

THE ALAMANCE GLEANER

Vol. LXVII

GRAHAM, N. C., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1941

No. 39

WEEKLY NEWS ANALYSIS By Edward C. Wayne

Shipping Losses and Kearny Incident Have Effect on Neutrality Act Debate; British View Invasion as 'Impossible'; French Assassinate Two Nazi Officers

(EDITOR'S NOTE—When opinions are expressed in these columns, they are those of the news analyst and not necessarily of this newspaper. (Released by Western Newspaper Union.)



One of the most momentous steps in U. S.-Argentine trade relations took place in the historic white room at the government house at Buenos Aires as a new treaty was signed between the two governments. Picture shows ceremony at signing and pictured left to right are Dr. Carlos Acevedo, Argentine finance minister; U. S. Ambassador Norman Armour; Dr. Enrique Guinazu, Argentine foreign minister. In the background are members of the Argentine government and U. S. embassy staff.

KEARNY:

Starting Things

The fact that the Kearny, U. S. destroyer hit by a Nazi torpedo, had been more than slightly damaged, had suffered the loss of some 11 lives and had several persons badly wounded landed with a jolt in a Washington already jittery in the midst of a debate on the Neutrality act.

The navy refused any information except the broadest facts, pending a fuller report of the commander, and the incident left congress in a welter of excitement.

On top of this had come two further sinkings, those of the Bold Venture, former Danish ship carrying the flag of Panama, and the Lehigh which was flying the Stars and Stripes.

The Lehigh was sunk off the coast of Africa, far from the combat zones. The impact of these three incidents on a congress which was being asked to permit the arming of merchant ships was terrific. Immediately measures were placed before congress ranging all the way from a complete repeal of the Neutrality act to a resolution asking for a declaration of war.

This last was not actually introduced, but certain isolationist senators said that it would be as a counter measure to the "pressure" being exerted from the White House.

Out of it all emerged the second half of the Neutrality act legislation, the measure to send American ships into combat zones, and this had been reported to have received presidential favor as a matter of present business.

Again, as the administration was meeting severe opposition on one of its measures, fate and the news played into its hands.

RUSSIANS:

Tough Battle

Pressure shifted from one direction to another along the Moscow front with the Russians putting up a desperate fight.

There had been a sudden heavily reinforced attack, however, in the southern, or Orel district, and the Nazis had claimed the capture of Stalino, a city of 450,000 people, and described as "a leading armament center of the Donets basin."

Still later the Nazis had announced gains on the Azov front and the defenders believed the Germans were shifting their attack to the south.

There had been reports of Stalin personally in command at the central front, his headquarters in an armored train. But the capital had been moved to a spot 550 miles southeast of Moscow.

Russian sources had declared the picture at Leningrad to be the brightest of that on any part of the long front, with the defenders of Russia's second city inflicting terrific losses on the attackers, and still holding their defense lines.

INVASION:

'Impossible'

British sources, following a protracted demand on the part of labor and certain sections of the press for an immediate invasion of the continent, officially declared this plan "still an impossibility."

The R.A.F., it was stated, was still smashing the Reich territory on a 24-hour basis, however.

50 FOR ONE:

Officers Shot

The killing of Colonel Holtz, the Nazi commander at Nantes, France, by assassination was promptly avenged by General Stuepsnelge, occupation commander, by the killing of 50 French hostages.

The commander said: "Cowardly criminals paid by England and Moscow killed the field commandant at Nantes with shots in the back on the morning of October 20. Until now the assassins have not been arrested."

"In expiation of this crime I have ordered, as preliminary measures, that 50 hostages be shot. Considering the gravity of the crime 50 other hostages will be shot if the assassins are not arrested."

The general offered a reward of 15,000,000 francs for the surrender of the guilty parties. Four members of the gendarmerie at Nantes had been taken into custody, including the prefect of the district. He and the mayor of Nantes issued an appeal for aid in the arrest of the killers.

On that very day, however, in the neighborhood of Nantes, a freight train was derailed, a section of track having been removed.

For other offenses four Frenchmen had been executed, and the total of hostages executed during October was said to have reached 134.

Next day reports told of the killing of another Nazi officer in France. This time, a major.

G.O.P.:

Willkie Policy

At the height of the neutrality debate more than 100 Republicans took part in an appeal for the repeal of the Neutrality act, in the face of the recollection that this action in the last war was shortly followed by American entrance as a full participant.

These were led by Wendell L. Willkie, who said:

"Millions upon millions of Republicans are resolved that the ugly smudge of isolationism shall be removed from the face of their party."

"At the same time he criticized the administration for the handling of labor relations, saying "the desire of many in the administration to rewrite our social and economic life under cover of the national effort must be ruled out during the emergency."

WICKARD:

On Prices

Secretary of Agriculture Wickard, calling the parallel between the present war and the last one too close for comfort, urged on congress the necessity of immediate price fixing to stave off disastrous inflationary tendencies.

He declared himself in complete agreement with the provisions of the pending price-control bill, and said that the planned price-fixing authority might not be necessary.

The nation's agricultural production next year, he predicted, will be the highest in history, and the increase would be mostly in meats, milk and eggs. He recalled that of the 14,000 banks which failed most were country banks, and said he didn't believe the American economy could stand a second siege like that.

Low-Down-on-Low-Bid



Appearing before the Senate defense investigating committee, Sidney Hillman, OPM associate director general, is pictured as he declared that low bid by a CIO contractor for a Michigan housing project was disregarded because its acceptance might result in strikes and open violence involving the entire construction industry in Detroit. The committee was probing charges that OPM shows favoritism to AFL.

LABOR:

Civil Strife

An internal war within the C.I.O. organization was revealed when a strike at a Detroit steel plant was suddenly halted.

The public was treated to the unusual spectacle of a union leader telling his members to go back to work because the army had been ordered to take over the plant "unless," and being roundly hissed.

There were yells of "bring on the soldiers."

The union leader, John Doherty, said: "The United States army already has received orders to move in. The government has notified our union that this strike will not be tolerated."

The men, who claimed that their own union leaders had "sold them out" in wage negotiations, hissed and catcalled, but they went back to work.

There were hints of sabotage in this strike, and the open charge by Federal Conciliator Dewey that he was looking for a "sinister purpose" in the walkout. Dewey had been in the conference which resulted in this particular steel company signing a contract with the SWOC.

MEXICO:

Releases Aliens

Latin-America and the United States had been puzzled by a report from Mexico stating that close to 600 Nazis and Fascists from the seized Axis ships had been released and returned to their former status of foreigners legally in the country.

American circles could not understand why President Camacho took this action, as it was believed certain to complicate Mexico's espionage problem, already quite complex.

It had been pointed out that, prior to their seizure, these Nazi and Fascist ships had been holed with propaganda, and that one of them, the Orinoco, had maintained a printing plant aboard, and that in addition to flooding the country with material along the Nazi party line, had given many entertainments aboard for Mexicans and had shown many propaganda movies.

BRIGADE:

Of Heroes

The British official reports of the Dunquerque episode were filled with many stories of heroism, but none of them more poignant than the story of the lost brigade of Calais.

This was a group of 3,800 British soldiers who held the French port, vital to the use of Dunquerque as a debarkation point, for all the days while the evacuees were crouched on the beaches, vulnerable to attack, thus permitting their brothers-in-arms to escape.

Of this body, only 47 ever returned to England. The commander was Brigadier C. Nicholson, and after standing heavy bombardment and with the town he was defending in flames, he received this terse command:

"Every hour you continue to exist is of the greatest help to the B.E.F. The government therefore decided that you must continue to fight. We have the greatest possible admiration for your splendid stand."

Belgians Assail Nazi Cruelties

Cite Killing of Family and Boy Who Called Soldier 'Dirty Hun.'

NEW YORK.—Baron J. van der Elst, counsellor to the Belgian embassy in Washington, and the Belgian commercial counsellor's office, at 630 Fifth avenue, made public the text of a cable from his government in London, charging acts of cruelty and injustice against the Nazis occupying Belgium.

The cable, signed by Paul Henri Spaak, foreign minister of Belgium, presented two instances of German conduct in Belgium, with the facts presumably obtained secretly from intelligence sources inside Belgium.

The first case was that of a Belgian family of three allegedly executed because they sought to hide a British airman. The second was that of a 10-year-old Belgian boy who called a Nazi soldier a "dirty Hun" and was shot for it.

Family Put to Death.

The text of Mr. Spaak's message follows: "In a case that came before a German military court in Belgium recently, several Belgians were accused of having given refuge to an English airman, whose machine had been shot down near Maesyeck. One evening toward the end of May, a Belgian named Meltior knocked on the door of the house of the Fraipont family, in a suburb of Liege. The daughter of the family, Lucie Vis, opened the door. Meltior, telling her that he was an old friend of her mother, Constance Fraipont, asked her to give hospitality to an English airman who had made a forced landing in the neighborhood and who was there with him. The airman was not injured and hoped that, with the help of Meltior, he could avoid being taken prisoner. Lucie Vis said she would take the airman in, and her parents helped her to frustrate the search for him made by the German authorities."

"Despite the secrecy which surrounded the place where the British airman was lodged, the fact came to the knowledge of the German police, who, in the course of a search through the house, discovered him and arrested him, together with the members of the family: Lucie Vis, her mother, Constance Fraipont, and her father, Emile Fraipont, a manufacturer of Liege.

Defense Plea Futile.

"These three persons and Mrs. Meltior, whose husband had meanwhile fled, were brought before the military court. The counsel for the defense pointed out that Lucie Vis and Mr. and Mrs. Fraipont had been moved to act by human sentiments. The court reasoned that feelings of this kind could not be taken into account. Lucie Vis and her parents were condemned to death."

"At Mont-sur-Marchienne, near Charleroi, on April 10 a 10-year-old boy, Maurice Van de Castel, was playing with two little playmates on the slope of the railway, which was guarded by German soldiers. One of the German soldiers chased the children away in a rather rough way. As the three children left the spot, one of them turned around and shouted at the German: "A dirty Hun you are!"

"The soldier turned around and fired point blank at the little fellow, who fell dead. This happened at only a hundred yards from the spot where, 24 years ago, Yvonne Visjet, a little girl, was killed by the Germans because she gave bread to a French prisoner."

Boost Per Acres Crop Yield To Meet Defense Demands.

CHICAGO.—How farmers can "enlarge" their farms to meet increasing defense demands without incurring the hazards of overexpansion was described in a statement made public here by the Middle West Soil Improvement committee.

The secret lies not in buying more land but in making the present acreage do a better production job," the statement declares. "This means following a soil management program that will raise the land's fertility level."

"Even in the most productive areas the average farm can usually be enlarged the equivalent of 10 per cent, and sometimes as much as 50 per cent, through intelligent soil treatment."

"In combination with other sound farming practices the use of fertilizer containing nitrogen, phosphorus and potash is essential in stepping up the soil's productive capacity. Such a practice not only has an immediate result in increasing the per acre yield of crops needed in the nation's defense effort, but represents an important long range soil conservation measure."

Smuggling Is Down; Cattle Rustling Up

Patrol on Canadian Border Has New Problem.

OGDENSBURG, N. Y.—No more are narcotics and gem smugglers the quarry of the United States customs patrol on the Canadian border, but instead cattle rustlers.

Usually considered only a problem in the badlands of the Southwest, the detection of cattle smugglers is an important job. The reason is that often the stock are infected with Bangs disease, which the United States is trying to stamp out to protect domestic herds.

"The war in Europe undoubtedly has cut down on smuggling of all types, including precious stones," explained Capt. Archie Denner, in charge of one of the largest territories in patrol jurisdiction, from Lake Champlain to Cape Vincent.

"Reduction of duties on most precious stones has been another factor in ending smuggling of that type. Narcotics smuggling today is virtually nonexistent."

Smuggling is down. Smugglers are discovering that it doesn't pay in the long run.

This condition contrasts with prohibition days when the customs men were busy night and day and often could get only 10 hours sleep a week.

The most sensational smuggling case along the northern border recently was an attempt in June, 1940, to carry \$280,000 in silver fox furs across the line at Detroit. The plot failed and the pelts were seized.

Silver fox is the only fur with a heavy duty now, according to Denner.

Standards for the men of the patrol are kept high. They must stay in top condition and be excellent pistol shots. Teams from the local service have won many trophies for their marksmanship.

Bear Bags Boat; Killed

With Oar After a Battle

BINGHAM, MAINE.—Game Warden Fletcher Hale reported a wilderness battle in which three men and a woman slew a belligerent black bear with no other weapons than a pair of oars and a hunting knife.

The battle was fought Saturday on isolated Clear Pond, near Pleasant Ridge, where Mr. and Mrs. Earl Howes, and Ernest and Clarence Andrews, all of Madison, were fishing.

The bear, according to Hale, burst through a thicket on the shore of the lake and spied the fishing party in a small boat. Splashing through the shallows, the bear lunged at the occupants. The men snatched oars and pounded the animal, which ripped a gash in Howes' hand. The bear, Hale said, then attempted to tow the boat ashore, but a blow with an oar stunned it. The coup de grace was administered with a hunting knife.

Airport Is Sinking in

Spots; Experts Puzzled

NEW YORK.—New York's municipal airport, officially known as La Guardia Field, is slowly sinking in some vitally important sections and no one appears to know when it is going to stop.

This was admitted by Maj. Elmer Haslett, director of the airport, and Joseph A. Meehan, chief engineer. They described means by which the \$1,500,000 administration building, nerve center of "the biggest and busiest airport in the world," is being prevented from sinking farther into the filled-in portions of Flushing bay that comprises a large part of the airport. Cracks started to appear on the building several months ago.

The problem is not confined to the administration building. Major Haslett said some of the runways are now from a half inch to a full inch lower than they were when the airport was opened early in the summer of 1939.

Thankful Land Owner

Repays County's Bounty

MOBILE, ALA.—Flabbergasted was the word for the county board of roads and revenues when it received this letter from Joseph J. Jives:

"My land was so poor it wouldn't even grow cactus, but when you put a road through it, those 10 acres became the richest plot in the whole county, thanks to a combination grocery store and jook joint I have erected."

"Enclosed you will find a check for \$142.22, which you will please have credited to the county's road and bridge fund. This sum represents 1 per cent of the unearned increment and my appreciation for the service the county has done me."

Washington Digest

Mentally Healthy Soldier Needed for Modern War

High Selection Standard Required in Supplying Army With Men Equipped to Meet Hazards of 'Blitz' Tactics.

By BAUKHAGE

National Farm and Home Hour Commentator.

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At a recent White House news conference the President was asked whether he thought there ought to be a lowering of the physical, mental and educational standards for admission to the army.

The question came up at the close of a long dissertation by Mr. Roosevelt on a report from the army which seemed to reveal a shocking state of the national health. It was based on figures which showed that nearly 50 per cent of the selectees rejected for service were ineligible because of deficiencies in these three categories. It did look as though Americans, as a people, were pretty sick.

The President's answer to the question of lowering the standards of admission was an emphatic negative. Very little attention was paid to this response at the time and the stories which went out over the air and the wires that day were chiefly concerned with the program for healing the physical ills of selectees at government expense.

But that part of the picture, as I learned when I talked with a prominent psychiatrist, is only half of it—or less.

Lowering the standards of mental requirements would, in case of war, mean a terrific psychopathic casualty list, the taxpayer would have a terrific bill to pay and the efficiency of the American fighting forces would be immeasurably impaired.

Record of Last War

Let's look at the record of the last war, when the mental hazards were only a fraction of what they are today with a thousand machines harnessed for destruction.

Briefly, the story is this: The government of the taxpayer has paid out nearly a billion dollars for the benefit and care of mental cases among veterans of the last war.

This sum represents 20 per cent of all benefits paid to veterans and their dependents.

There are 92,231 such mental cases and a third of all veterans confined to hospitals are mental cases. It is true that some 21,000 of these men cannot prove that their plight is traceable to their military service, but they are on Uncle Sam's expense list just the same, and they would not be if they had been kept out of the army in the first place.

Of course, all of these 9,000 mental cases could not have been spotted by the draft boards in 1917 and 1918. Not all cases of mental weakness or little weakness can be spotted now. But the army now has a wealth of experience on the subject and the Veterans' Administration is co-operating with many local boards in this effort. Twenty years' study has made these government doctors expert in discovering hidden weaknesses in the human mind. Some of the nation's greatest psychiatrists have offered their services to the army.

Today, of course, there are many reasons why mental qualifications count more than in the last war. In the first place, modern warfare requires greater self-discipline on the part of the individual.

Special Training Needed

In the old army the squad, composed of seven or eight men, was a unit. The squad has now been abolished. Modern ordnance—small and heavy arms—is much more complicated. Each man must be specially trained for a special task and frequently the responsibility formerly relegated to a group, falls on the individual.

Greater skill to operate modern arms and equipment is necessary. Also, the devastating effect of mechanization creates a greater mental strain. An example of this is the terrifying effect of the noise of dive bombers. When the French troops first heard the stupas they threw down their arms and fell flat on the earth.

As Dr. Martin Cooley, consultant of the Veterans Bureau in Washington puts it:

"When one considers how the warfare of today has stepped up in intensity and tempo with the stuka divers, the panzer divisions, the elements of deadly surprise and audacity and the dropping of bombs of high explosives weighing as much as a ton, it becomes evident that combat troops will have an immense

strain on their morale, and it must be expected that a man with unstable nervous system or a flaw of character will crack under the strain."

In the last war an effort was made to weed out the men, who, from their medical histories or as a result of examinations, were considered unable to stand up under the strain of service. Strangely enough, it was the medical officers rather than the line officers who were inclined to be lenient in accepting questionable cases, and the medical department of the army records that 3,640 cases of record were discovered and the men retained in the army against the advice of the neuro-psychiatric officers.

Many of these men broke down when they reached camp before they heard a gun fired. With this record staring them in the face, it is no wonder that responsible war department officials are anxious that there be no let-down in the standards for admission to military service.

Pan American

Child Congress

War and politics are no respecters of children. Bombs and shells spare neither nursery nor school. And politics, frequently, like the bad Samaritan, goes by on the other side, even in peace-time.

The Pan-American Child Congress, whose purpose is to build sturdier, happier, wiser future citizens of the Americas, was established in 1919. Plans are now under way for its first meeting since 1935 which is to be held next spring in Washington.

Four times during the last six years, the meeting of the congress has had to be postponed. The first came in 1938 when Nicaragua found that it could not go ahead with plans for being host to the convales. Then, when the delegates were all ready to take the boat the next year for Costa Rica, where the postponed congress was to meet, it was cancelled again, indirectly because of war. The real reason for this last postponement, perhaps, was indicated in a headline in a San Jose, Costa Rica, newspaper, which read: "Is this a Pan American-German Congress?" Germany had announced that it would send exhibits and take part in the meeting and presumably Nazi influence in Costa Rica was strong enough to make it unwise for the local government to protest. In any case, the meeting was again cancelled.

On Gray Days—Meditation, Repose.

The other day I sat on a bale of straw in a stable with the measured crunch and stamp of horses around me, waiting for the rain to stop. I watched the slanting drops with mixed desires. The earth was so thirsty for these few drops that it seemed more than selfish to hope the watery benediction would cease.

At last a rooster crowed and the rain thinned to a mist. The whole countryside seemed to look up in damp gratitude for its short cup of pleasure. There was life and movement everywhere. The dog dug in the softened dirt for no particular reason. When I passed he looked up at me with mud on his whiskers and a foolish, happy grin on his face. Chickens energetically pulled at worms that they hadn't seen for weeks and then, suddenly, there was a bright flash of color before me. Eight bluebirds appearing out of the air like a bright light suddenly turned and alighted on the top rail of the fence.

Back in the city, skies were still gray, but the same muted feeling of relief that I had felt in the country spread along the streets.

There is always to me a beauty in gray days. I feel as though I had stepped from a garish world into a quiet cloister—I hear sandaled feet on cool stone, the light, subdued, comes through stained glass windows. It is time for meditation and repose.

Rep. John W. Gwynne of Iowa has a plan whereby automobile license plates would be good for a five-year period in order to conserve steel for national defense. The congressman estimates that adoption of such a plan would save 850 tons of steel annually in Iowa alone and would also save the taxpayers of that state \$44,000 each year.