PSF Great Britain 1940, Oct.-Dec.

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"Morgenthau Diary" -- Book 337 (December 8-9, 1940)

~~SECRET~~ AND PERSONAL

British Embassy,
Washington, D. C.,

December 8th, 1940

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I enclose herein a letter for the President forwarding a secret and personal letter for him from the Prime Minister. A copy of Mr. Churchill's letter is enclosed herein for your personal information.

I should be very grateful if the letter could be sent on to the President at the earliest possible moment. I hope it may be possible to send it by sea plane, because the Prime Minister is most anxious that the President should have time to read it carefully while on his cruise and before he gets back to the bustle of Washington.

I should also be greatly obliged if the enclosed letter from myself to Mr. Henry Hopkins could be sent at the same time.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. Secretary,

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) L. Lothian

The Honourable
Cordell Hull,
Secretary of State of the United States,
Washington, D. C.

Printed in FRUS, 1940, III, 18-26.

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"Morgenthau Diary" -- Book 337 (December 8-9, 1940)

15.15

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D. C.
December 7th 1940

My dear Mr. President,

As we reach the end of this year I feel that you will expect me to lay before you the prospects for 1941. I do so strongly and confidently because it seems to me that the vast majority of American citizens have recorded their conviction that the safety of the United States as well as the future of our two democracies and the kind of civilisation for which they stand are bound up with the survival and independence of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Only thus can those bastions of sea-power, upon which the control of the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans depends, be preserved in faithful and friendly hands. The control of the Pacific by the United States Navy and of the Atlantic by the British Navy is indispensable to the security of the trade routes of both our countries and the surest means to preventing the war from reaching the shores of the United States.

There is another aspect. It takes between three and four years to convert the industries of a modern state to war purposes. Saturation point is reached when the maximum industrial effort that can be spared from civilian needs has been applied to war production. Germany certainly reached this point by the end of 1939. We in the British Empire are now only about half-way through the second year. The United States, I should suppose, was by no means so far advanced as we. Moreover, I understand that immense programmes of naval, military and air defence are now on foot in the United States, to complete which certainly two years are needed. It is our British duty in the common interest as also for our own survival to hold the front and grapple with Nazi power until the preparations of the United States are complete. Victory may come before the two years are out; but we have no right to count upon it to the extent of relaxing any effort that is humanly possible. Therefore I submit with very great respect for your good and friendly consideration that there is a solid identity of interest between the British Empire and the United

tates while those conditions last. It is upon this oting that I venture to address you.

. The form which this war has taken and seems ikely to hold does not enable us to match the immense rmies of Germany in any theatre where their main ower can be brought to bear. We can however by the se of sea power and air power meet the German armies n the regions where only comparatively small forces an be brought into action. We must do our best to revent German domination of Europe spreading into Africa and into Southern Asia. We have also to maintain in constant readiness in this Island armies strong enough o make the problem of an overseas invasion insoluble. or these purposes we are forming as fast as possible, s you are already aware , between fifty and sixty divisions. Even if the United States was our ally instead of our riend and indispensable partner we should not ask r a large American expeditionary army. Shipping, t men, is the limiting factor and the power to sport munitions and supplies claims priority the movement by sea of large numbers of soldiers.

The first half of 1940 was a period of

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

disaster for the Allies and for the Empire. The last five months have witnessed a strong and perhaps unexpected recovery by Great Britain; fighting alone but with invaluable aid in munitions and in destroyers placed at our disposal by the great Republic of which you are for the third time chosen Chief.

9. The danger of Great Britain being destroyed by a swift overwhelming blow has for the time being very greatly receded. In its place there is a long, gradually maturing danger, less sudden and less spectacular but equally deadly. This mortal danger is the steady and increasing diminution of our tonnage. We can endure the shattering of our dwellings and the slaughter of our civilian population by indiscriminate air attacks and we hope to parry these increasingly as our science develops and to repay them upon military objectives in Germany as our Air Force more nearly approaches the strength of the enemy. The decision for 1941 lies upon the seas; unless we can establish our ability to feed this Island, import munitions of all kinds which we need, unless

and move our armies to the various theatres where Hitler and his confederate Mussolini must be met, and maintain them there and do all this with the assurance of being able to carry it on till the spirit of the continental dictators is broken, we may fall by the way and the time needed by the United States to complete her defensive preparations may not be forthcoming. It is therefore in shipping and in the power to transport across the oceans, particularly the Atlantic Ocean, that in 1941 the crunch of the whole war will be found. If on the other hand we were able to move the necessary tonnage to and fro across the salt water indefinitely, it may well be that the application of superior air power to the German homeland and the rising anger of the German and other Nazi-gripped populations will bring the enemy of civilization to a merciful and glorious end. But do not let us underrate the task.

Our shipping losses, the figure for which recent months are appended, have been on a scale not comparable to that of the worst years of the war. In the 5 weeks ending November 3rd the

ses reached a total of 420,300 tons. Our estimation the annual tonnage which ought to be imported in der to maintain our war effort at full strength 43,000,000 tons; the tonnage entering in September s only at the rate of 37,000,000 tons and in October 38,000,000 tons. Were the diminution to continue this rate it would be fatal, unless indeed mensely greater replenishment than anything at resent in sight could be achieved in time. Although are doing all we can to meet this situation by new thods, the difficulty of limiting the losses is viously much greater than in the last war. We ack the assistance of the French Navy, the Italian vy and the Japanese Navy, and above all the United tates Navy, which was of such vital help to us ring the culminating years. The enemy commands the rts all around the northern and western coast of ance. He is increasingly basing his submarines, ying boats and combat planes on these ports and on islands off the French coast. We lack the use of rts or territory in Eire in which to organise our stal patrols by air and sea. In fact, we have now

only one effective passage of entry to the British Isles namely, the northern approach, against which the enemy is increasingly concentrating, reaching over farther out by U-boat action and long distance bombing. In addition, there have for some months been merchant ship raiders both in the Atlantic and in the Indian Oceans. And now we have powerful warship raiders to contend with as well. We need ships both to hunt down and to escort. Large as are our resources and preparations we do not possess enough.

7. The next six or seven months bring the relative battleship strength in home waters to a smaller margin than is satisfactory. The "Bismark" and the "Tirpitz" will certainly be in service in January. We have already the "King George V" and hope to have the "Prince of Wales" at the same time. These modern ships are of course far better armoured, especially against air attack, than vessels like the "Rodney" and "Nelson" designed twenty years ago. We have recently had to use the "Rodney" on trans-Atlantic escort and at any time when numbers are so small, a mine or a torpedo may

alter decisively the strength of the line of battle. We get relief in June when the "Duke of York" will be ready and will be still better off at the end of 1941 when the "Anson" also will have joined. But these two first class, modern, thirty-five thousand ton, fifteen inch gun German battleships force us to maintain a concentration never previously necessary in this war.

8. We hope that the two Italian "Littories" will be out of action for a while and anyway they are not so dangerous as if they were manned by the Germans. Perhaps they might be! We are indebted to you for your help about the "Richelieu" and the "Jean Bart" and I daresay that will be all right. But, Mr. President, as no one will see more clearly than you, we have during these months to consider for the first time in this war, a fleet action in which the enemy will have two ships at least as good as our two best and only two modern ones. It will be impossible to reduce our strength in the Mediterranean because of the attitude of Turkey and indeed the whole position in the Eastern basin depends upon our having

a strong fleet there. The older un-modernized battleships will have to go for convoy. Thus even in the battleship class we are at full extension.

9. There is a second field of danger: the Vichy Government may either by joining Hitler's new order in Europe or through some manoeuvre such as forcing us to attack an expedition despatched by sea against free French Colonies, find an excuse for ranging with the Axis Powers the very considerable undamaged naval forces still under its control. If the French Navy were to join the Axis, the control of West Africa would pass immediately into their hands with the gravest consequences to our communication between the northern and southern Atlantic, and also affect Dakar and of course thereafter South America.

10. A third sphere of danger is in the Far East. Here it seems clear that the Japanese are thrusting Southward through Indo China to Saigon and other naval and air bases, thus bringing them within a comparatively short distance of Singapore and the Dutch East Indies. It is reported that the Japanese are preparing five good divisions for possible use as an overseas expeditionary force. We have to-day no forces in the Far East

capable of dealing with this situation should it develop.

11. In the face of these dangers, we must try to use the year 1941 to build up such a supply of weapons, particularly aircraft, both by increased output at home in spite of bombardment, and through ocean-born supplies, as will lay the foundation of victory. In view of the difficulty and magnitude of this task, as outlined by all the facts I have set forth to which many others could be added, I feel entitled, nay bound, to lay before you the various ways in which the United States could give supreme and decisive help to what is, in certain aspects, the common cause.

12. The prime need is to check or limit the loss of tonnage on the Atlantic approaches to our Islands. This may be achieved both by increasing the naval forces which cope with attacks, and by adding to the number of merchant ships on which we depend. For the first purpose there would seem to be the following alternatives:

(1) the reassertion by the United States of the doctrine of the freedom of the seas from illegal and barbarous warfare in accordance with the decisions reached after

the late Great War, and as freely accepted and defined by Germany in 1935. From this, the United States ships should be free to trade with countries against which there is not an effective legal blockade.

(2) It would, I suggest, follow that protection should be given to this lawful trading by United States forces i.e. escorting battleships, cruisers, destroyers and air flotillas. Protection would be immediately more effective if you were able to obtain bases in Eire for the duration of the war. I think it is improbable that such protection would provoke a declaration of war by Germany upon the United States though probably sea incidents of a dangerous character would from time to time occur. Hitler has shown himself inclined to avoid the Kaiser's mistake. He does not wish to be drawn into war with the United States until he has gravely undermined the power of Great Britain. His maxim is "one at a time". The policy I have ventured to outline, or something like it, would constitute a decisive act of constructive non-belligerency by the United States, and more than any other measure

would make it certain that British resistance could be effectively prolonged for the desired period and victory gained.

(3) Failing the above, the gift, loan or supply of a large number of American vessels of war, above all destroyers already in the Atlantic, is indispensable to the maintenance of the Atlantic route. Further, could not United States naval forces extend their sea control over the American side of the Atlantic, so as to prevent molestation by enemy vessels of the approaches to the new line of naval and air bases which the United States is establishing in British islands in the Western Hemisphere. The strength of the United States naval forces is such that the assistance in t he Atlantic that they could afford us, as desribed above, would not jeopardize control over the Pacific.

(4) We should also then need the good offices of the United States and the whole influence of its Government continually exerted, to procure for Great Britain the necessary facilities upon the southern and western shores of Eire for our flotillas, and still more

important, for our aircraft, working westward into the Atlantic. If it were proclaimed an American interest that the resistance of Great Britain should be prolonged and the Atlantic route kept open for the important armaments now being prepared for Great Britain in North America, the Irish in the United States might be willing to point out to the Government of Eire the dangers which its present policy is creating for the United States itself.

His Majesty's Government would of course take the most effective steps beforehand to protect Ireland if Irish action exposed it to a German attack. It is not possible for us to compel the people of Northern Ireland against their will to leave the United Kingdom and join Southern Ireland. But I do not doubt that if the Government of Eire would show its solidarity with the democracies of the English speaking world at this crisis a Council of Defence of all Ireland could be set up out of which the unity of the island would probably in some form or other emerge after the war.

13. The object of the foregoing measures is to

reduce to manageable proportions the present destructive losses at sea. In addition it is indispensable that the merchant tonnage available for supplying Great Britain and for the waging of the war by Great Britain with all vigour, should be substantially increased beyond the one and a quarter million tons per annum which is the utmost we can now build. The convoy system, the detours, the zig-zags, the great distances from which we now have to bring our imports, and the congestion of our western harbours, have reduced by about one third the value of our existing tonnage. To ensure final victory, not less than three million tons of additional merchant shipbuilding capacity will be required. Only the United States can supply this need. Looking to the future it would seem that production on a scale comparable with that of the Hog Island scheme of the last war ought to be faced for 1942. In the meanwhile, we ask that in 1941 the United States should make available to us every ton of merchant shipping, surplus to its own requirements, which it possesses or controls and should find some means of putting into our "hands" a large proportion of the merchant shipping now under

construction for the National Maritime Board.

14. Moreover we look to the industrial energy of the Republic for a reinforcement of our domestic capacity to manufacture combat aircraft. Without that reinforcement reaching us in a substantial measure, we shall not achieve the massive preponderance in the air on which we must rely to loosen and disintegrate the German grip on Europe. The development of the Air Forces of the Empire provides for a total of nearly 7000 combat aircraft in the fighting squadrons by the spring of 1942, backed by about an equal number in the training units. But it is abundantly clear that this programme will not suffice to give us the weighty superiority which will force open the doors of victory. In order to achieve such superiority it is plain that we shall need the greatest production of aircraft which United States of America are capable of sending us. It is our anxious hope that in the teeth of continuing bombardment we shall realize the greater part of production which we have planned in this country. But not even with the addition to our squadrons of all the aircraft which under present arrangements,

we may derive from the planned output in the United States can we hope to achieve the necessary ascendancy. May I invite you then, Mr. President, to give earnest consideration to an immediate order on joint account for a further 2,000 combat aircraft a month? Of these aircraft I would submit that the highest possible proportion should be heavy bombers, the weapon on which above all others we depend to shatter the foundations of German military power. I am aware of the formidable task that this would impose upon the industrial organization of the United States. Yet, in our heavy need, we call with confidence to the most resourceful and ingenious technicians in the world. We ask for an unexampled effort believing that it can be made.

15. You have also received information about the needs of our armies. In the munitions sphere, in spite of enemy bombing, we are making steady progress. Without your continued assistance in the supply of machine tools and in the further release from stock of certain articles we could not hope to equip as many as 50 divisions in 1941. I am grateful

for the arrangements already practically completed for your air in the equipment of the army which we have already planned and for the provision of American-type weapons for an additional 10 divisions in time for the campaign of 1942. But when the tide of dictatorship begins to recede, many countries, trying to regain their freedom, may be asking for arms, and there is no source to which they can look except to the factories of the United States. I must therefore also urge the importance of expanding to the utmost American productive capacity for small arms, artillery and tanks.

16. I am arrangingto present you with a complete programme of munitions of all kinds which we seek to obtain from you, the greater part of which is of course already agreed. An important economy of time and effort will be produced if the types selected for the United States Services should,whenever possible, conform to those which have proved their merit under actual conditions of war. In this way reserves of guns and ammunition and of aeroplanes become inter-changeable and are by that very fact augmented. This is however a sphere so highly technical that I do not enlarge upon it.

17. Last of all I come to the question of finance. The more rapid and abundant the flow of munitions and ships which you are able to send us, the sooner will our dollar credits be exhausted. They are already as you know very heavily drawn upon by payments we have made to date. Indeed as you know orders already placed or under negotiation, including expenditure settled or pending for creating munitions factories in the United States, many times exceed the total exchange resources remaining at the disposal of Great Britain. The moment approaches when we shall no longer be able to pay cash for shipping and other supplies. While we will do our utmost and shrink from no proper sacrifice to make payments across the exchange, I believe that you will agree that it would be wrong in principle and mutually disadvantageous in effect if, at the height of this struggle, Great Britain were to be devested of all saleable assets so that after victory was won with our blood, civilisation saved and time gained for the United States to be fully armed against all eventualities, we should stand stripped to the bone.

Such a course would not be in the moral or economic interests of either of our countries. We here would be unable after the war to purchase the large balance of imports from the United States over and above the volume of our exports which is agreeable to your tariffs and domestic economy. Not only should we in Great Britain suffer cruel privations but widespread unemployment in the United States would follow the curtailment of American exporting power.

18. Moreover I do not believe the Government and people of the United States would find it in accordance with the principles which guide them, to confine the help which they have so generously promised only to such munitions of war and commodities as could be immediately paid for. You may be assured that we shall prove ourselves ready to suffer and sacrifice to the utmost for the Cause, and that we glory in being its champion. The rest we leave with confidence to you and to your people, being sure that ways and means will be found which future generations on both sides of the Atlantic will approve and admire.

19. If, as I believe, you are convinced, Mr. President, that the defeat of the Nazi and Fascist tyranny is a matter of high consequence to the people of the United States and to the Western Hemisphere, you will regard this letter not as an appeal for aid, but as a statement of the minimum action necessary to the achievement of our common purpose.

I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

Winston S. Churchill.

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TELEGRAM

The White House

Washington

13poh 24 CABLE VIA COM'L.

LONDON, Dec. 19, 1940

THE PRESIDENT:

If it is not to be Atherton let it be Armour for British ambassador. All Christmas blessings.

MARGOT OXFORD.

PSF: Gt. Britain
File personal

SAVOY HOTEL LONDON

20th November, 1940

Dearest Franklin, I am much distressed as I got a letter from you yesterday - and have lost it. The bedroom next to mine was smashed, and 2 people killed and 10 injured, so the Manager of the Hotel rushed into my room yesterday and said that I, and my maid must go down at once to the deep shelter here which no bomb can reach. It is on bright nights that the Germans come over and ruin all our lovely London houses (It was 2 nights before yesterday that two people here were killed) I flung several interesting letters into the waster-paper basket, and ran down to the shelter. Yours must have been among them. I am terribly sorry about this, as, of course, this morning, my waste-paper basket has been taken away by the very careful housemaid here. Do write to me again here. I shall live here now I suppose til I am killed by a bomb. You cannot see a sadder sight than London, unhappier faces! If only, only there had been no neutrality, and every country from the 1st day of the war had said, -"We must depend upon England and France, we intend to fight this horrible war, and stand up against what is cruel, wicked, and against God" - then there would been no war. Now we are fighting alone, with you, and all our Colonies, etc. If you had been beaten, we should have lost the war. Our sufferings are great, and I cry in bed to think that such vile men as the Dictators should be so successful. I don't care a d-n about cleverness - I've lived with it all my life - I only

care for Goodness, and Courage. That we shall win, I've no doubt, but at what a cost! To sleep in a shelter every night, where I can't read, or smoke, or do any thing (not even sleep) is a great trial. But others are suffering more than I am. I beg you to send Ray Atherton as your new Ambassador here.

No one has ever had such a fine influence over my Country, or has been so much loved, and respected. The others have been mere Robots and quite unknown to the common British people.

All my affection, and admiration

Yours,

(Signed) MARGOT OXFORD

PSF: Gt. Britain

20th November 1940

SAVOY HOTEL LONDON

TELEPHONE. TEMPLE BAR 4343 : TELEGRAMS. SAVOY HOTEL LONDON

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houses (It was a night before
yesterday, that the people here
were killed) I flung several
uninteresting letters into the
waste paper basket, & I am down
to the shelter. Yours must have
been among them. I am terribly
sorry about this, as of course
this morning, my waste-paper
basket has been taken away by the
very careful housemaids here. Do

2

SAVOY HOTEL LONDON

TELEPHONE. TEMPLE BAR 4343 : TELEGRAMS. SAVOY HOTEL LONDON

write to me again here. I shall
live here now I suppose till
I am killed by a bomb. You
cannot see a sadder sight
than London, nor happier
faces! — If only only there
had been no neutrality, &
every country from the 18th day
of the war had said, "we
work depend upon England & France, we

intend to fight this horrible war, &
stand up against what is cruel,
wicked, & against God — then
there wd have been no war. Now
we are fighting alone, with
Zion, & all our Colonies etc
If Zion had been beaten, we sd
have lost the war. Our sufferings
are great & I cry in bed to think
that such vile men as the Dictators
sd be so successful. I don't care
a d—n about cleverness — I've
lived with it all my life — I only

3

SAVOY HOTEL LONDON

TELEPHONE. TEMPLE BAR 4343 : TELEGRAMS. SAVOY HOTEL LONDON

Care for Goodness, & Courage.
That we shall win, I've
no doubt, but at what
a cost! - To sleep in a
shelter every trifle, where
I can't read, or smoke, or
do any thing (not even sleep)
is a great trial. But others
are suffering more than I am.
I beg you to send Ray Atherton

as your hard Ambassador here.

No one has ever had such a fine influence over my country, or has been so much loved & respected. The others have been mere Robots & quite unknown to the common British people

All my affection & admiration yrs

Marcel Oxford

America

LONDON, W.C.
12.45 PM
20 NOV
1940
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POSTAGE
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President

The White House

Washington

America

PSF: Gt. Britain

quintuplicate

LONDON, December 20, 1940.

No. 6458

SUBJECT: Bomb Damage in English Cities.

~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~

file

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's despatch

1-7/ No. 6359 of December 6, 1940, and to enclose copies of further reports received from the consular officers in

charge

charge at Birmingham, Southampton, Liverpool and Sheffield regarding conditions in those cities after recent bombing attacks.

Respectfully yours,

Herschel V. Johnson
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim

Enclosures:

1. Letter from the American Consulate at Birmingham, dated December 5, 1940.
2. Letter from the American Consulate at Southampton, dated December 5, 1940.
3. Letter from the American Consulate at Southampton, dated December 6, 1940.
4. Letter from the American Consulate at Liverpool, dated December 9, 1940.
5. Letter from the American Consulate at Southampton, dated December 13, 1940.
6. Memorandum containing telephonic report from the American Consulate at Sheffield, dated December 13, 1940.
7. Memorandum regarding bomb damage at Sheffield, dated December 16, 1940.

(All enclosures in quintuplicate)

WCF/JC

A TRUE COPY OF THE SIGNED ORIGINAL

Enclosure No. 1 ... to despatch No. 6458 20 DEC. 1940
from the Embassy at London, England.

AMERICAN CONSULATE
Birmingham, December 5, 1940.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Walter H. McKinney, Esquire,
American Consul,
London, W. 1.

Dear Mr. McKinney:

Britain's war effort is being much hampered as a result of breakdowns and dislocations in the transport and communications services in the Birmingham area.

While it is true that, generally speaking, particular but small difficulties may be quickly remedied, these so frequently arise that their over-all effect is probably more untoward than is the over-all effect of the fewer but more serious difficulties that take, if often seems, an inordinate length of time to overcome.

The explosion of a small bomb on or near a main railway line leading into this thickly settled and highly industrialized zone causes damage which can be repaired in a few hours, but before the elapse of that much time, the schedules of many thousands of work and business people have been upset and consequent dislocations and confusion occasioned in many hundreds of enterprises directly or indirectly helping the country in its war effort. An example may assist to a better understanding of the manner in which relatively insignificant damage can disrupt a great city's plans for the day.

A very small high explosive bomb fell at the edge of the rails between Birmingham and Warwick. The track was made impassable, but the damage was repaired before evening. However, the morning trains between Leamington and Birmingham were much delayed, and several thousand people who daily travel over this line to the latter place from outlying residential districts and safe areas arrived at their accustomed destinations from one to four hours late. The trouble was not all attributable directly to the bomb referred to. Upon reaching Birmingham, travelers found that mid-morning trams and buses could not even begin successfully to cope with the situation. Hence, a vast majority of those who could not reach their places of employment by walking had simply to wait either until some motorist gave them a lift or until a seat or standing room became available on a public vehicle operating upon lull schedule.

To the man in the street, why it should take so long for more serious damage to be remedied passes all comprehension.

About two weeks ago a large bomb exploded in the middle of a thoroughfare in a residential section of Birmingham.

This artery is used by all sorts of motor vehicles leaving the city center to points south. But it has been blocked ever since the bomb exploded in it. The passer-by frequently sees a few workmen warming their hands before a brazier close to the crater. Less frequently, he sees some of them doing this or that towards repairing the damage. In any event, puzzled drivers still do a comparatively long detour to get around the blocked passage and still wonder why a small body of idle soldiers is not put to work with picks and shovels and made quickly to remedy a situation which is occasioning much caustic criticism and the waste of much valuable time and precious petrol.

Added to the delay and confusion brought about by transport breakdowns and dislocations are delay and confusion brought about by breakdowns and dislocations in the field of communications.

For some weeks it has been next to impossible for any ordinary day telephone call to be put through from Birmingham to London as the lines have been reserved for what is termed "priorities". Just what constitutes a priority few private persons seem to know. Business people, or at least some of them, are able finally to get through, provided they can convince telephone supervisors that delay will hold up work of national importance. But even in such cases, a wait of from one to three hours is common.

Yesterday, a private subscriber at Birmingham learned that he could dial TEL (telegrams) and let the system function for as many as three hours without obtaining a reply from the message taking section.

A little better success attends dialing TOL (tolls) during both business and the early evening hours, but calls even in the TOL category are often either abandoned or put through only after an exasperatingly long wait.

Local calls on the dial system during the day may or may not go through, depending upon a variety of circumstances. In the first place, some letter exchanges, VIC (Victoria), for example, are and have been operating defectively for several days. In the second place, the busy tone is much more frequently encountered than is usual for the simple reason that so many people fruitlessly have their receivers off apparatuses trying to get through to some other subscriber. In the third place, the dial system breaks down or does not function well when an abnormally large number of subscribers is simultaneously endeavoring to use the service. It is now no uncommon thing for Birmingham housewives to spend large parts of their time uselessly trying to call shops or friends.

The combined effect of transport and communications breakdowns and dislocations is felt at all hours and in all walks of life. Every day thousands upon thousands of hold-ups in productive processes and operations are caused by people not arriving on time or not being able quickly

to get in touch with somebody. Business engagements, when those concerned must travel, seldom work out as planned and when they are kept at all, somebody usually arrives very late.

So far, there is nothing permanent about any of the tie-ups in the transport and communications fields. A telephone cable severed today may be joined tomorrow. A fleet of buses destroyed this week is replaced in some way or other the next. But if this part of England continues to be bombed as it has been during the last few weeks, it is certainly a question whether repairmen will be able to keep apace with their work and the fear is that replacements of destroyed or damaged equipment will steadily become more difficult and may even develop into a problem which can only be met by importation. Already electrical equipment is hard to get hold of, owing to damage and dislocations in the producing trades. It is understood that requests for new telephones to fill needs created by bombings are simply filed for reference in the comparatively distant future. It is also understood that if buses continue to be destroyed at the current rate, it will not be very long before it will become impossible for municipalities satisfactorily to cope with the problem of getting workpeople to and from even urban plants engaged in tasks of the utmost national importance.

The general public is inclined to make light of inconveniences which attend and persist for some days after heavy raids. The hundreds of persons who daily stand for long periods at rural and urban bus stops are, on the whole, good natured and patient. But as admirable as is their disposition to accept their situation with humor or resignation, their employers are becoming alarmed at the reductive effect which successive but temporary transport failures has on the productive capacity of the plants for whose output they are responsible.

For some years before the outbreak of war, it was nip and tuck between the supply of and the demand for transport and communications facilities in the Birmingham area of England. No sooner was a new road built or a new cable laid than that road and that cable became overtaxed with traffic. The daily movement of some two millions of workpeople in a relatively minute and densely populated area offered problems the solution of which required the utmost ingenuity. The most had to be made of each road, of each line, and roads and lines came to constitute a veritable maze. Schedules for transport services were kept almost to the second. Each traveler caught something in the way of a vehicle at precise times each day and only by the maintenance of the services at the perfection level were they made to suffice.

Immediately the war started, there was a vast movement into the Birmingham area of workers seeking employment in its thousands of separate plants which at once assumed responsibilities in connection with the production of goods

to equip the fighting forces. The transport and communications systems were rapidly expanded but not quickly enough to meet the demands as they grew. In any event, however, output at the plants referred to became from the outset of the war onwards more and more dependent upon the maintenance and growth of these systems. As long as there was no bombing, the expansion of transport and communications facilities served to meet requirements in a fairly satisfactory manner, but as soon as bombing commenced, it became apparent that they were, in the very nature of things, particularly vulnerable.

Already a tendency in the direction of locating replacement plant outside the Birmingham area has been noted. But it is recognized that general and early decentralization of the area's tremendously important war industries is entirely out of the question. Accordingly, it would seem to be certain that if the Germans continue regularly and indiscriminately to bomb the area, they will succeed in preventing its output from rising above the low level to which it has already been reduced by bombing. On the other hand, however, the centralization of the industries referred to will constitute an enormous advantage if the Germans should for any reason stop bombing the area.

In conclusion, just a few words about the recuperative powers of the area's transport and communications services.

There are already distinct signs that these powers will begin rapidly to wane if the necessity for exercising them as they have been exercised during the last few weeks persists for an extended period. Shortages of materials and equipment are even now holding up repair and replacements. There are just so many men available for cable and road construction work and their number is extremely difficult to augment. That a week of bombing followed by a week of freedom therefrom will offer no problem is merely an idle boast, for it has been demonstrated by experience that what is undone by bombing in the transport and communications fields in a week takes much longer than that to repair.

Very truly yours,

JAMES R. WILKINSON
American Consul

Enclosure No. 4 to despatch No. 6458 dated 20 DEC 1940
from the Embassy at London, England.

AMERICAN CONSULATE
Southampton, England.
December 5, 1940.

~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~

The American Consul General,
London.

Sir:

Damage to Fawley Refinery of the
Agwi Petroleum Company.

Yesterday I proceeded to Fawley, which is some ten miles from Southampton by road, to see what damage if any had been done to the refinery there of the Agwi Petroleum Company (subsidiary of the Standard Oil Company) in the two week-end attacks on Southampton of Nov. 23/24 and Nov. 30/Dec. 1.

I found that attacks were made on both weekends. On November 23 starting at about 7.04 p.m. the refinery was attacked by oil bombs. The stores building was set on fire and three of the H.E.'s did damage to the various lines. The first bomb broke the main steam line, 15" and 12" water lines, electric cables and some telephone lines and put out all the lights. The second damaged the ethyl and chemical lines and other lines were fractured by the fourth bomb. The damage was not very extensive and repairs were being made.

On the night of November 30, a large number of H.E.'s were dropped in the refinery grounds but fortunately most of them just missed tanks and lines. One fuel tank containing approximately 8,000 tons of fuel oil was completely destroyed by a direct hit from an H.E. bomb, but luckily no fire started and most of the contents were held by the earthen fire walls and will be recovered. One of the asphalt filling sheds was hit and suffered damage to the building and pipe work. The railway siding was also slightly damaged by an A.A. shell.

Another raid followed on the night of Dec. 1 but without damage. There were no casualties at the refinery.

Very truly yours,

G. K. DONALD
Consul General

Enclosure No. 3 to despatch No. 6458 of 20 DEC. 1940
from the Embassy at London, England.

AMERICAN CONSULATE
Southampton, England.
December 6, 1940.

~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~

The American Consul General,
London.

Sir:

Damage to Southampton Docks from
bombings of Nov.30/Dec.1, 1940.

I have just returned from a tour of both the old and new docks where I found the following damage.

Every shed but one on the new docks received direct hits but the damage done was comparatively slight in most instances. These sheds are fireproof; otherwise they would have been burned out completely. It looked to me as if all the sheds could still be used. The quay walls received very little damage. As to the flour mill on the new docks - which I am told is the largest in England - the main building containing all the offices was entirely destroyed, but the mill itself apparently escaped serious damage, although the conveyer system for feeding wheat from the vessels to the mill was partially demolished.

The large King George V graving dock got a direct hit, but only superficial damage was done which should be easily repairable. Cadbury's warehouse received a direct hit and was seriously damaged. Other buildings were, of course, damaged, and, as previously reported, General Motors assembly plant was completely gutted.

The old docks are another story. Here there were numerous old sheds made entirely of wood and very inflamable, and the damage was very serious. It looked to me as if at least 50 per cent of the sheds were either completely demolished or so badly damaged as to be unuseable. The sheds around the Empress Dock were entirely destroyed. The big plant of Harland and Wolff on the docks was not as badly damaged as I previously reported, in fact, most of it seems intact. It seems useless to attempt enumerating each particular part of the docks that was damaged. The quay walls on the whole escaped damage. The sheds around the Ocean Dock are of more recent construction and are fairly useable.

Very truly yours,

C. K. DONALD
American Consul General

Enclosure No. 4 to despatch No. 6488 of 20 DEC. 1940
from the Embassy at London, England.

AMERICAN CONSULATE
Liverpool, England.
December 9, 1940.

~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~

Walter H. McKinney, Esquire,
American Consul,
American Consulate General,
London, W. 1.

Sir:

The report of the Regional Commissioner received by telephone on December 7 shows that during the week ending that day there was little enemy aircraft activity over this area and no serious damage was done. On December 1-2 eleven small fires were caused at St. Helens, slightly damaging the glass works, but they were quickly extinguished. On December 2-3 three persons had to be evacuated at Nantwich, Cheshire, because of an unexploded bomb.

Otherwise the Regional Commissioner referred to supplementary reports of casualties and damage caused in the big raid of November 28-29. The latest figures for Tarvin, Cheshire, show that 22 persons were killed, 21 seriously injured, and 20 slightly injured, 17 of the fatal casualties being at the Barrowmore Hall Tuberculosis Hospital. In Liverpool, the latest figures are, 264 dead, 62 seriously injured, and 253 slightly injured. The gas works at Wavertree and the railroad track at Garston were damaged, and the Garston Docks were closed until December 3 because of unexploded land mines. Many of the land mines dropped in Liverpool were rendered ineffective. It may be said, however, from personal observation, that much destruction has been wrought in the residential districts of Liverpool: in one of the best residential areas a square block of houses has been demolished and all the houses within a radius of five hundred yards were rendered useless, and at Childwall, another better-class area, over one hundredand thirty houses were rendered uninhabitable.

Very truly yours,

PHILIP HOLLAND
American Consul General

Enclosure No. 5 to despatch No. 6458 of 20 DEC. 1940
from the Embassy at London, England.

AMERICAN CONSULATE
Southampton, England.
December 13, 1940.

~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~

The American Consul General,
London.

Sir:

Air Raid Report. Weeks ending December 1
and December 8, 1940.

The nights on which heavy bombings were made on Southampton have been reported in special reports and it seems useless to review them. Considerable progress has been made in cleaning up the streets of Southampton and light and water and even gas have been restored to a large number of districts. The consulate has still not been able to secure any statistics of casualties believed to be reliable. The figures given out by the municipality were 370 casualties of which 116 were fatal. This appears to be entirely too small considering the large number of houses completely destroyed.

Telephone service has not yet been restored. The consulate itself is without a telephone or electricity although it now has heat and water.

As previously reported the entire retail shopping district is wiped out, but some of the shops are attempting to open in a small way in other sections of the town. How they will get stocks for their new premises I do not know. People have been allowed to purchase rationed goods in any shop that is still open, not being restricted to those at which they are registered. There is still considerable confusion about the new ration books since the Food Office was destroyed and all the new books were burnt. The applications for new books which, as you know, were made on the backs of the current ration books, were also burnt, so that people have been instructed to send in the fronts,

I have been informed by the manager of the British American Tobacco Company that his company lost 6½ million pounds of tobacco in the destruction of warehouses M and N in the old docks during the blitz of November 30/December 1.

Very truly yours,

G. K. DONALD
Consul General

Enclosure No. 6 to despatch No. 6458 of 20 DEC 1940
from the Embassy at London, England.

MEMORANDUM

Vice Consul Ramsey called from Sheffield at 3:30 p.m. today to say that Sheffield had had its first major air raid of the war between 7 o'clock last night and 4 o'clock this morning. Fortunately no members of the Consular staff were injured, and the only harm to the consular premises - now about to be vacated - consisted of a few broken windows.

The planes came over in waves, concentrating on the business and residential districts, gutting by fire two of the largest department stores - Cockaynes and Walshes, and injuring nearly all buildings on the Moor, the principal business street. A good deal of damage was also done in prominent residential streets, for instance, Fulwood Road, Westbourn Road and in the Crossbooll region, St. Mark's Church was burnt out.

He thinks that there must have been a considerable number of civilian casualties, although he has no information on the subject, or upon the amount of damage done to the industrial part of Sheffield.

Mr. Ramsey intends to proceed with the packing and shipping of furniture.

Walton C. Ferris
American Consul.

London,

December 13, 1940.

Enclosure No. 7 to despatch No. 6458 of 20 DEC 1940
from the Embassy at London, England.

MEMORANDUM QUOTING A PERSONAL MESSAGE RECEIVED BY CONSUL WALTON C. FERRIS FROM AN INTIMATE FRIEND IN SHEFFIELD, THE WIFE OF THE HEAD OF A LARGE METAL WORKS, SHOWING THE EFFECTS OF TWO AIR RAIDS ON SHEFFIELD ON DECEMBER 13 and DECEMBER 16, 1940.

December 16:

We are still here, but most of Sheffield is not. We waited a long time for our Blitz but we have certainly had it with a vengeance. From 7 p.m. until 4:30 a.m. on Thursday night without a break, and again for 3½ hours last night. The center of Sheffield was demolished on Thursday. Cole's (1) and Fargate (2) are still there, but the most part is one large rubbish heap. High Street (3) has completely gone, Walsh's (4) and Cockayne's (4) are both demolished, also Fitzalan Square (5). Nearly two square miles in the center has gone. The Vicker Arches (6) have had a direct hit. Our house is all right, but Norman's works (7) have bombs on two sides of them and were badly damaged, and last night four time bombs landed all around them so we are not feeling too happy. They concentrated on the East End (8) last night and Attercliffe (9) has been wrecked and several of the big works. Sheffield is in a state of chaos. It is supposed to be worse than Coventry and Birmingham put together. The casualties have been very bad and there are thousands of homeless and no arrangements for housing them. It is an appalling mess. St. Mark's Church (10) has only the spire left and Newbold Lane, Clarkehouse Road and Westbourne Road (10) had land mines, and so you can imagine what they are like. Mother Maitland (11) is all right but had large bombs all around her. Fred Neill's works (12) have more than half gone. The brutes have not missed any part of Sheffield. I am

working

working all the daylight hours trying to do what I can to help, but it is a hopeless task, the sights I have seen have made me feel literally ill.

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(1) Large Department Store in center of Sheffield opposite Sheffield Cathedral - subsidiary of Selfridge's, London.

(2) Short principal fashionable shopping street running between Town Hall and Cathedral.

(3) Central shopping street intersecting Fargate at right angles, running from FitzAlan Square past the Cathedral and American Consulate (which other information shows was not wrecked) and about a mile west to residential section.

(4) Large Department Stores at East End of High Street.

(5) Principal open square of Sheffield at east extremity of High Street.

(6) Main line railroad bridge, East End steel works region.

(7) J.A. Chapman and Company, Ltd., a subsidiary of Stanley Rule and Company, New Britain, Connecticut.

(8) The East End of Sheffield includes one of the most highly industrial regions in England with United Steel Company, Ltd., Hadfield's Ltd., English Steel Company, Ltd. and several other of the largest steel works in England, besides workers residential districts.

(9) Workers residential district in East End.

(10) St. Mark's Church is a land mark in the older fashionable residential section on the western hillside of Sheffield, the streets mentioned being prominent streets intersecting each other in this region.

(11) Mrs. Maitland lives in another middle-class residential section about 3 miles south of the St. Mark's Church region.

(12) James Neill and Company, probably the most modern tool works in Sheffield, manufacturers of "Eclipse" machinist's tools and "Eclipse" safety razors and blades.

file personal

LB 4-40

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 20th, 1940

My dear Mr. President,

I write to offer to you and to Mrs. Roosevelt my sincere and respectful gratitude for your participation in the funeral ceremony for Lord Lothian at Washington Cathedral on December 15th. I would also express to you and to Mrs. Roosevelt my very deep appreciation of the beautiful wreath of white chrysanthemums which you were so good as to send. I am of course informing Lord Lothian's sisters of the honour which you and Mrs. Roosevelt paid to their brother's memory.

Believe me,

My dear Mr. President,

With the highest respect

Yours very sincerely,

Harold Butler

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D.C.