

protest is prompt and overwhelming, as we trust it will be. Fortunately, in the phrase of Speaker Longworth, "there are more taxpayers than soldiers." That

is a sobering reflection to Congressmen. That, and only that, may yet prevent the veterans from completing the most grandiose grab they have ever thought of.

Backstage in Washington

WASHINGTON, D. C.

WE FIND almost every naval, marine and army officer except the bureaucratic bell boys to be indignant at the excessively harsh treatment, as they view it, which President Hoover, Secretary Adams and Secretary Stimson are meting out to Major General Smedley Butler for his alleged slur against Benito Mussolini. Few of them have any personal sympathy for the famous "devil dog," since most of them look upon him as a bit of a braggart and a limelight lover. Few of them, being pretty human fellows and jolly good convivialists, approved his prohibition police work at Philadelphia, and still fewer indorsed his turning in of the officer who served him cocktails at a private party.

General Butler, in short, is none too popular with fellow-officers or with the rank and file. Nor is this feeling due entirely to the Quakerite's habit of stealing the limelight every so often; some of it is traceable to soreness at his conceded ability and advancement.

This personal prejudice against the man, however, gives added significance to the almost unanimous resentment felt toward the punishment which the Administration is preparing for him. Incidentally, nobody here labors under any doubt as to the outcome of the trial—any more than they did when "Billy" Mitchell was hauled before his peers for exposing the delinquencies of our aerial defenses. In the opinion of official and unofficial Washington, the doughty marine is as good as convicted, and the only doubt centers about the stiffness of the sentence to be passed on him.

We note that the White House, as is its wont, denies it has taken a hand in the affair. That, however, is one of those official denials which is the prerogative of a President, for it is inconceivable that the Chief Executive would permit a couple of underlings to initiate and execute such major moves as an apology to a foreign government and the court-

martialling of so brilliant and be-ribboned a hero as Smedley Butler. It just isn't done, especially by such a yes-sir yeomanry as that with which Mr. Hoover has surrounded himself.

What the admiralty sees in the determination to make an example of General Butler is a belated but bitter effort to cow those among them who dared to tell the truth about the London peace pact before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Half a dozen admirals, as we recall, bluntly declared that the pact was discriminatory against the United States in that it required us to build

dogs by any means possible. But such a step was obviously out of the question in view of the fact that the officers had been summoned to give testimony by a Senate body. It would have been too much of a giveaway to single out for punishment those gold-braiders who told what they conceived to be the truth. But at conferences with the press Mr. Stimson expressed himself quite forcibly anent the admirals' conduct, and in one instance he virtually accused them of disloyalty. Mr. Adams, though cool to the pact himself, regarded his subordinates' frankness as a reflection upon himself and his disciplinary system. All three—Messrs. Hoover, Stimson and Adams—are the sort of men to resent little things like this, and, so the Navy now thinks, they have been waiting for a chance to retaliate.

In General Butler's admittedly indiscreet comment they got it, and they are making the most of it. Through him the Administration means to impress upon our admirals and generals that, after all, they must take orders and not give them, speak only when spoken to, and keep the peace when breaking it will prove prejudicial to affairs of state and politics.

Nevertheless, we find general agreement that the apology should have been made, even though previous Administrations have been content to overlook numerous slurs and slights against the United States perpetrated by Il Duce and his hot-headed diplomats in this country. There are, we understand, practical reasons for keeping on good terms with Mister Mussolini, as Mr. Stimson, our democratic keeper of the nation's honor, referred to him. Unless the Italian dictator gets together with France for a settlement of their naval stalemate, the London pact may become a more disillusioning document than the admirals said it was.

Capitol Hill Machiavellians, we are told, have an explanation for the Administration's attitude toward General Butler. Recalling reports that the General may oppose "Kingfish" James J. Davis for the Republican senatorial nomination next year, the latter's colleagues wonder whether Mr. Hoover, by making a martyr of the soldier, does not seek to strengthen him for this contest. To our mind, however, this is an instance in which the thought is father to the wish.

A. F. C.



Enright in New York Evening World
To the woodshed!

ships totally unsuited to our naval needs. As if that were not sufficient heresy, they also advertised that the agreement, though hailed by Mr. Hoover and Mr. Stimson as a great disarmament advance, would result in larger armadas than sailed the seas before the signatory nations assembled at St. James Palace.

Both the President and the Secretary of State, we happen to know, were barely able to restrain themselves at this puncturing of their fine pact and preliminary promises. They would have, if they dared, muzzled the talkative sea

Oil Hells in Oklahoma

By EARL SPARLING

OIL made Oklahoma. In that land of blackjacks and gyp hills it created spontaneously a wealth which in older commonwealths had been achieved only by two centuries of slow increment. In several short decades oil turned an arid, hardbitten region, fit once only to be given to Indians, into a new Utopian outpost of the South, a fabulously rich frontier. It built schools and supported them, swelled the state treasury, produced so many men of wealth they had to be counted to the acre. It changed tent towns overnight into paved cities and embellished foothill and prairie with manor houses and princely estates.

But there was paradox in all of this. Oil was not an industry. It was a gamble. Though it built cities, erected refineries and created capitalists, it kept America's last frontier alive by necessity. Its heroes were not men in silk hats and tailored clothes, but men in khaki and boots. Come boisterously to a region of unfenced cattlemen, the last of their kind, to a region that held a third of all the Indians left in America, to a land where bandits could attain more renown than bankers, these industrialists in boots defied the mansions and the steel towers of trade arising around them. They promised of necessity to save that frontier gusto which is the inner spirit of America.

Today the paradox is painfully plain. One of the greatest oil fields in history is threatening to engulf a large part of Oklahoma City, the capital and metropolis of the state.

Oil was discovered unexpectedly five miles south of Oklahoma City some two years ago. Today that field has marched up to the sidewalks of the city and no one knows where it will stop.

There are already more than seventy wells drilling inside the city limits and half a dozen dangerous gushers have blown in virtually in the shadow of the capital's skyscrapers. In August, 1930, a wild gusher, blowing fifty million cubic feet of inflammable natural gas a day, got out of control a mile and a half from the heart of the city, and housewives

nearby had to leave Sunday dinners on their stoves and flee through streets of oil. A month later a 65,000 barrel oil gusher blew in one morning in a school yard on the southeastern edge of town, the greatest high gravity sweet oil producer the world had known.

And this was only a faint warning of what was to come. In the middle of the night, October 30, 1930, there was a roar just a mile from the principal business corner of the city, and panic took the people. Through darkened streets at three in the morning raced city firemen to warn all the residents within a six-square-mile area that one spark of fire might mean their lives.

Dawn came strangely in Oklahoma City that day. A white pall of oil-soaked gas floated over the southern part of the capital. Inflammable gas blew in a sickening wind toward the proud prairie skyscrapers, and oil ran in rivers down streets on the edge of town and oil

rained heavily and blackly from the sky.

One-eighth of the city went under martial law. All firemen were summoned to sleepless duty and 200 state militia men were thrown around the danger zone. Six schools in the southern part of the city were closed. Trains entering from the south were stopped out in the farm lands. The danger zone reached seven blocks north of Main Street toward the proudest part of the metropolis.

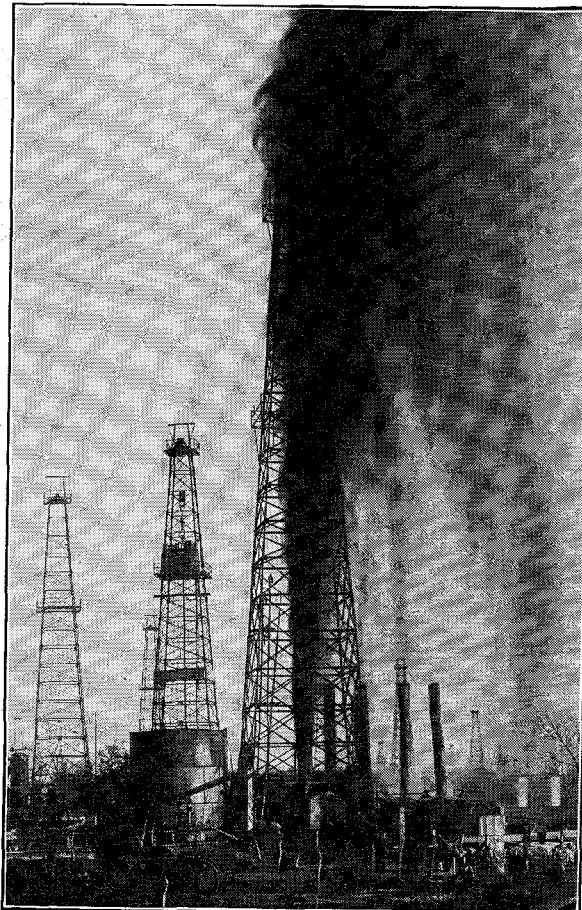
For sixty-six hours Oklahoma City fought that well. It was the wildest oil well veteran field men had ever seen. It threw from 60,000 to 100,000 barrels of crude oil over the city every twenty-four hours and some 100,000,000 cubic feet of natural gas. A thousand men fought it day and night, wearing rubber coats and using copper headed hammers, for steel against steel might cause the fatal spark. For sixty-six hours, in chilly autumn weather, thousands of Oklahoma City people could neither cook in their homes, nor light fires for warmth, nor strike a match for a cigarette.

Automobiles parked on Main Street were sprayed with oil, and business men who ventured into the wholesale district went there in raincoats. Windows in the skyscrapers had to be closed that stenographers might hear the dictation, and nearer the upheaval business men had to talk in a shout.

Before that well was tamed 168 acres of land—fortunately vacant—blazed toward the sky, and the North Canadian, meandering through the southern part of town, had become a burning river. How the fire started no one knew. It reached to within a few yards of that shrieking well before the army of fighters managed to beat it back.

The fire rolled on down the river to burn bridges and threaten other towns. But Oklahoma City, in a typically southwestern way, nicknamed the well Stout Fella—because it had been drilled by C. E. Stout—and started calculating the damage.

The sixty-six hours that Stout No. 1 blew wild had been the most critical in the city's entire forty-one years. The reminder stretched



Ewing Galloway

A BAD NEIGHBOR

A gushing oil well near Oklahoma City