THE WAR-WEEK—Commentary on Current Events

German Offensive Draws Nearer; Canadians Prepare To Register

Few people last week allowed themselves to be lulled into a sense of security by seeming inactivity on the part of Germany. Rather, it was everywhere felt that Hitler, completing consolidation of his eastward position — in the Baltic, in the Balkans — was awaiting only the moment, to strike at Britain.

THE CHOICE FOR BRITAIN

Reports circulating in Rome had it that first Italy and Germany would serve an ultimatum upon Great Britain offering her the choice between surrender and destruction. An article in Virginio Gayda's newspaper, obviously referring to Prime Minister Churchill's own speech of July 14th, said that "Britain will have to settle to her last account, choosing between submission to the renovating, restorative forces of Europe, or extremely grim and violent war in which inexorable destruction, a fateful, precipitous step toward final overthrow, will be measured not by years or weeks, of which Churchill spoke, but by days or hours."

THE PUSH SOUTH

A cabled dispatch from Helen Kirkpatrick, Chicago News' correspondent in London, reported indications last week were that German forces might go southward either before or simultaneously with their expected attack on Great Britain; their objectives being Spain, Portugal, Gibraltar and the Azores. (Military experts regard Gibraltar and the Azores among the primary German objectives, as both of these can control and dominate some of the world's most important trade routes).

BRITAIN: Stormy receptions in the British House met these announcements: that Great Britain had formally acceded to Japan's request to close the Burma road lifeline of the central Chinese government; that a bill dispensing with trial by jury and the right of appeal in wartime Britain was being pushed by the Home Secretary; that the government scheme to evacuate children to the Western hemisphere had been postponed.

Prime Minister Churchill in his Sunday address declared that the British would rather see London laid in ruins than Hitler victorious. Germans who enter Britain will get short shrift, the Premier said, and should the invader come, there will be no lying down to him as in other countries.

"A LONG WAR"

A Russian writer, estimating Britain's chances in the coming struggle with Germany, said last week: "If Britain is really determined to fight to a victorious end, then, relying upon her geographical position, the tremendous power of her naval forces and exceptionally powerful financial and economic resources of the British metropolis, Dominions and colonies, she may maintain a long, stubborn resistance . . . The landing of armed forces on the British Isles represents, even for the powerful German army, an exceptionally difficult operation. This perhaps is still the only real means by which Britain might be forced to capitulate, unless the struggle ends in some compromise. That is why the war may continue for a long time and assume completely new forms."

During the week, while German air raiders continued extensive attacks on coastal defenses of England, daring R.A.F. bombing squadrons acted more vigorously than ever in flights over Germany. They wrought great havoc upon airports, barge concentrations, oil depots, munitions factories and jumping-off places for enemy air forces and invading troops.

END OF REPUBLIC

FRANCE: The end of the democratic Third French Republic — which rose from the ashes of the Empire of Napoleon III and fell under the Nazi conquest — was reached last week when the French Parliament approved a bill giving the Government of Marshal Petain full powers a new Constitution. And France became a totalitarian state, its motto no longer "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," but "Work, family, fatherland".

MEDITERRANEAN: Threefold Italian attacks against British possessions in the Middle East were keeping up their pressure last week, according to dispatches from Cairo — against Kenya, against Egypt, and British Somaliland. Severe fighting took place at a number of outposts. Above and below the Suez, at the same time, British bombers attacked Italian army, navy and air bases, from Mediterranean Libya to the tip of the Red Sea.

Most of the Italian fleet was reported last week in home harbors after fleeing under cover of a smoke screen following a brief engagement with British warships.

WHITHER CHINA?

FAR EAST: A Munich of the east took place last week when Great Britain agreed to close the Burma Road to munitions and war materials needed by China in her war against Japanese agression; and to prohibit the transport of arms into China from the British crown colony of Hong Kong. The U.S. State Department at Washington registered objection to the deal; but did nothing to help China, either.

If, as a result of the cutting off of the Burma lifeline, the Chinese government is forced to conclude a peace with Japan, it will mean that in short order Japan will find her hands free to seize French Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies.

At home in the Land of the Rising Sun, the Cabinet of Premier Yonai resigned en bloc, apparently to make way for a new regime all ready to fulfil Japanese army demands for a "firm hand" policy in the Orient.

Collapse of the Yonai regime was ascribed to three major reasons:

1. Its failure to satisfy expansionists who have been demanding that Japan take full advantage of the "golden" situation created by the fall of France and Holland, both of whom have rich colonies in the Far East.

2. Desire for closer alignment with Germany and Italy. This was considered impossible so long as Premier Yonai and his Foreign Minister, Hachiro Arita, remained in office.

3. Dissatisfaction with the Yonai regime since its inception, on the ground of its "excessive" liberalism.

SYRIA'S THE KEY

NEAR EAST: Events moved toward a showdown in the Near East. Beneath an outward calm, forces were brewing last week in Syria, which may change the entire face of that part of the world. In a dispatch from Cairo, New York Times' correspondent Joseph Levy wrote: "It is generally agreed that Syria today is the key to the situation in the Near East. Whatever happens in Syria, whether political or military, will affect all other Arab lands. Now that France has collapsed, Arab nationalist aims, political ambitions, and the long-dreamed-of federation of the Arab States have sprung to sudden rebirth. It is with the help of Britain, that the Arabs now expect to attain their aims. They want to see quick British action, action which would give the Syrians immediate moral and material support in their effort to become independent."

NO. 1 GUESSING GAME

UNITED STATES: One of the biggest guessing games in all history was in progress last week at the Democratic national convention in Chicago, while the delegates (and the candidates) waited, feeling more and more frustrated, for President Roosevelt to come out with his intentions. For engineered suspense, there had perhaps never been anything like it.

The week before the convention had been eventful. President Roosevelt, declaring that the United States must prepare for "total defense" asked Congress for $4,848,181,957 additional for the army and navy and proclaimed this two-fold policy: "We will not send our men to take part in European wars" . . . "But we will repel aggression against the United States or the Western hemisphere . . . The huge outlay, which brought the session's appropriations for the armed forces to $10,100,078,270, is designed to give the United States a start on its "two-ocean" navy, a combined army-navy-air force of about 36,000 planes and modern weapons and equipment for a land force of 2,000,000 men.

CANADA: A rush for marriage licenses, which amounted to a veritable stampede in Quebec province followed last week upon the announcement by federal authorities that all Canadian men married on or after July 15th would be considered as "single men" so far as military service is concerned . . . And those young men between the ages of 21 and 24 who didn't get through under the wire looked forward to undergoing military training this summer either as volunteer recruits for the non-permanent active militia or as draftees into the same organization . . . The calling-up of further age classes for training was expected as soon as the Defence Department was ready for them.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Every man and woman in the Dominion over the age of 16 (except cloistered nuns, men already in the army, inmates of insane asylums) learned last week that between the dates August 19th and 23rd, they would have to answer a questionnaire, for national registration purposes, giving full details with regard to age, education, occupation, qualifications for service.

The business of national registration—a tremendous undertaking — is being looked after by the newly-created War Services Department under Hon. J. G. Gardiner, former Minister of Agriculture. The Department will place the results of the registration and survey at the disposal of the government; promote, organize and co-ordinate different forms of voluntary assistance with a view to the most effective use of personal services or material contributions for war or other purposes; co-ordinate existing public information services of the government; make arrangements regarding refugees or other persons brought to Canada by reason of the war; take over the powers or duties of any other government departments, should the occasion be deemed necessary.

JOB INSURANCE

Canadians earning less than $2,000 a year (4,660,000 people in the Dominion are affected) will participate in the contributory unemployment insurance scheme which came before the House of Commons last week. By 1941 it is expected the program will cover 2,100,000 wage-earners in all types of industries and other work. Employees — divided into seven classes — will contribute from 12 to 36 cents a week; the employers' contribution ranges from 21 cents to 27 cents, according to the wage group. The government adds a grant of one-fifth of the total contributions of employers and employees, and pays the cost of administration. Benefits for single persons range from $4.08 to $10.20 a week; those for wage-earners with dependants from $4.80 to $14.40 a week. To qualify for the benefits, a worker must have paid 30 weekly contributions or 180 days. Payment of benefits begins nine days after unemployment.

The Ontario government's new policy of reducing relief rolls was seen last week as putting the screws on first, the municipalities; second, individuals in the province. The municipalities were asked to strike off relief every person who could be classed as "employable"; the "employable" in each case being forced to take any job offered him, no matter how miserable the wages, or how ill-fitted for the work he happened to be. The fact that scores of the "employables" had army rejection slips appeared to matter not a whit.

EMPTY ARMS

The country was full of disappointed homes, potential foster-parents with empty arms, after the word came through last week that the British Government had decided to postpone the avacuation of children to the Dominions and the U.S. . . . Declared Ontario's Minister of Welfare Cross: "This province alone could absorb 50,000 British child war guests without difficulty, and arrangements could be made to boost that figure by many thousands."

The First Canadian Division has a new commander, Major-General G. R. Pearkes, V.C., of Calgary, was appointed to succeed Major-General A. G. McNaughton, who had been promoted to command a new British Army Corps with the rank of Lieutenant-General.

Conservative news: Conservative House leader Hanson last week rejected the suggestion that he, along with a number of selected followers, sit in with the King Cabinet at Ottawa for discussions on the Dominion war effort. Mr. Hanson and his followers refused to become associated members of the Cabinet . . . No move has yet been made to select a new party leader for the Conservatives.

Soldiers' Welfare Room Operating In Barrie, Ont.

A Welfare Room for the use of men and women in His Majesty's Forces has recently been opened on the corner of Dunlop and Mulcaster Streets in Barrie, Ontario.

This accommodation, which includes the complete ground floor of the building, has been newly decorated and equipped and provides facilities for letter writing, meeting friends, and for quiet rest and meditation. Arrangements have been made for its continued maintenance throughout the duration of the war.

The establishing of this room by the Christian Science organization is in keeping with their general policy during the last war, when Welfare Rooms were established near many camps on this side of the water, as well as in England, France, and elsewhere.

Questionnaire For Canadians

To Be Answered by Everybody in Dominion Over 16, During National Registration Week — Divided into 18 Parts

The National War Services Department has made public the questionnaire for national registration to be answered by all Canadian residents of 16 and over.

It contains eighteen questions to be answered by men. Women must answer the first fifteen questions directed to the men and an additional four special questions.

The joint fifteen questions follow:

1. Surname. Given names.

2. Permanent postal address (if away from usual residence when filling in card give name of usual residence).

3. Age last birthday. Date of birth.

4. Conjugal condition — single, married, widowed, divorced.

5. Of what dependents (if any) are you the sole support: (a) father, (b) mother, (c) wife; (d) number of children under 16 years, (e) number of other dependents, (f) do you contribute partial support to any one?

6. Country of birth of: (a) Yourself; place. (b) Your father, place, (c) Your mother, place.

7. Nationality or country of allegiance: British subject (a) by birth, (b) by naturalization? (c) Foreign citizen? (d) if naturalized, in what year? (e) In what place? (f) If not British subject, to what country do you owe allegiance? (g) If an immigrant, in what year did you enter Canada?

8. Racial origin.

9. Language or languages: (a) Do you speak English? (b) French? (c) What other language can you speak or read and write?

EDUCATION

10. Education: (a) Primary only. (b) Primary and secondary. (c) Vocational training (business college and technical high school). (c) College or university degree?

11. Is your general health (a) good? (b) Fair? (c) Bad?

12. If blind, deaf, dumb, crippled or otherwise physically disabled, state nature of disability. If permanently disabled, are you in receipt of a pension? In respect of war service? Workmen's Compensation? Old age or blind? Other?

OCCUPATION

13. Class of occupation: (a) Are you an employer of labor other than domestic? If so, state business. (b) Are you working on your own account, but not employing labor? If so, state business. (c) Are you an employee? (1) Working at usual occupation. (2) Working at other than usual occupation. (3) unemployed. (d) Others not working because pensioners, dependents, retired, independent means.

14. Occupation or craft (answer giving years of experience): (a) Present occupation? (b) What is your regular occupation? (c) What other work can you do well? (d) If an employee, who is your present employer? Name, address, nature of business, where employed? (e) If experienced in a skilled industrial occupation or profession, describe specifically the type of work in which you are specially equipped by training or experience.

15. Unemployment: (a) How many weeks did you work in the past twelve months? (b) If out of work now, state number of weeks since last employed in any occupation other than work performed in return for direct relief. (c) Are you totally incapacitated for employment?

FOR MEN ONLY

Following are questions to be answered by men only:

16. (a1) Were you brought up on a farm? (a2) Until what age? (b1) Have you worked on a farm? (b2) How long? (b3) In what Province or country? (c1) Can you handle horses? (c2) Drive a tractor? (c3) Use farm machinery? (c4) Can you milk? (c5) Are you able to do other farm work?

17. Is there any particular occupation in which you would like to be specially trained?

18. Defense services:

(1) Have you previously served in any naval, military, or air forces? If so, state: (a) Forces of what country? (b) Approximate dates between which services performed? (c) Unit? (d) Rank held?

(2) If retired or discharged, give reasons therefor.

(3) Have you been rejected for military service in the present war? (a) Why? (b) Where?

FOR WOMEN ONLY

Following questions are to be answered by women only:

16. State length of experience (in years) if any in: (a) general farming? (b) Truck farming? (c) Fruit farming? (d) Poultry farming? (e) Dairy farming? (f) business establishments?

17. Can you (a) handle horses? (b) Drive motor trucks? (c) Drive an automobile? (d) Drive a tractor? (e) Use farm machiery? (f) Milk cows? (g) Do plain cooking?

18. Indicate here any qualifications or practical experience that you possess, not already described.

19. Do your circumstances permit you to serve in the present national crisis, by changing your present occupation to some other for which you are qualified? (a) Where you can return home daily? (b) Away from home?

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SCOUTING . . .

The Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and Boys' Brigade, of London, Ont., are carrying out an organized district collection of used and waste material of all kinds as a co-operative war effort. The city was divided into eighteen areas, and a committee appointed to plan and direct gathering and storing of the waste-paper, scrap metal, lead foil, etc., collected.

When Lord Baden-Powell visited Toronto in 1923, during a tour of Canada, he told eight Wolf Cub flag bearers that if they ever came to London he would "stand them a real English tea." The invitation resulted in a near "believe it or not" when six of the group of eight, all members of the 48th Highlanders now in England, called at the Imperial Boy Scout Headquarters to enjoy the tea. The Chief Scout himself was absent, in Kenya, but they were entertained on his behalf by Sir Percy Everett, a Deputy Chief Commissioner.

Chesley, Ont., Scouts are growing potatoes on a plot of ground placed at their disposal by a friend of the troop. Contributions of seed potatoes were invited to launch the project.

Niagara Peninsula Boy Scouts co-operated with the Red Cross branches of the area in the opening and operation of a "White Elephant" store in St. Catherines. Collections were made of used furniture, bric-a-brac, garden tools, lawn mowers, etc. Broken furniture was accepted provided the broken parts were available. Scout halls were made district collection centres.

Convalescents, Do Gardening

Plant Seeds in Saucers and Cultivate Potted Plants and Keep Happy

What "green growing things" can do to create happy hours for an invalid is told in a letter to the New York Sun from Mrs. Melinda I. Manchester, former member of the faculty of Teachers' College. During a recent convalescence in a Massachusetts sanitarium, Mrs. Manchester discovered a new and stimulating form of occupational therapy in planting seeds in different ways and cultivating potted plants.

"I learned from experience," she writes, "that the old saying "keep busy to keep happy" is a good doctor's prescription. I put grapefruit seeds, chick peas, white and red beans on wet cotton batting in saucers and covered them. In 48 hours, sprouts appeared, and after a few days of exposure to either electric or sun light, keeping them very wet, they developed and grew to several inches. On ordinary sponges, I germinated wheat seeds and produced seedlings ready for setting in soil. I even had a 'lawn' growing on a flat, wet sponge that was bright and green and clipped twice.

PUT THEM ON GLASS SHELF

"One peck of potting soil, a few waterproof paper pots, some bright red and green dishes and coasters furnished color and receptacles for propagating and planting. A cheap enamel coffee maker served as watering pot. When the window sill and dresser became crowded, an inexpensive, two-tiered glass shelf was fastened to the top of the lower shelf and this gave room for the pots and a better exposure to the light. All this was done inside one room having one window with an eastern exposure and at very small expenditure.

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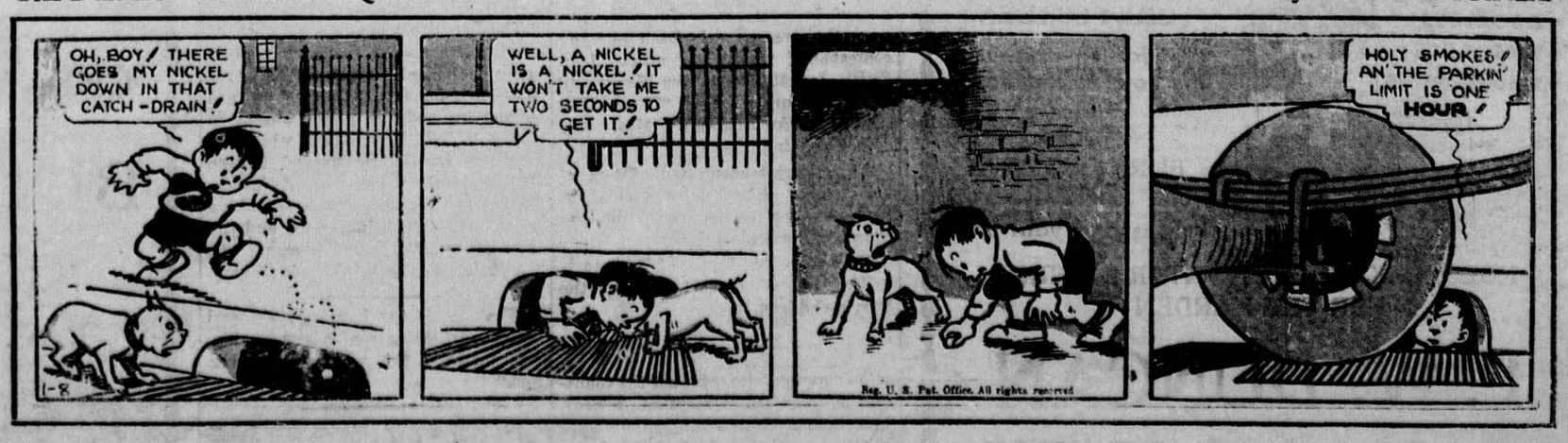
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