of sweet charity. ~~The indictment continues:~~ ~~"They're not interested~~

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Each jingle jill keeps fifty per cent of what she collects. The rest goes to the heads of the organization. At this Christmas season, it's rather disillusioning to hear about jingle jills instead of jingle bells.

Shocking, isn't it Hugh?