

Jottings From Munro's Korean War Notebook

(Special to The Guardian by Ross Munro)

Scattered jottings from a Korean Notebook:

The hard-pressed Americans are not doing all the ground fighting in Korea. There are South Korean formations in the line, too, trying to hold the beachhead perimeter.

They have been the forgotten troops of the campaign in the newspapers because few correspondents have time to pay much attention to them, occupied as they are with the American battle story.

But the "ROK divisions" — standing for Republic of Korea — have been doing quite a big job. At first they had few weapons and could do nothing but retreat. But within the past few weeks the Americans have been pushing in arms to them and the ROK formations have been very active.

They have been holding the northern sector of the beachhead in their own, with comparatively little American help and despite heavy losses along the east coast, the ROK showing has been creditable.

Battalions of South Koreans also have been operating alongside American formations, covering their flanks as well as they can and working through the hills with the same guerrilla tactics which the North Koreans employed so well. At the first, the American GI's didn't think much of his South Korean soldier allies, but now that the ROK units have something to fight with and are doing well in the battle the U.S. troops take their cap off to them.

The war theatre was full of incongruous events and situations. For example, I went down to an American army warehouse on Tokyo Bay to try and get some kit for the front. At the wharf, plunk in front of the main supply warehouse, was a Russian gunboat. It had been moored there for a week. The Russian crew spoke to no one and never left the ship. There was nothing to prevent the gunboat coming into Tokyo Bay but it seemed a curious place to tie up.

Hidden away in the mountains of southern Korea, there is an airstrip where a new South Korean airforce is being formed and trained by American pilots.

These are the pilots of the "Flying Tiger" volunteer squadron who New Mustangs with great success in the first month of the war. Then the volunteer group was disbanded as the regular airforce took over and the squadron leader, Major Deane Hess of Marietta, Ohio, was given the job of creating the South Korean airforce. Dark, youthful, Major Hess has a vision of something much more important than this though. He is aiming at the ultimate formation of a United Nations Mustang group of two or three squadrons.

He talks of getting Australia, New Zealand, British, American and Canadian pilots working together and have his South Korean pilots in there too. Family life and aircraft go hand-in-glove at an American jet fighter base in southern Japan. One group of F-80's was stationed on this base as occupation force and the pilots' families lived on the airbase with them in tidy little villages.

When the war in Korea broke, the group went into the field and you have jetmen having breakfast with their wives and children, then slipping off across the Sea of Japan on a strike to return to base for a family lunch. Fortunately, casualties have not been high but it is a terrific strain on the families.

While the Communist propaganda machine is going full blast in

invaded areas of south Korea, the Americans have not until recently used psychological warfare in the conflict.

But not a few leaflets are being dropped by air to try to keep up morale in red-occupied areas. One of them was headed "To Our Fellow-countrymen in Communist-occupied areas of South Korea" and began "Dear Fellow-Countryman: due to the Communist ruthless aggression, a part of our beloved territory and some of our compatriots have been seized by the enemy. We cannot but be moved by profound sorrow."

The leaflet urged the South Koreans to "have a little more patience." "That you may be liberated by the U.N. forces and enjoy the day of freedom, be patient. It may be that on the eve of Communist defeat you will be subjected to great misery by the enemy. However, until we restore your freedom and until the ROK recovers its complete sovereignty, please stand firm. Especially, let the young people avoid being drafted by the enemy. In this way, let us defend our 4,000 year old history from Communist aggression."

There have been rumors from time to time that some Russians are serving with the North Koreans. I could find nothing to support this. But it is likely that back at HQ in North Korea or at Seoul, there are Russian officers helping a lot in the direction of operations. The mass infantry attack technique that the Reds have been using is Russian.

FOOTNOTE:—Returning to Ottawa, I hear regular army officers, agitated at the fact comparatively small numbers of them are being called into the special force, refer to the men in the new brigade group as "The Chosen Few." Chosen is the other name for Korea.

U. N. Continues Korean Debate

(By The Associated Press) LAKE SUCCESS, N. Y., Aug. 24—Russia demanded that the United Nations end its "colossal international bluff" and order U. N. troops to leave Korea at once. The United States and Britain struck back with blistering attacks on the Soviet propaganda campaign.

Russia's Jakob A. Malik said continued intervention in Korea will only extend the conflict and the United States will have to bear the blame for "dire consequences." Warren R. Austin, chief U. S. delegate, called Malik's charges of U. S. aggression in Korea "a big lie" and "applesauce." He said some of Russia's statements appeared to be based on "philosophy worthy of some witch doctor."

Austin also brought before the Council for the first time a direct U. S. charge that Malik had made a false statement when he claimed Russia had supplied no military aid to the Communist North Koreans since 1948.

Referring to the discovery of a Russian-made shell in Korea dated 1950, Austin said: "This shell did not explode on the battlefield. It explodes in the Security Council. Of course, I recognize that this may be just another case of false Soviet labeling."

Malik earlier had implied to a reporter that U. N. forces may have faked the date on the shell. "It's easy to put a stamp on it."

Gov't Makes Plans For Operation M. P.

OTTAWA, Aug. 23 — (CP) — "Operation M.P." started last night as the Government prepared to fly Commons and Senate members to Ottawa for the emergency rail-strike session of Parliament that begins next week, possibly Monday.

With rail travel crippled, a Government official said commercial air lines, including Trans-Canada Air Lines and Canadian Pacific Air Lines, have been "drafted" into a plan to fly some 200 members of Parliament and senators to Ottawa within the next few days.

The plan, as prepared by Transport Minister Chevrier and Defence Minister Claxton, also includes the use of Transport Department and R. C. A. F. planes in the event that commercial aircraft prove insufficient to get members here.

The official said that members will be asked to get in touch with their nearest commercial transport agent and book passage for Ottawa. Priority ratings have been arranged so that all Commons members and senators, as well as other parliamentary officials will get first call on all available air-transport seats.

"Operation M. P." said the official, applies only to members east of Quebec City and west of Port Arthur, Ont. All other members are expected to make their way to Ottawa either by car, bus or other means.

Meanwhile, Ottawa hotel officials said that members are swamping at least one downtown hotel, the Lord Elgin, with reservations calls. The strikebound C. N. R. hotel, the Chateau Laurier, which usually accommodates a large segment of the M.P.'s and senators said it had no orders to accept reservations.

3,000 N. S. Coal Miners Idle

HALIFAX, Aug. 24 — (CP) — An estimated 3,000 coal miners—about one-quarter of Nova Scotia's pit force—were idle this week as a result of the railway strike. Another 400 were expected to be idle by tomorrow.

Miners in Springhill, Stellarton and Inverness could not work because of lack of rail cars to handle the loads from the pitshead. Westville miners were expected to be in the same position tomorrow.

But in the coal centres of Cape Breton, the majority of the Province's miners were still working. Water transportation made the difference.

Officials of Dominion Steel and Coal Corporation said, however, that if the strike is prolonged it will seriously affect the industry.

Harold Gordon, DoSCO's coal operations chief, said shipment of coal to Maritime points via rail and the Strait of Canso would be at a standstill during the strike.

Unions Issue Statement On Strike Situation

MONTREAL, Aug. 23 — (CP) — The country-wide tie-up of railway operations left no more excitement in union headquarters in Montreal than in the orderly withdrawal of non-operating personnel from offices, yards and shops.

When negotiations, carried out between the disputants by a Federal Government conciliator, broke down at 5:25 A. M. EDT today, leaders of each side went to bed.

Union strike directives and plans, arranged long in advance of the scheduled walkout, went into effect without any apparent hitch.

Union leaders slept a few hours and were up again later in the forenoon. Frank Hall, on behalf of himself and A. R. Mosler, heads of the negotiating committees of the unions, issued a verbal statement to newspaper men.

Mr. Hall's statement was made at a downtown hotel following a meeting of a sub-committee which is understood to have concerned itself with the over-all picture of the strike situation.

Mr. Hall's statement said there were indications yesterday that a settlement possibly might be reached but that the railway companies stiffened their resistance and were not ready to make concessions to meet those offered by the unions.

Except for an early-morning statement by the railways following the breakdown of negotiations, there was no further announcement during the day from them.

The companies' statement outlined an 11th-hour offer that had been made the unions. It included a proposal for the 40-hour week, instead of the present 48, to become effective Oct. 1, 1951.

The companies also offered a four-cent hourly wage increase effective this coming Sept. 1.

Mr. Hall told newspaper men that so far as known the strike was 100 per cent effective, was proceeding smoothly and had 100-per cent support. He added: "This strike against the railways hasn't stopped our fight against Communism."

Unauthorized Pickets "One of our committees at the Place Viger freight yards of the Canadian Pacific Railway called in the anti-subversive squad of the police who threw out a number of pickets who were there without authorization.

"Our men are not anxious to get engaged in brawls which would play into the hands of Communists who try to take advantage of the situation."

A full statement is being prepared for mailing to membership. It will be made public tomorrow. In the interim the verbal statement was issued.

"In order," said Mr. Hall, "that the work of the mediator, Dr. W. A. Mackintosh, for whom we have high regard, should not be abortive and in the interests of reaching a settlement and thus avoiding a strike, our committee did make material concessions, receding from what had been their position of

the five-day 40-hour week and proposed wage increases. "Notwithstanding this very considerable contribution on the part of this committee, no agreement was effected. Points of difference were:

"1. As to the amount of wage increases and the effective date thereof.

"2. Differences over the effective date of the five-day 40-hour week.

"3. Duration of the contracts to be settled following settlement.

"4. The railways wanted a so-called transitional period of nine months from the effective date of the five-day 40-hour week during which no punitive overtime would be paid up to 48 hours. That meant that although technically the five-day 40-hour week would be in effect, 48 hours could be worked without payment of overtime.

"5. We could not agree to exclude from any of the terms of settlement employees engaged in hotel services and water transport employees.

"These were the rocks on which we foundered. The railways insisted to the end that a number of counter-proposals which they had submitted should be discussed and negotiated and presumably become part of agreements.

"Some of these counter-proposals contemplated taking from employees conditions they have enjoyed for a great number of years.

"They wanted a three-year contract. That to us was unprecedented. Agreements with these organizations have always been for a year, subject to 30-days' notice.

"We view this desire for a three-year contract as an effort on the

Text Of Statement On Calling Parliament

OTTAWA, Aug. 24 — (CP) — Following the text of Prime Minister St. Laurent's statement Monday on the calling of Parliament to deal with the rail strike crisis:

The Government regrets that all efforts to settle, by collective bargaining, the labor dispute between the railways and the unions have failed and that a nation-wide

railways' part to prevent employees from getting a fair share of the prosperous conditions which face the industry in view of Canada's industrial activity and the international situation."

strike has started. The suspension of railway and telegraph services, particularly with the world situation we face, will quickly create a serious emergency and the Government will have to act to protect the vital interests of the whole national community.

Parliament which, in view of the international situation, was to meet at an early date now is being called to meet at once so that the representatives of all the people may act together in discharging their responsibilities to meet the situation.

Meanwhile, I would hope that, whatever disruption and loss the strike may cause, all of us will recognize that the railway employees concerned have not broken any law applicable to their case.

The record shows that our railway workers are and have always been responsible and public-spirited Canadians and whatever action the Government may have to take will be intended solely to protect

the vital interests of the whole Canadian people. As soon as the matter of practicable arrangements for the transportation of members has been attended to, the proclamation fixing the actual date for the meeting of Parliament will be published—probably later today or tomorrow.



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