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CARLSBAD CURRENT-ARGUS

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TUCUMCARI WATER TANK TOPPLES

Truman Will 'Clean House'

4 Die, 3 Injured As City Wrecked By Catastrophe

TUCUMCARI, N. M., Dec. 13 (AP)—Collapse of a 3,000,000-gallon water tank killed four persons and caused millions in damage early today.

Several hours later a witness told of seeing a "fireball," or apparent meteor, hit the tank in pre-dawn darkness. He said it toppled moments afterward.

A meteor expert said, however, that such a phenomenon would have left a huge crater rather than merely smashing the tank.

Giving way with a deep rumble, the tank loosed a flood through the business district about 4:10 a. m. (MST).

Saw Fireball

Water up to waist deep spread devastation over an area three blocks wide and, in lessening degree as the distance grew, a quarter mile long. The scene was likened to one hit by a bomb.

Lorenzo Gutierrez, about 60, whose home is across the street from where the water tower stood, said he saw the fireball.

"I saw the light streak across the sky and land close to the tank," he related. "It hit with a roar, and then there was the sound of the tank breaking open."

Gutierrez said he was awake at that hour because his customarily is an early riser. Now retired, he is the father of a typesetter for the Tucumcari Daily News.

Official investigators are checking the fireball report and also the possibility of sabotage. City Manger A. J. Fleming said. He reported the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the State Fire Marshal have been asked to help.

The break in the water tank's three-eighths inch thick steel was a jagged tear apparently a knife had been run down the sides, Fleming said.

No True Meteor

"Although I am not an expert in this type of investigation, I believe an explosion occurred inside," Fleming told a reporter. "It undoubtedly was sabotage, as there was no indication of an explosion in the tank itself.

In Albuquerque, Dr. Lincoln La Paz, head of the Institute of Meteoritics, said he had a hunch it would have been left by a true meteor.

"Meteorites do not carry flame right down to the ground," said La Paz, a member of the University of New Mexico faculty.

He noted, however, that there are almost nightly reports of still unexplained fireballs. La Paz said one of them recently descended near San Jose, Calif., another burning a trail across a field, near Uniontown, Pa. These cases are still being investigated, he said.

Pressure, quickly mobilized, has recovered four bodies shortly after 7:30 a. m. They were believed to be all the dead. The last to be found, a child 3 or 4 years old, was under a 350-foot section of the tank.

The Dead

The dead, after a recheck, were identified as:

T. T. Elliott, 44.

Mrs. Elliott, his wife, 43.

Tony Elliott, one of couple's 18-month-old twin sons.

Steve Gallegos, 12.

Three others were hospitalized

(Continued on Page 14)

New Mexico In Action To Aid Tucumcari

SANTA FE, Dec. 13 (AP)—National Guardsmen today were ordered into Tucumcari, hit by a disaster in the collapse of a huge water tank.

Gov. Mechem said Col. Jack McFarland, acting adjutant general, notified him that guardsmen were ordered to service at Tucumcari to help clean up the debris, maintain order and help wherever they can. He did not state the number of men or specify what detachments were sent.

Mechem said he stood ready to help in any way he can. He has had no specific request for help, however, and is awaiting more information, he said.

State Public Health Director J. R. Scott said that two members of the Health Department's engineering staff left this morning with two emergency chlorinators, a supply of chlorine and emergency water-testing equipment. They were due in Tucumcari early this afternoon.

For job of the two engineers, R. C. Steele and Robert Lowe, I will be to attempt to give Tucumcari a safe supply of water during the emergency. Scott said he understood there were a number of wells at Tucumcari from which emergency supplies could be drawn.

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The Little ARGUS

TODAY'S CHUCKLE

The sting of a bee is one 32nd of an inch long. The other six inches are imagination.

* * *

LICENSE TAGS

Mrs. Jerry Smith of 119 South Fifth Street suggests that the low license plate numbers throughout the state should be given to the persons who are the safest drivers in the state. "This idea is radical, I know," says Mrs. Smith; "but honestly, wouldn't it work? We've tried everything, why not this?"

It sounds like a good idea, but how can you determine the safest driver?

* * *

DUES CHECK-OFFS

Two Carlsbad potash workers walked into the front office of one of the potash companies the other day and asked if they had any legal way to stop their dues check-off payments to the Mine-Mill Union. They learned that when they signed the dues check-offs, the check-offs were irrevocable for one year. But the year now is up, and the check-off payments can be stopped by the members any time they want to. Both of the two potashers, incidentally, had their check-offs stopped.

* * *

POLITICAL NOTES

U. S. Rep. A. M. Fernandez is scheduled to arrive in Carlsbad tomorrow to visit his daughter, Mrs. Cecil Hancock, and family. Also visiting in Carlsbad is Mrs. Georgia Lusk, former representative from New Mexico and now a member of the U. S. War Claims Commission, who is visiting her son, Gene Lusk, and other relatives.

There has been some talk that Rep. Fernandez may not be a candidate for re-election next year, and it is noted that he recently built a nice new home in Santa Fe. There also has been talk that Mrs. Lusk might run for Congress next year, and there has been other speculation that she might run for the Senate against Dennis Chavez.

But she reportedly has taken the position that she will not run unless there is a vacancy. Mrs. Lusk recently returned from a trip around the world. She went to the Far East on business of the War Claim Commission, and she paid the cost herself for the rest of the trip around the globe.

* * *

POTASH NEWS

Old John L. Lewis' District 50, United Mine Workers Union, seems to have kicked the Mine-Mill Union out of the potash works at Trona, Calif., for sure. The American Potash and Chemical Corp. at Trona has signed a contract with District 50, giving the workers new economic benefits totaling 11 cents an hour. This includes 5 cents across the board, 3 cents for ironing out inequities between jobs, and about a cent an hour in increased differentials.

There are 1,160 employes in the bargaining unit, and more than 800 of these have become bona fide members of District 50, according to a check made by the Price Waterhouse Auditing Co. This total membership represents 300 more members than the highest number ever reached by Mine-Mill.

The new contract was negotiated for District 50 by the same negotiating committee that formerly represented Mine-Mill, and the same officers that were elected under Mine-Mill will serve as officers under the District 50 setup.

The Trona potashers reportedly kicked out Mine-Mill because their conformed the International Union more of a liability than a help, because of its ties with Communism. Many of the potash workers, were antagonistic toward Howard Goddard, who represented the International at Trona.

Under the new setup, the Trona workers have a modified union shop. New employes must become members of the union within 30 days after starting to work, and present members must maintain

(Continued on Page Two)

Special Agency Will Fight Corruption

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13 (AP) — President Truman today promised what he called continued drastic action to clean house in the government. He indicated he will set up a special agency to fight corruption, possibly tomorrow or Saturday.

Allowing himself to be quoted directly at one point on the scandals in the tax collecting and some other agencies, Mr. Truman told a news conference:

"Wrongdoers have no house (SIC) with me no matter who they are or how big they are."

In response to questions, the President said he has no plans to fire Attorney General J. Howard McGrath or Democratic National Chairman Frank McKinney.

McKinney Scored

Several Republican members of Congress have demanded the dis-

(Continued on Page Two)

3 From Carlsbad Hospitalized After Accident

Mr. and Mrs. Grigg Lazenby, 814 West Pierce, and Mr. and Mrs. George F. Pixler, 1103 North Canal, were injured when a car they were traveling in to El Paso this morning overturned on U. S. 62-180 near Pine Springs, Tex.

Brought back to Carlsbad in West and Riverside ambulances, three of the injured were hospitalized. They were Pixler, who suffered several broken ribs, Mrs. Lazenby, severe cuts and bruises, and Mrs. Pixler, hip injury and cuts and bruises. All three are at Memorial Hospital. Lazenby received emergency treatment there for cuts and bruises.

A wind pocket apparently was cause of the accident, along with misty weather, according to accounts related here. The car, driven by Lazenby, hit a gust of wind, started skidding on the slick highway and overturned 11 times.

Wind was blowing hard enough to make motor vehicles swerve on the stretch where the accident happened—a sharp curve just beyond the Texas Highway Department supply sheds and the ranger station, witnesses said.

2 Uranium Discoveries Announced In San Juans

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13 (AP)—The Interior Department has announced new uranium discoveries in the San Juan Mountains of Southwest Colorado.

The are in the Uncompahgre and Red Mountain mining districts of San Juan and Ouray Counties and are a little more than 100 miles southwest of similar deposits found recently near Leadville in central Colorado.

The geological survey made the finds in prospecting for the Atomic Energy Commission.

The department said yesterday the discoveries are not of immediate interest for commercial production, but they are "significant because they disclose a new area that is a potential source of radioactive material."

The finds were in black slate beds in Uncompahgre Canyon south of Ouray near Bear Creek Falls, in the mountains north of Ouray and in volcanic rock in the Red Mountain district.

The areas are famous for high grade silver ore found there between 1881 and 1896.

12 Red Planes In 16 Days Chalked By Major Davis

FIFTH AIR FORCE, Korea, Dec. 13 (AP)—Lieut. Col. Clarence Davis shot down in just 16 days—that's the astonishing record set today by America's hottest jet ace, Maj. George A. Davis, Jr., of Lubbock, Tex.

Davis bagged four Communist MIGs today in two slashing air battles over North Korea. That boosted his MIG kill to nine, three more than Maj. James A. Jabara shot down to set the previous record before he returned to the U. S. last spring. Davis also has bagged three Red TU-2 bombers, probably destroyed one MIG and damaged one TU-2 and one MIG.

State Auto Chief Says He'd Back Merit System

SANTA FE, Dec. 13 (AP)—Ed Brossell, State Motor Vehicle Commissioner, says he'd like to see department employes on a merit system.

He came to the support of a Little Hoover Commission recommendation yesterday, explaining such a move would permit departments to operate at top efficiency despite election turnovers.

"In most states," he said, the Motor Vehicle Commissioners goes with a change in administrations, but the personnel stays the same."

That way, he explained, only the new director must learn the job from scratch. The office staff continues operation as before with experienced personnel.

Since Republican Governor Mechem took over the first of the year, he boosted out, 60 of the 65 Democrats who have left the payroll in his department have almost wiped out the former staff.

Fresh replacements, he said, cut down efficiency.

'Subsidies' Not Intended For Farmer Benefit

LAS CRUCES, Dec. 13 (AP)—"So-called government subsidies to farmers have been based on the national need to guarantee food and fibers," E. O. Moore, Dexter, told extension workers at their annual conference at State College this morning.

"Conservation payments were not intended to benefit the farmer, but to benefit the soil—to preserve it for future generations. These payments were in the interest of national economy and were not intended as a gift to help farm operation," he declared.

Moore is president of the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts. He also outlined the work of the districts and described the work of the district supervisors.

Rain Forecast Here

Intermittent light rain showers were forecast today by the Civil Aeronautics Administration Airway Communications Station at Municipal Airport.

The tail-end of a cold front to the north and west of Carlsbad should bring cooler temperatures and precipitation to this area, the CAA said. Light rains were reported falling at Salt Flat this morning.

Low temperature recorded by the CAA this morning was 25. The low yesterday morning was 27.

Cottonwood Trees Budding In Carlsbad, Says Tree Man

Carlsbad cottonwood trees are budding.

December buds were noted today on cottonwoods next to the courthouse along Canyon, some along West Mermod, and up North Main.

Warm weather this winter has kept the sap up in cottonwoods and poplars, accountable for those buds, Kile York, tree surgeon, explained today. It will take a "real cold spell" to send the sap down to the roots, killing the buds, and Carlsbad hasn't had one of those spells yet this winter, York said.

He said about four days of a pretty good freeze would be fatal for the buds. That would be about a day longer than the recent cold "do-nothing" interval, and at a colder temperature, he figured.

Pruning an average of 150 trees a week in Carlsbad throughout the year, with his assistants, York observed that early trees come early in the 12 years he's been a tree surgeon here. In that period, the only other time budding was recalled today happened in 1946.

That was when it was warm enough so you could "go around in your shirt sleeves pretty nearly every day," he remembered.

York said buds first showed up this winter about two weeks ago. He said he first noticed them while he was pruning in about the 800 block, North Main.





McGRATH TESTIFIES — Attorney General J. Howard McGrath (far right, in front of microphones) testifies in Washington before the House Ways and Means subcommittee in its tax investigation. In the center on line of subcommittee members, is its chairman, Rep. Cecil King (D-Calif.) (light suit, hands folded.) Reporters and cameramen surround the witness table. McGrath told the probers he holds "no brief" for any "indiscretions" by T. Lamar Caudle. Others unidentified. (AP Wirephoto)

Evidence In Calf Shooting Holds Carlsbad Man For Trial

Cattle hair allegedly found in the trunk of Willis Luman's automobile was cited in testimony at a preliminary hearing yesterday afternoon on the case of Luman, charged with unlawfully shooting a Carlsbad rancher's Hereford calf.

Luman was bound to district court under $1,000 bond by J. L. Dow, justice of the peace, at the end of the hearing.

Later yesterday, the same calf-shooting charge was filed against George Stringfellow, who was arraigned some time today.

Found Dead

The calf belonged to J. S. Windham, rancher, nine miles southwest of Carlsbad, according to testimony at the hearing yesterday afternoon. Windham told the court he saw a 375-pound, white-faced Hereford, about five to six months old.

Luman and Baker had been hunting at the Windham ranch several days before the calf was found dead, a bullet between its eyes, about 32 miles away on the Hamilton place on the Queen road, the court was told.

Al Malone, state cattle inspector, and Sheriff's Chief Deputy Ed C. Price told yesterday afternoon of finding hair and bloodstains in the trunk of Luman's auto, when they went to his home at Thayer Apartments after discovery of the dead calf was reported to Price by Elmer Hamilton.

"There were cattle hair, in my opinion," Malone told the court.

Trunk Washed

Richard H. Robinson, assistant district attorney, drew further testimony from Price and Malone that the hair strands were red and white, stiff hairs, not soft and silky like rabbit hairs.

Luman explained to Price, the deputy testified, that the hair in the car trunk came from rabbits he had hauled, and the blood from turkeys he'd also hauled. The trunk of the car had been washed out, water still showing under the mat, Malone said.

Price, in response to Robinson's questioning told of a test made concerning the rifle which the deputy said Luman had admitted using the day he hunted. The bullet found in the calf's carcass was one which Malone fired from the rifle were sent to the Texas investigation laboratory at Austin, Price said.

Asked by Robinson if the report received later from the laboratory was that both bullets came from the same rifle, Price replied, "They said they did."

Different Stories

Testimony by Price recalled that Luman had denied shooting the calf or having anything to do with it.

On two occasions when Luman

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Transport Driver Charged In Crash

ALBUQUERQUE, Dec. 13 (AP)—The driver of a fuel oil transport involved in a truck collision at Belen Tuesday has been charged with driving on the wrong side of the road, Danny Stringfellow, officer in charge of the Belen State Police office, said today.

The driver, George McGever, 21, of El Paso, was released on $25 bond pending his appearance in the Belen Municipal Court.

Stringfellow said today that McGover admitted that he "dozed off" just before the accident and that his truck had crossed the center line.

The blade of a bulldozer carried on the back of a Springer Transfer Co. truck tore a gaping hole in the fuel transport tank. Some of the 600 gallons of the blazing fuel oil destroyed the fuel transport, a small church nearby and caused extensive damage to a five-room home. No one was injured.

The accident occurred on Highway 85 in the south edge of Belen.

Anaconda Copper To Sell Aluminum

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13 (AP)—Defense Production Administrator Manly Fleischmann today authorized the Anaconda Copper Mining Company to go into large-scale aluminum production.

The action was taken over opposition by the Justice and Interior Departments.

It clears the way for construction of a multi-million-dollar aluminum reduction plant at Kalispell, Mont., by Anaconda and the Harvey Machine Co. of California.

Damage Suit Against Carlsbad Man Dropped

ALBUQUERQUE, Dec. 13 (AP)—A $5,000 damage suit against Marion Alsugary of Carlsbad for alleged breaking a contract has been dismissed by U. S. Dist Judge Carl Hatch.

Roscoe Graham and Jack Hinds of San Angelo, Tex., contended Alsugary agreed orally to deliver 2,000 ewes, but 627 never arrived and many of those delivered were of inferior quality.

Las Vegas, Nev. Driver Dies In Crash

CLINES CORNERS, Dec. 13 (AP)—Franklin T. Stroud, Jr., 34, of Las Vegas, Nev., was killed last night when he ran hit a culvert west of here.

State Policeman Robert Bushagher estimated Stroud was traveling about 90 miles an hour.

The death was the 264th on New Mexico highways this year on the Associated Press list. Stroud was alone.

Carlsbad-Artesia Highway Deadlock May Be Broken

State and federal government officials will meet in Santa Fe next Tuesday to try to settle the problems which are holding up the $2 million-dollar, 10-mile paving project on the Carlsbad-Artesia highway, Ralph Jones of Albuquerque, chairman of the New Mexico Highway Commission, announced today.

The all-day meeting has been set for Tuesday, and officials will attend from the U. S. Bureau of Land Management, the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads, the U. S. Reclamation Service and the New Mexico Highway Department.

Jones said in a telephone conversation that he "hopes and expects" for favorable action, "so that we can go ahead on the Carlsbad-Artesia project."

The meeting in Santa Fe was arranged by Wesley Nelson of Washington, D. C., assistant commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation.

The million-dollar paving program between Carlsbad has been held up for three months by the Bureau of Land Management, which has refused to grant an easement for right-of-way through federal lands. The bureau has never made public the basis of its refusal.

A $300,000 contract for three and one half miles of paving has already been let, and the highway department is ready to call for bids on another project to cost about $700,000.

If agreement is worked out Tuesday, Jones said, the $700,000 project will be let to bids next month.

Police Leave Joker To His Wife

PITTSBURGH, Dec. 13 (AP)—Police preferred no charges against a practical joker last night—they turned him over to his wife for disciplinary action.

Six officers rushed into the home of A. R. Delmonico after they said he called police and said:

"I'm gonna shoot my wife."

The policemen said they found Delmonico calmly sitting at a kitchen table and that he grinned and said it took them "just eight minutes" to answer his call. Police said no charge was filed because Mrs. Delmonico said:

"I'll take care of him!"

Federal Mediators Moving Into Steel-CIO Controversy

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13 (AP)—The Federal Mediation Service today moved into the steel wage negotiations.

Mediation Chief Cyrus S. Ching announced that he has asked Clyde M. Mills, assistant director, and Walter A. Maggiolo, acting general counsel, to confer with representatives of the CIO Steel Workers and the steel industry.

Ching said the two would meet with the representatives today and tomorrow and report back to him on the status of negotiations.

The CIO Union and U. S. Steel Corp., bellwether of the industry, have been negotiating on a new contract for three weeks.

The union has said publicly that it wants a substantial wage increase over the hourly $1.95 pay that its million members now earn. It also is seeking a union shop, a guaranteed annual wage, and improved premium and incentive pay.

The same demands have been presented to most of the other steel producers, who usually wait for a U. S. Steel settlement to follow as a pattern.

The contract between U. S. Steel and the CIO is due to expire Dec. 31, leaving the workers free to strike.

Hurley Jumps Into Rio Grande Battle

SANTA FE, Dec. 13 (AP)—Republican Patrick J. Hurley sailed into New Mexico's two-party politics tonight with a volley reminiscent of election campaigns of '46 and '48.

The fiery ex-secretary of war declared the Republican 80th "do-nothing" interval, and at a colder Water plan, despite "all the noise now being made by the Democrats."

Hurley jumped into the latest press release battle between Senatory Dennis Chavez and Clinton Anderson by issuing a statement of his own. In it he said Republicans are responsible for nearly every constructive act in New Mexico pertaining to water.

"Some Democrats have attempted constructive acts in regard to New Mexico's water problems, and some minor projects may have been instituted by the Democrats," he admitted. "But with all their shouting and their complete control of the politics of the state, they have not yet made the beautiful city of Albuquerque safe from disastrous floods.

"If the Democrats will stand aside a moment, the Republicans will also take care of this problem for them."

The rackus started when Anderson wrote the Budget Bureau asking about accuracy of a published report that the bureau had approved $2,300,000 more for the Jemez Dam near Bernalillo and $1,034,000 for the Vermejo project near Raton.

He said President Truman told him Dec. 7 they had not been approved, and that a premature report back to him of senator last year "delayed, if it did not jeopardize" the Rio Grande channelization project.

Chavez replied he would be responsible for his own information and other members of Congress should attend to their own business.

"I am not interested at all in Anderson's calls or letters to or about the President, including the library at Independence," Chavez retorted.

Hurley said a comprehensive survey of the Rio Grande Valley was inaugurated while he was secretary of war.

"The controversy raging between the two distinguished senators from New Mexico in regards to which one of them is responsible for the Middle Rio Grande Water program will be misleading regardless of who wins the controversy," Hurley said.

"Neither of the senators who are quarreling nor the Democratic Party are responsible for the Middle Rio Grande improvement program. . . .

"The approval of the plan under which appropriations are now beginning to be made was adopted June 30, 1948, by a Republican Congress that is often referred to by the Democrats as a do-nothing Congress."

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'No Death March' Allies Demand

MUNSAN, Korea, Dec. 13 (AP)—The Allies today demanded the Reds guarantee there would be no "death march" of Allied prisoners in Korea.

"No progress of any sort" was reported by a truce committee on prisoners, but spokesmen for both sides indicated another subcommittee might soon break a 17-day deadlock on how to police an armistice. They didn't get anywhere today.

An official U. N. Command spokesman said the Reds may hold many prisoners in camps far to the east of Panmunjom, where the Communists want to trade prisoners.

Flying Rocks Injure 2 Men At Empire Mine

SILVER CITY, N. M. Dec. 13 (AP)—Flying rocks today injured two striking workers who crossed picket lines surrounding the Empire Zinc mine at nearby Hanover.

It was the second report of violence this week on the picket lines of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Unit. The strike has been in progress for 14 months.

Sheriff Supt. S. S. Huyett told this story:

Four carloads of non-strikers tried about 7 a. m. (MST) to get into the zinc works via a side road, which about 35 pickets, including a few women, were blocking.

The pickets let fly with the rocks, which crashed through car windows. Flying glass struck Theron McDaniel, one of the non-strikers near the eye.

Burris Fortenberry, another non-striker, received a gash on his head when a rock struck him.

All four cars made it inside the picket lines, however. McDaniel and Fortenberry were treated by a physician.

Huyett said that another car was stopped when it tried to enter the works on another road. He said Jesus Rodriguez telephoned into the plant that he and two companions were stopped by the strikers.

There was no immediate comment from union officials.

Prior to today's incident, local President Cipriano Montoya has said he knew nothing of any new violence except what he had read in newspaper accounts.

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