

SUMMARY OF THE MOUNT HORNBLLOWER HEARINGS

The Mount Hornblower hearings were very well attended considering the difficulty of reaching Danktown. The Volcano Service officials, who came by helicopter, were surprised at the turnout, particularly since the only public notices had been in the Congressional Record and the Danktown Weekly Gazette and Shopping News.

The hearings opened on a note of tragedy. A ~~raft~~ ^{surplus} life raft overturned while running the rapids of the Dank River, drowning an entire troop of Boy Scouts. Two ~~other~~ Behemoth helicopters collided ~~abruptly~~ and crashed in flames. Both pilots, three lawyers and four ~~men~~ ^{geologists} perished in the catastrophe, and a week's supply of vermouth and olives was lost. The Danktown Public School System, together with all teachers and pupils, also was wiped out.

The first witness was Abraham J. C. Lincoln, former Rhodes Scholar, All-American Quarterback, and one of the nation's ~~One Hundred~~ ^{Fifty} Outstanding Young Men. As chief counsel for Behemoth Corporation Mr. Lincoln briefly ~~sketched~~ sketched the Behemoth plans to tear down Mount Hornblower and ~~run~~ sluice it ~~in~~ ^{through} the Dank River to a ^{projected} pumice block factory in Damp City.

John Slob, representing the Mistville Volcano-Climbing and Bird-Watching Society, spoke in opposition to the proposal -- quite briefly, being still out of breath from the thirty-mile hike over Dank Pass.

Sir Francis Drake gave the present name, ~~skinning~~ claiming it ^{accidentally} for Queen Elizabeth. The first ascent of Hornblower was made by Lewis and Clark while lost in the fog. ~~That~~ The entry for that day in Clark's journal reads, "right smart chance for an early winter in these parts." Lewis, always the practical one, commented, "poor country for corn and small grains." Sacajawea is quoted by Francis Parkman as saying, "heap cold feet by golly." The second ascent of Hornblower was made by a Buddhist missionary (Zen) who is still there. The third party to reach the summit was led by the Duke of the Calabria ~~who~~ ^{while} trying to forget an unhappy love affair with the heiress apparent to the Holy Roman Empire. His chief cameraman, Vittorio de Sica, sent a photograph of the peak to President Theodore Roosevelt, who is quoted in the memoirs of his barber as crying, "This is a bully mountain!"

Mr. Magmas was unable to complete his narrative owing to his painful injuries. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Furthermore, the Damp City Chamber of Commerce chose this moment to shower upon Danktown leaflets condemning those who stood in the Way of Damp City's Progress. The leaflets told how the pumice factory payroll would enable Damp City to build sewers, close down the ~~XXXXXX~~ card rooms, and provide a heating system for the orphanage. The mayor was quoted as saying, "what does it matter if we can't get all the pumice out of the city water supply? A little roughage never hurt nobody!"

Those in the hearing rooms ~~would not have known~~ ^{about the} leaflets ~~had not~~ ^{one of the} scatter-bombs failed, and crashed through the roof, instantly killing three volcano climbers and

a Volcano Service Ranger. The hearings adjourned briefly for the funeral services.

Sir Humphrey Tinker-Evans-~~the~~ Chance, KBE, Commander RN ret., was the first witness following resumption of hearings. Being still quite seasick from running the Dank Rapids in a foldboat, his message was delivered by his secretary, who looked none too good himself. It was put on record that Her Majesty's Government, though reaffirming the Treaty of 1847, retains a certain interest in Hornblower and its companion volcanos, Nelson, Hawkins, Jellico, Raleigh and Prince Valiant, and urges all who share in the common Anglo-American heritage to remember the historic bonds of friendship that unite our Great Nations.

William Rudolph Burst, publisher of the Danktown Weekly Gazette and Shopping News, then was recognized, and with short recesses for food and sleep spoke for three days. Mr. Burst recapitulated the major battles of the Revolution and the War of 1812, discussed smart professors and New York City millionaires who want everything their own way, and made many satiric remarks about Mistville dudes who climb volcanos and chase birds. His biggest laugh was earned by an anecdote about the Danktown character who accidentally climbed Hornblower one night while trying to find his way home. Afterwards, whenever the boys were cutting up somebody always asked him ~~xxx~~ whether he was going to climb ol' Hornblower tonight and he'd look real serious and ~~xxxx~~ say, "hope not! I didn't leave nothing up there!" Even the Volcano Service officials had to chuckle at that, though they were trying to be impartial.

When the audience was quiet Mr. ~~xxxx~~ Burst resumed his speech -- in a very serious mood. After noting that Mount Hornblower is in Dank County, he asked the audience what ~~xxx~~ possible concern was it to people in Mist County what Dank County did with Hornblower. Pointing a dramatic finger directly at Mr. Slob he cried, "how would you like it if we came down to Mistville and told you how to run your county?" Pacing up and down, ~~xx~~ pausing briefly to sneer at Mr. Magmas, he asked the audience ~~xx~~ how, in the name of Heaven, ~~could~~ ^{could} these smart professors and New York City Millionaires have the gall ~~xxxx~~ to interfere in the private affairs of Dank County. After allowing these thoughts to sink in he concluded with a story about ~~the~~ Duke ~~of~~ Calabria. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Mr. Burst told the story in broken Italian which was very amusing, and sat down amid gales of laughter and cheers.

Babbit Yokum, president of the Danktown Boosters, movingly pictured the uninterrupted distress of Danktown since Repeal, which at one fell blow rendered the entire population ~~xxxx~~ unemployed. He attacked the Washington Bureaucrats who said that since there was nothing in Dank County ~~xxx~~ but ~~xxxxxxxx~~ cinders and rain ^{everybody} should move out. He attacked the city dudes from Mistville who ran the state and didn't give a darn about Danktown. Whenever the welfare officers hiked in over Dank Pass, carrying little dabs of medicine and baby formula, they just told about jobs a person could ^{get} ~~work at~~ in Mistville. When the leaders of Danktown said it wasn't right that a ~~trained~~ ^{craftsman} specialist couldn't work at his calling the welfare officers only gave them a list of states that still had Prohibition. Mr. Yokum was eulogizing the Behemoth

Corporation for offering to bring new customers to Danktown when he suffered a fainting spell. The Chief Physician for the Behemoth Corporation rendered first aid, and with his staff evacuated Mr. Yokum to a hospital, first warning the audience to refrain ^{temporarily} from smoking.

While the atmosphere was clearing the Volcano Service officials placed in the record a letter from the Congressman for the 13th District, which includes Danktown. The Congressman ~~informant~~ stated that he was first and last, to his dying breath, working for Dank County and the American Way.

Mr. Slob then placed in the record a letter from the Congressman for the 13th District, which includes Mistville.

The Congressman stated that he was first and last, to his dying breath, working for Mist County and the American Way.

Arthur Creep, fully recovered from his devils club wounds, then placed in the record a letter from the Congressman for the 15th District, which includes Damp City. The Congressman stated that he was first and last, to his dying breath, working for Damp County and the American Way.

A joint letter from the two ^{U.S.} Senators proclaimed ~~their~~ their heroic efforts to advance the interests of Our Great State and the American Way. The Governor's letter ~~was~~ ^{expressed} ~~his~~ ~~sincere~~ ~~conviction~~ ~~that~~ ~~everything~~ ~~would~~ ~~work~~ ~~out~~ ~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~best~~. The President of the United States wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

A letter from Mr. Magmas was presented. His injuries having become infected, he ~~was~~ had been carried out ~~of the compound~~ ~~over Dank Pass~~ over Dank Pass in a stretcher, face down, during the speech by Mr. Burst. The Mistville Volcano-Climbers and Bird-Watchers who performed this act of mercy took the opportunity to carry back fresh provisions to Danktown. ~~It was thus a double act of mercy,~~ since Mr. Slob ~~was~~ had been ^{slowly} dying of scurvy, all attempts to borrow fresh limes from the Behemoth ^{Corporation} ~~Company~~ being thwarted by the armed guards outside the compound. An appeal through the Volcano Service was answered by the ~~the~~ Chief Butler for Behemoth with ~~the~~ sympathies, and regrets, ~~but~~ that the crew of geologists had ^{developed} ~~such~~ an unexpected fad for a beverage known as "Dankers Away", which required an entire lime for each bottle, ^{and therefore} (the Behemoth ^{Corporation} ~~Company~~ was, itself, critically short of limes.

Mr. Magmas was not in top form ^{while} ~~was~~ dictating his letter, ^{being} ~~and according to his companions~~ ~~was~~ out of his head from the fever. After a rather moving introductory paragraph in which he forgave his friend, the burro, ~~was~~ for the wounds, and then asked the burro to forgive him, ~~was~~ pointing out to the burro that had it not been for ~~the~~ burro steals the Committee for the Protection and Extension of Vulcanism would have lost an executive secretary, Mr. Magmas sketched the ~~the~~ current condition of vulcanism in America and the world.

Statistically, volcanic activity has been declining over the world at an average rate of 8% a year for 17,000 years. Though the ~~Kxxkxix~~ Pel~~es~~' and Krakatoas and ~~Xxxkxixxxkxix~~ Katuails and Vesuvius's and Paracutins and Mauna Hia Hia's get all the headlines, the plain fact is that for every good, solid eruption, a dozen ~~xxxxkxkng~~ volcanos quit smoking altogether. Nowhere in the world is the situation more desperate than in the United ~~xxxxx~~ States. The present administration knows the danger, and ~~kxx~~ being unwilling to take any positive action to rehabilitate volcanos, has attempted to blind the public by admitting Hawaii and Alaska into the Union.

Every ~~x~~ reputable vulcanologist has attacked this ~~xxxxxxx~~ politician's stopgap ^{as nothing more than} a cheap election year trick.

~~xxxxxx~~ this letter was read in even, moderate tone³ by a Volcano Service secretary, ^{but} the effect was inflammatory. Mr. Yokum suddenly dived through a window into the hall and attempted to strangle the pretty young secretary, but several Behemoth ^{Corporation} ~~Company~~ attorneys brought him to his senses, ^{through} ~~xxxxxx~~ somewhat late, since a Behemoth ^{Corporation} ~~Company~~ Paratrooper had meanwhile impaled him on a bayonet.

Mr. Yokum was carried outside, bleeding ~~x~~ profusely, while ~~and~~ Mr. ~~xxxx~~ Burst attacked smart professors and New York City millionaires and Mistville dudes who want the whole country for themselves. He then lapsed into his comical

broken Italian ~~xxx~~ for some very cruel and suggestive remarks
the family relationship of
about volcano-climbers and bird-watchers and King Farouk.

The entire hall was in turmoil, ~~xxx~~ men punching each other in the nose, women fainting, infants squalling, lawyers clucking, Volcano Service officials rousing gavels. Then, sensationally, a mysterious woman appeared ~~xxxxxxxx~~ in the door, ~~stood~~ ^{passed} there a moment, and threw back her heavy veils. The audience gasped, and fell into cathedral-like silence.

It was none other than the internationally-famous beauty born in Fairtooth Loose, who, ~~xxx~~ a little Mafia gang in western Sicily became the wife of Singapore's richest, most handsome opium smuggler. Later she became the internationally-famous publisher of Strife, the magazine for people who can't read, and Thyme, the magazine for people who can't think. ~~xxx~~ Finally, proving that a woman can find adventure and love even though ~~xxx~~ thirty-five years old, she became the wife of the South Pacific's poorest and ugliest pirate, General Angbi Nektal Ded, and was now his Ambassador to the Western Hemisphere. With her internationally-famous biting wit, Madam Ambassador General Loose presented a vivid word picture of funny codgers in puttees and ~~xxxxxxxx~~ pith helmets gaping and drooling into ~~xxx~~ mouths of volcanos, and now and then dashing ~~xxxxxxxx~~ through the snow, squinting ~~into~~ ^{into} ~~through~~ binoculars at birds. The audience was completely fractured, naturally. When at last the hall had quieted sufficiently for her fluting little voice to carry she arched her brows, turned her hands palm up, and amusingly shrilled, "why can't these people

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In order to gain a fair and impartial sampling of opinion, the Volcano Service officials ~~xxxxxxx~~ announced that the second ~~month~~^{round} of hearings would be held on the opposite bank of the Dank River.

The decision was ~~not~~^{both} popular with ~~either~~ side. The Behemoth helicopters spent the entire weekend moving the *Company* compound to the opposite bank, a very expensive undertaking. The Mistville Foldboat Club, ~~though disappointed to~~^{too difficult to} ~~concerned~~ about the effect of pumice on ~~their~~ foldboats, worked heroically ~~at this time~~ attempting to ferry witnesses over the river. Unfortunately the Dank River was in flood. A foldboat which had been designated for the occasion HMS Ward Irwin was swamped with the loss of all hands, including Sir Humphrey Tinker-Evans-Jance and his secretary and valet. Another foldboat containing Mr. Slob was carried away and has not been seen since entering ~~xxxxxxx~~ the ^vfiltration plant ~~xxxx~~ Damp City.

With all opposing witnesses either drowned or left stranded on the far bank the Volcano Service expected much quieter hearings, particularly since the trail over Dank Pass had been closed due to excessive fire hazard and the flood waters of the Dank River were rising hourly. The Behemoth Helicopter Fleet brought in a fresh team of lawyers and geologists and Nobel Prize Winners to replace those whose livers had gone bad//. Hearings reopened in an atmosphere of cheerful friendliness.

Mr. Lincoln delivered a prepared speech, magnanimously praising Mr. Magmas and Mr. Slob and Sir Humphrey Tinker-Evans-Chance for their ~~xxx~~ public spirit. These, he said, are the men who make democracy work. He announced that Behemoth Corporation was sending flowers to the funerals of all three -- or in the case of Magmas, to the hospital, if he should make it. After a standing ovation he resumed. Though respecting the right of others to disagree with him -- indeed, being ready to die to defend their right to disagree with him -- Mr. Lincoln begged his audience to take the larger view of the public interest. True enough, Hornblower as a volcano had served the public ~~xxxx~~ interest ~~xxxxxxx~~ many years. It taught the Indians how to roast venison and boil fish, it served as a landmark to pioneer wagon trains, and ~~xxxxxxx~~ recently had given a great deal of honest pleasure to volcano climbers and bird watchers. But time is passing, the world is changing. This is the Twentieth Century, the Space Age, and Hornblower has outlived its usefulness as a volcano. But Hornblower will not die, Hornblower can never die. It will live in our memories as a symbol of the great American past, and it will live in our cities as a symbol of the great American future, ^{upon hundreds} hundreds of thousands upon thousands of particles of Hornblower all around us as we work, shoulder to shoulder, to build a ^{bigger,} better America. In large part, the great future of America depends upon the ~~xxxxxxx~~ pumice blocks manufactured from Mount Hornblower.

The audience cheered and hollered and ^{clapped and} stamped ~~XXXX~~ for twenty minutes after Mr. Lincoln sat down, and most had tears in their eyes. William Rudolph Burst, openly sobbing, led the audience in "God Bless America" and hearings were ~~adjourned~~ adjourned for the day. Babbit Yokum invited the whole crowd to his place in the woods to sample Danktown Dew.

The dismantling of the Behemoth compound next morning ^{reflected} ~~indicated~~ the general conviction that ^a ~~the~~ conclusion ^{was near.} ~~would come quickly.~~ But the Volcano Service reckoned without the flood. Several years previously a group of Mistville professors and lawyers and engineers and scientists, finding ^{themselves} ~~that they were~~ unemployable, had taken to the woods, and established a community near the headwaters of the Dank River. As many had commented, the flood debris sweeping by Danktown contained a surprising number of books. Now the mystery was explained. The settlement of unemployable intellectuals had been totally destroyed by the flood. The only survivor was cast up on a logjam, and staggered into the hearings on that last day, more dead than alive. Behemoth physicians immediately rushed to his aid, and Mr. Lincoln publicly ordered a helicopter to be warmed up. However, ~~Mr~~ Lincoln rescinded this order when the survivor gasped out his story, and when the mud had been washed from his face. Lincoln ~~also~~ also ordered the physicians and nurses to let the man alone. For it was none other than the notorious ex-Congressman

and anti-Fascist, Thomas Pain.

Despite this embarrassment the Behemoth array of witnesses proceeded briskly through their testimony, geologists and hydraulic engineers and ceramic engineers and civil engineers and mining engineers and sanitary engineers and mechanical engineers and population engineers and sales engineers, all presenting succinct technical information concerning the transformation of Mount Hornblower into pumice blocks.

Suddenly, ~~then~~ there was a commotion in the back of the hall. Mr. Pain, who had been presumed dead, arose from the floor and asked by what right Behemoth Corporation proposed to tear down one of the most magnificent natural objects in the land, an object which was ancient before apes left the trees and became men, an object which belongs to the entire nation as surely as the Mississippi River belongs to the nation -- by what right did a private corporation, dedicated to earning profits for its stockholders, ~~xxxxxxx~~ propose to steal a publicly-owned volcano for private profit?

Mr. Lincoln did not deign to answer this ^{outburst of} demagogical hysteria. He nodded to a bright young assistant, a former ~~Rhodes~~ Rhodes Scholar and All-American Quarterback, who reviewed the ownership of Mount Hornblower.

In 1933 Behemoth Corporation absorbed the assets of Great Western Expansion ~~xxxx~~ Inc., a bankrupt investment fund, several of whose officers are still in jail. Among the assets of Great Western were a controlling interest in Great Eastern Expansion, another investment fund, also bankrupt, several of

whose officers are still in jail. ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxx~~
~~xxxx~~ ~~xxxx~~ All that was found in the Great Eastern vault
was a stack of defaulted bonds from Consolidated American
Railroads, which had been bankrupt for years, all of its former
officers having ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{achieved listing} in the New York Social Register,
~~xxxxxx~~ several having served the nation as senators and
Cabinet ~~xxxx~~ Members. Consolidated American Railroads had no
railroads, only residual land grants from railroads that had
never been constructed.

One of the railroads, chartered during the administration
of Ulysses S. ~~xxxx~~ Grant, was the Miami-Boston-~~xxxxxx~~
Shreveport-Duluth-Dallas-Fargo-Yuma-Helena-Santiago-Bellingham-
Tiajuana-Sequim-Tokyo-Nome Railroad Inc. Even in that idealistic
age when idealism was its own reward there were some members of
Congress who doubted any idealists were strong enough to build
such a ~~xxxxxx~~ magnificently idealistic railroad. Therefore the
charter issued by Congress was ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxx~~ extremely
niggardly. The company was assigned title to every other state or
~~xxx~~ county along the proposed right of way. However, the company
must choose whether it wanted states or counties, it could not
have both.

The bright young ~~xxxxxx~~ Behemoth attorney concluded with
a survey of the ^{relevant} Indian treaties. In 1853, following the
Attack on Danktown by ~~xxxx~~ Funny-Boy-With-Crazy-Eye, who
walked into town and stared crookedly at a group of Christians
peacefully writhing in horror ~~xxxxxx~~ during a sermon ~~by their~~
~~preacher, who was~~ ^{about} ~~xxxx~~ describing Hell, the United States Cavalry

~~to be xxxxxxx over~~ ^{Crossed} Dank Pass~~x~~ and demanded that the Indians hand over Funny-Boy-With-Crazy-Eye. General Dauntless MacCaesar gave his personal guarantee of a fair trial. However, the Indians, not understanding the language, threw bits of pumice at the Cavalry~~x~~ and ~~most of them~~ ^{almost all} were shot dead, ~~in defense~~. The remainder retreated to the summit of Mount Hornblower.

~~xxxxxxx~~ Several weeks later ~~x~~ the US Commissioner's secretary hiked to the summit, found one Indian still breathing, and with him negotiated the treaty by which all the tribal lands were legally ~~and~~ ^{transferred} to the US for a down payment of 300 cans of war surplus corned beef, plus a yearly installment of six pounds of flour for each member ^{of 2000} of the tribe ~~for~~ ~~xxxx twenty years~~, ~~though~~

As the Behemoth attorney said, there ~~have been people~~ ^{are those} who ~~thought~~ ^{think} the price ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ low, but then the Indians did not possess a clear title to the land, and therefore the payments should be considered free gifts to a gang of probable trespassers. In any event, the title to Mount Hornblower ~~xxx~~ rests ^{correctly} by every conceivable test in the hands of Behemoth Corporation.

Mr. Lincoln then arose, and delivered a most impressive ~~about~~ analysis of the role of ~~x~~ Anglo-Saxon land law in founding American Democracy. He ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ^{xxxxxxxx} told about King Alfred, the Domesday Book, Magna Carta ~~also he told about~~ ^{and mentioned} Justinian and Napoleon. ~~Said~~ he in conclusion, the ~~xxx~~ essence of civilization is law, and from Hammurepi's Code to the Taft-Hartley ~~xxx~~ Act, the most important laws have concerned the rights of property. Unless property rights are respected there is no liberty, there is no freedom. A man's home is his castle!

Mr. Lincoln again sat down amid cheers and sobs and women kissing his feet.

Mr. Pain managed to pull himself from the floor and ask Mr. Lincoln if, between his studies of Alexander Hamilton, he had delved into that obscure contemporary who placed human rights above property rights, a fellow named Thomas Jefferson.

Mr. Lincoln, possibly somewhat flustered, arose and ~~starex~~ delivered the same speech as before, ending with a man's home is his castle!

Mr. Pain, though weakening, again pulled himself from the floor. Apparently his fever was rising, ~~farx~~ if his testimony is any indication. Said he, "Money ~~max~~ stolen in 1880 becomes in 1950, by the statute of limitations, property defended by Magna Carta. But what ~~kix~~ if I, in 1950, steal the Behemoth Corporation ~~weatly~~ payroll, and ~~maxx~~ bury those hundreds of millions of dollars away in the ~~gux~~ ground? What if, though ~~I am~~ publicly suspected and accused of robbery, I am not convicted, and live out my span enjoying ^{and savoring} the fruits of criminality? Then, in 2020, my wealthy descendants pull out of the family vault, chuckling, the bills I stole in 1950. They are marked bills, of course. Will Behemoth Corporation get its money back? Or will my descendants point out that the statute of limitations and Magna Carta has transformed the loot into property?"

Mr. Lincoln arose, icy and tall, to tell about the American ~~Frontier~~ Frontier, the tough trip over the Allegheny^s, through the Ohio ~~Country~~ Country, the Great Plains, the Mountains, how there would not be an America had not the ~~land~~ land laws been deliberately liberalized to provide an incentive for individual enterprise. Cried Mr. Lincoln, would there have been farms without homestead laws, would there have been gold without mining ~~claim~~ claim laws?

Mr. Pain was barely audible in his last statement. He doubted that frontier land law was applicable when there was no ~~frontier~~ frontier. He doubted that frontier land law designed to encourage the flinty pioneer should fairly apply to a fat ~~corporation~~ corporation. Mr. Pain then fell down dead.

While his corpse was removed to the river and consigned to the flood, a bright young Behemoth lawyer, Summa cum laude at Harvard, Eagle Scout, and one-time Squash Champion of Westchester County, placed in the record a certified copy of the Trot-Bang Survey which ~~found~~ found that 97% of the stock in Behemoth Corporation is held by aged widows/ who eke out meager dividends by ~~scrubbing~~ scrubbing floors.

A Nobel Prize Winner from Harvard summarized his research into the use of pumice as a cure ~~for~~ for cancer and the common cold.

Mr. Lincoln promised ~~Harvard~~ Harvard all the pumice needed, as a free ~~gift~~ gift from Behemoth Corporation.