

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

Trademark Registered U. S. Patent Office.
MORNING—EVENING—SUNDAY

Combining the Fort Worth Star, established Feb. 1, 1906, Fort Worth Telegram, purchased Jan. 1, 1909, the Fort Worth Record, purchased Nov. 1, 1925.

Amon G. Carter, President and Publisher

Entered as second class mail matter at the Postoffice at Fort Worth, Texas, Jan. 1, 1908, under Act of March 3, 1879.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS
Classified Advertising Department, 2-4131.
All Other Departments, 3-2301.

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One Week, Evening Only, No Sunday.....13c
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Single Copies, Evening, 3c; Morning, 5c; Sunday...10c

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Who Is For America?

COL. CHARLES A. LINDBERGH in his Chicago speech stepped out as spokesman for the American appeasement group which rallies, still somewhat furtively, under the cry that we should "play ball with Hitler." It ought to be apparent to patriotic Americans that this group is getting every day closer to identification with groups which in European countries under the Hitler threat first paralyzed preparedness and later hastened the conquest of their homeland.

This is not to say, of course, that all who object to this or that feature of the effort to place this Nation in a position to defend itself are in the same category with those citizens of European democracies who succeeded so well in undermining the military strength of their countries that Hitler's conquests were made easy. In the ranks of those who raise their voices against "entanglements," against getting into the war, against compulsory military service, against giving actual aid short of war to Britain, against this and against that, but always against something that has bearing on the question whether we shall exert our strength against the peril that confronts us just as surely as it does England—in the ranks of the anti-this and anti-that, there are Americans who are merely muddle-headed, merely contrary, or have not enough of the true red blood of Americanism to know that the question of what America shall do right now with respect to the danger which confronts us is far more vital than the matter of putting somebody out of office and somebody else in. Unfortunately for the high regard which Americans in the past have had for Colonel Lindbergh, he can not be defended on the ground that he does not know what he is doing—or, at least, on the ground that he has not had opportunity for knowing. He has had far more contact with international affairs than the average American. Perhaps he has had too much. For the good of America, and for the sake of our previous respect and admiration for his accomplishments, it might have been better had he chosen an earlier period to repatriate himself and make his speeches on the side of appeasement.

If Colonel Lindbergh's arguments can be rationalized at all, it must be assumed that he is convinced that England is going down before Hitler, and that we had better not do anything now to make the conqueror any more angry with us than he already is. What a sturdy patriotism that is!

It is all the less worthy because it involves the worse than naive presumption that with Hitler finally victorious in Europe and the British fleet out of his way, or maybe in his hands, there could be "co-operation" between Germany and the United States on any other basis than that of command at Berlin and slavish obedience at Washington. If Colonel Lindbergh does not know better than to believe that we can get along with Hitler without sacrificing everything that in the past we have held dear, he has not improved the opportunities of his residence in Europe. Co-operation with Hitler has always meant doing what Hitler wants done and never crossing him, by act or word.

Hitler will deal fairly with the United States only if this country is powerful enough in war to enforce respect.

Because this is the biggest and most vital fact that thrusts itself out of the world situation at present, the United States must make all possible speed toward that preparedness. And because of this vital fact, whoever stands in the way of that national unity which creates and permits speedy preparation should examine the effects of his position to make sure that he is not injuring his country's interests and the cause of human right.

And when we have finally aroused ourselves to the fact that we must quickly reach a state of hitherto unequaled mili-

tary preparedness if we would save our country, our way of living, and the cause of the rights of man everywhere, we ought to have "guts" enough to go down the line with it. It may be "realistic" to assume that the foulest aggression of history is going to be successful in bringing all Europe under its heel, and that, accordingly, we should endeavor to placate the beast and bargain with him for our lives. But that is the sort of "realism" that does not go with patriotism and confidence in our strength. It is defeatism of the sort that in the glorious past did not stand in the path of America's march. If Americans finally become awake, it is not to be believed that we will permit such defeatism to make a craven Nation of us in the future.

The true point of "realism" in the present debate has to do with the question how best to take care of ourselves, how best to secure that space of time which is necessary, even with the most intense efforts, for preparing our defense.

Since the signal for Hitler's aggression against us, if it comes, will come with the fall of England and the elimination or seizure of the British fleet, it is a first concern of ours to delay that possible moment as long as we can in any way that is within our power. Hitler can not bother us unless and until England is out of the way. Then, because we are not yet ready for him, we must do our best to make sure that England stands, or at least does not fall until we have finished arming.

The words of General Pershing, the recommendations of Secretary Knox and President Roosevelt, show us the way. We should send England the destroyers she needs to defend the channel against invasion. Whatever obstacles are in the way of that arrangement should be overcome. We can not buy defense so effective or so cheaply in any other fashion. The United States has 300 destroyers, many of them left over and decommissioned after the World War. Some of them are not modern fighting craft, but their guns will still speak and their armor shed enemy shells. For us, they are offensive units, since heavier ships would take the lead in operation against any attempt at naval invasion of this continent. For Britain, they would be defensive weapons, taking the place of the destroyers which the British navy has lost in the present war, serving until the British shipyards, now working under pressure, can begin turning out replacements.

It would be a "gamble" in which we had everything to gain and nothing to lose. If our destroyers enabled Britain to fight off invasion, our preparation would have to be less extensive and less costly. If they merely delayed Britain's fall, the time gained might mean the difference between victory and defeat in the final battle for the life and integrity of civilization which, if Britain goes down, certainly will be fought on our continent.

Whatever is needed to permit the transfer of 50 destroyers to Britain, as General Pershing suggested, ought to be done, and done right now. Refusal to help the side that is already fighting the battle we must eventually take up if that side loses would be monstrous. Indecision and delay in sending that help would be almost as bad.

New Democratic Chairman.

EDWARD F. FLYNN, the new national Democratic chairman, is a product of the same political school of experience which gave the party his able predecessor, James A. Farley. Mr. Flynn has worked with Mr. Farley as a lieutenant, and no doubt was the choice recommended by the retiring chairman.

In the approaching campaign, Mr. Flynn doubtless will enjoy the advice and counsel of Mr. Farley. Thus, there is every reason to anticipate that the Democratic party will have the same competent leadership as in the past. Discipline, cool-headedness, loyalty, organizing ability, an infinite capacity for painstaking work, and a friendly personality are attributes common both to Mr. Farley and Mr. Flynn.

The Republicans should not underestimate their opposition under its direction by a chairman of Mr. Flynn's type. He and Mr. Farley are exponents of the theory that practical politics wins elections. The less experienced leadership of the Republican party has a big job laid out for it.

Just Folks —Edgar A. Guest

PLAYTIME.

Well, these are troublous days I must admit,
But war is nothing to that little chap
Who wants to ride a-straddle of my lap,
And politics fret not his soul a bit.

I think he wonders sometimes why I sigh
And have a look that lies so far away.
I know he thinks this world was made for play
And doesn't dream how much has gone awry.

Oh, it is wrong with him to romp about
And take this twenty minutes worry free,
Pretending all is well on land and sea
And hearts are not deep laid with grief and doubt?

Yes, little fellow, come along and play!
A little while the world we'll both forget.
Men shall not steal life's gladness from you yet.
We'll romp once more tomorrow come what may!