THE WAR - WEEK — Commentary on Current Events

Loss Of Singapore Increases Peril To Dutch East Indies and Burma

Four years ago Great Britain's mighty naval base at Singapore was officially opened. At that time, it was declared by experts to be an impregnable bastion of British power and prestige in the Far East. Today the power and the prestige are lost.

Japan became the master of Singapore one week after the Mikado's forces began to storm the island, and nine weeks after they began their drive from bases in Thailand and Indo-China on down the Malay peninsula to their goal at Singapore. It was a brilliantly planned and executed campaign.

Not since the fall of France has the Allied cause suffered such a severe blow. The loss of the Gibraltar of the East is a catastrophe to the United Nations and an immeasureable gain to the Japanese. The land, sea and air forces, perhaps 200,000 men, used in the capture of the stronghold, are now freed to concentrate on Sumatra and Java, the last barriers on the way to Burma and India.

Peril In Burma

The Allied armies in Burma have been forced to retreat but reinforcements are arriving. The planes of the R.A.F. and the American Volunteer Group (originally organized to guard the Burma Road) are playing an important part in the fighting. They have shown recently that in one theatre at least the Japanese have not won air superiority.

Large Chinese forces composed of seasoned fighters with four years' experience of war have recently arrived from the north to bolster Imperial defences in the Burma region.

In Allied quarters it is feared that Japanese reinforcements will be sent to the front north of Malaya where a comparatively small Japanese amy is advancing toward the vital port of Rangoon. It is on the docks at Rangoon that supplies are unloaded for Free China. The genearl outlook is far from favorable. The menace to Burma has far-reaching significances. This rich British Crown Colony is a barrier of India and a gateway to China. The importance of the colony is evident, not only in increasing Japanese pressure and Allied reinforcements, but in the temporary presence at the front of General Sir Archibald Wavell, generalissimo of the United Nations in the Far East.

Battle In Dover Strait

Three German fighting ships, 62,000 tons of striking force, have escaped from the harbor of Brest under cover of foggy weather and a heavy smoke screen. With a powerful escort of destroyers, minesweepers, motor torpedo boats and air squadrons, they headed at top speed for the Strait of Dover and the North Sea. They dared the sea power of Britain in its home waters and after a great sea battle lasting for five hours made their escape to German waters.

Mr. Churchill has declared that Britain's war position has been simplified by the removal of the German warships from Brest. He gives the following reasons:

(1) A threat to British convoy routes has been removed, and the enemy has been forced to leave an advantageous position.

(2) The diversion of Britain's air bombing effort from Germany to the port of Brest, which, though necessary, has been so wasteful, is now ended, and a heavier scale of attack on Germany from the air is now possible.

(3) The Scharnhorst and the Gneisenau received damage during the run from Brest which will keep them out of action for some time to come.

(4) Before those warships can again go to sea to take any active part in the war, the Royal Navy will be reinforced by various important units of the highest quality, and a similar strengthening process is going forward in the Navy of the United States.

Plea For Unity

The British Prime Minister's recent broadcast was in the essential points an appeal to the nation and Parliament to stand firm and give the government a solid foundation for its work.

When he surveyed the power of the United States and its resources and felt that they were now "in it with the British Commonwealth, all together, however long it lasts, until death or victory," Mr. Churchill said that this was the first and greatest event he had to report to the British people.

"That is what I have dreamed of, aimed at and worked for and now it has come to pass," Mr. Churchill said.

But at the same time he balanced the good of the latest war developments—in which he included the efforts of Russia—against the heavy and grave events elsewhere. And frankly telling the people throughout the world that he spoke "under the shadow of a heavy and far-reaching military defeat", the loss of Singapore—Mr. Churchill went on to call for a spirit of unity and new exertions in this dark hour.

Adverse news "of many misfortunes and gnawing anxieties" lay before us, Mr. Churchill said but from that very fact he invoked a new spirit of toughness from the people who march against the Axis.

"This is the moment," he concluded, "to display that calm and poise, combined with grim determination which not so long ago brought us out of the very jaws of death. Here is another occasion to show, as so often in our long history, that we can meet reverses with dignity and with renewed accessions of strength.

VOICE OF THE PRESS

HORSE AND BUGGY LOVE

Looking back over the years, we can see that, in the horse-and-buggy days, making love in the moonlight was far and away better, more wholesome, more sacred ceremonial than anything the speedier automobile has to offer the boys and girls of this generation True, Old Dobbin never ran out of gas, never suffered a flat tire! But such artifices were unnecessary a generation ago. If the youths of today were acquainted with these delights of which we are speaking, they would not bemoan the possible passing of the pleasure car. Getting back to old ways would be a prospect altogether pleasing. We have but one suggestion to make: That it is just as easy to pick the wrong girl in a buggy as in an automobile.

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—Brandon Sun

NEW EXPORT FIELD

Formation of a Bean Growers' Association should open the way to a new, profitable market for Western Ontario farmers. The growers are acting promptly on the suggestion of Hon. J. G. Gardiner to prepare to ship dried beans to Britain, from which has come a request for this form of food.

This is another product which this district is in a splendid position to supply. It adds to the variety of the goods which we can send to Britain, and the new market will be of benefit both to our farmers and to the Old Land.

—Windsor Star

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LITTLE DARLINGS (?)

The child psychologists had better get busy in London, Ont., where some of the little darlings appear to be dangerous young beggars. At least, that's the impression we get from this bit of precautionary wisdom in the Free Press: "Never speak unkindly to a child. A child's nerves are very sensitive. Besides, it may shy a rock at you."

—Ottawa Evening Citizen

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NO SCREAMING

Officers of the Canadian Women's Army Corps are being taught to issue commands without screaming. They really don't need the instruction. Countless men can testify that the most compelling commands they ever heard were in low, honeyed tones and started off, "Darling, don't you think you'd better . . ."

—Windsor Star

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THE FAMILY CAR

According to information gathered by the Ontario Motor League the average distance travelled in a year for motorists in the old part of Ontario is 15,500 miles and the average consumption of gasoline is 854 gallons a year.

—Fort William Times-Journal

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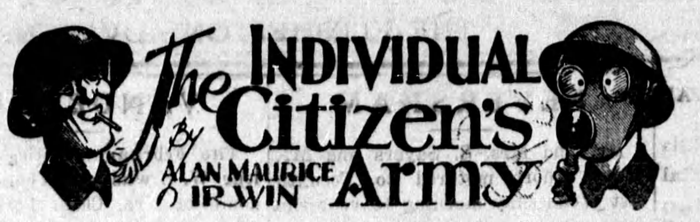
TIRE NUISANCE

Standardization to one size of tire for all cars might simplify our future tire problem, by creating another nuisance at the same time: "Can I borrow one of your tires for the week-end?"

—Kitchener Record



A Weekly Column About This and That in The Canadian Army

A few columns back this space was devoted to that branch of the Individual Citizen's Army administered by the Master General of the Ordnance. It was remarked that there would be more coming on this subject.

Now, following the arriva. in Great Britain of an advance party of the First Canadian Base Ordnance Workshop, seems to be a good time to re-open the subject.

"Biggest" seems to be the controlling adjective for pieces about the M.G.O.'s branch. First we had the biggest mail-order house — now comes this new Base Ordnance Workshop which is without question the biggest repair and service station in the world.

But it isn't so much the new workshop I want to talk about as the unconventionality that characterized its formation.

Unconventionality is as much a trade mark of the M.G.O. branch as are superlative adjectives. Which is just as well since this is an unconventional war.

Prime piece of unconventionality, of course, is the heading of the most rapidly expanding branch of the Canadian Army by a civilian. As you know there was a precedent for that in English history.

Now, and this brings us back to the Base Ordnance Workshop, here is another example of the type of unconventionality that is going to help us win the war. Overnight an ex-private, who had made his name a big one in the operation of peace-time mechanized vehicles, was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel and appointed to command an army organization for which no pattern existed. The ex-private, who had been too busy in the years between wars to carry on in the militia, was G. A. Secord, of Toronto. One day he was Mr. Secord, operator of the Hertz Drive Yourself System, the next he was Lt.-Col. G. A. Secord, officer commanding the First Canadian Base Ordnance Workshop.

Here is an amusing paradox. The man responsible for this latest unconventionality is Victor Sifton, Winnipeg newspaperman and Master-General of the Ordnance—who reversed the process when he was appointed to his present position.

How come? If you'll stand for a bad pun the answer is, "comme ca."

When Lieut.-Colonel Sifton first volunteered his services for the duration of the war he was appointed Executive Assistant to the Minister of National Defence and his name is still painted on the opaque glass of an office door on the same floor as Col. Ralston's office.

The legend reads: "Executive Assistant, Lieut.-Col. Sifton." For economy reasons it was obliterated by a sheet of paper pasted over it when Sifton took over the M.G.O. job.

But when he took over the new job Lt.-Col. Sifton became Mr. Sifton—demoting himself just exactly the same number of steps that he promoted Lt.-Col. Secord!

And on the door of his present office there appears just this: "406, Private!"

Unconventional? The word seems pale.

Just recently President Roosevelt appointed William Knudsen Lieutenant-General to do the same job in the United States.

"Lieutenant" is pronounced "Lootenant" in the United States and is accorded somewhat the same pronunciation by the British Navy. Soldiers and civilians in the British Empire pronounce it, as you know, "Leftenant." This isn't army slang, it is true, but it is in line with the minor researches into colloquial terminology conducted from time to time by this column.

We have scouts at work and hope to publish the results of their reconnaissance next week.

20 WAYS TO SAVE SUGAR BY USING BEE HIVE SYRUP

Made from Corn

History Repeats Itself!—In 1918, the "Canada Food Board, Ottawa," published a booklet—which said in part—"Glucose and white corn syrup are perhaps the most satisfactory and least expensive sugar substitutes available" . . . "the board recommends the use of glucose wherever possible." (Bee Hive Syrup is 95% glucose.) Bee Hive Syrup is not an "intense sweet"; it is half as sweet as sugar, therefore the natural food flavours are permitted to dominate more pleasingly.

- Sweeten your cereal, fresh fruit and porridge with Bee Hive!
- Use Bee Hive Syrup when making apple sauce, stewed rhubarb, stewed apricots, etc.!
- Use Bee Hive Syrup as a sauce on rice, bread, cottage and other favourite puddings!
- Sweeten your coffee, and cocoa with Bee Hive!
- Use Bee Hive Syrup in preserving!
- Use Bee Hive Syrup for cake icings!
- Use Bee Hive Syrup on ice cream!
- Use Bee Hive Syrup in fruit juice!
- Use Bee Hive Syrup in making candies!
- Use Bee Hive Syrup as a milk modifier in baby feeding!
- Try Bee Hive Syrup in recipes for cake—buckwheat cookies, cocoanut pudding, chocolate cake, fruit cake, jelly rolls, junket, marmalade, oatmeal drop cookies, oatmeal scones, potato drop cookies, white cookies, etc.!

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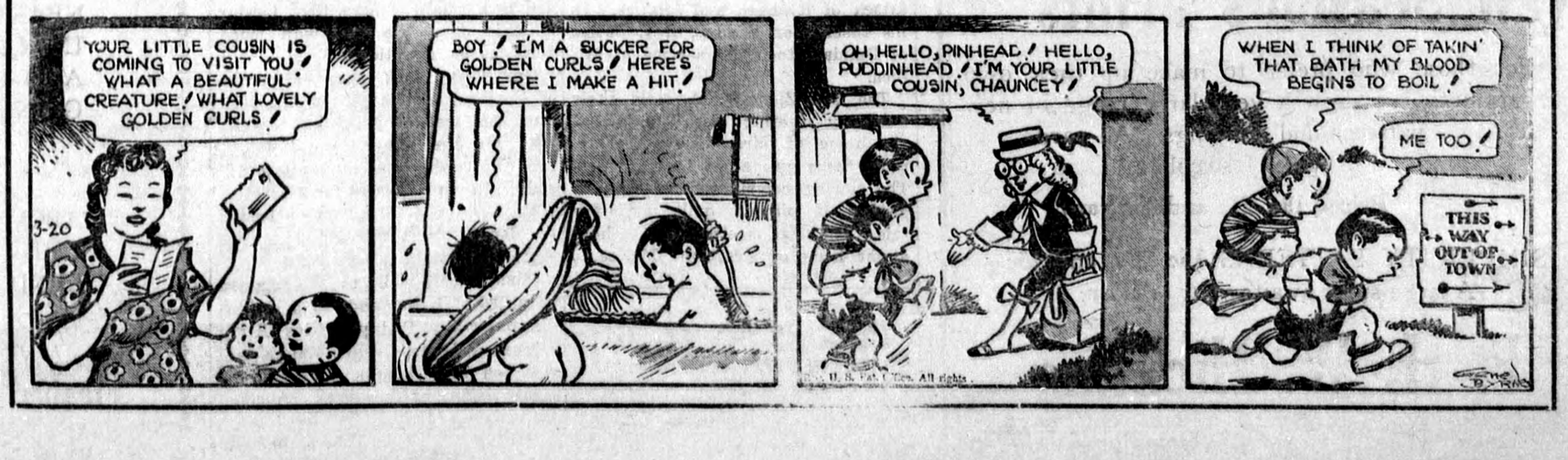
REG'LAR FELLERS—A Real Surprise By GENE BYRNES