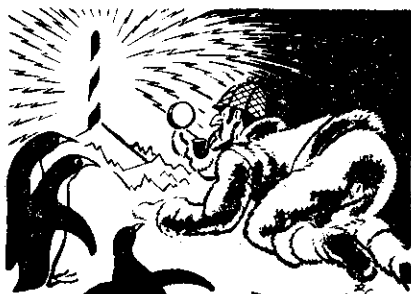


COME TO THE SUNNY SOUTH POLE . . .

Amplifying Rear-Admiral Byrd's dropping of flags over the South Pole, the United Press correspondent at Little America says the flags of the United Nations are together in a cardboard box. Admiral Byrd said afterwards: "I put them all together as they ought to be."

—Cable message.

ONCE upon a time—about 35 years ago as the crow flies—when all polar exploration had to be done on foot, hitting the headlines was as easy as falling into a crevasse. All you had to do was to reach one of the poles, and on foot that was elementary. You simply got on to a meridian, turned your face north or south (it made no ultimate difference which), and kept on walking until you met all the other meridians. There you found the pole. If you had a good dog-team it was even simpler.



"To reach one of the poles on foot was elementary"

But try and get hot news about the Great Frozen Spaces on to the front page to-day, in competition with genuinely arctic regions like Much-Twittering-in-the-Drift (where temperatures have been so low that the music for Sexagesima did not thaw into audibility until the first Sunday in Lent), and you will find that it requires a standard of publicity work usually found closer to the 49th Parallel.

And that, of course, is precisely the standard which Admiral Byrd and his armour-plated Antarctic expedition has been able to command. News-flashes have been streaming northward from Little America with the regularity and celerity of atmospheric depressions leaving the Ross Dependency.

CONSIDER, for example, the reports about the



flight over (and around) the Pole. It was surely not far short of genius to take time out from icecap-hopping to stain the white radiance of eternity, as the explorer Shelley termed it, with the flags of 54 nations, and thus give some semblance of unity to even the rear-end of this One World. What if they were dropped in a cardboard-box (supplied, no doubt, by the International Canister and Carton Corp., Inc., of Oshkosh, Wis.)? If a British expedition had dropped them they would probably have been tied up with red-tape, and any one-worldly-minded airman who tried to improve on the gesture by dropping the bundle on Long Island during conference-time would probably get grounded for violating the Federal Air Code.

It must be admitted that Admiral Byrd more than rose to the occasion. Indeed, on the polar flight he rose even higher than that and braved the altitude

Written for "The Listener"
by E. and O. E.

safety-limits to traverse the Great Polar Plateau. But here, surely, his press men failed to make the same good showing. The highest and largest plateau in the world, they called it—and left it at that. But what a story it might have made if they had only remembered (as every schoolboy should) that the earth is an oblate spheroid with an equatorial radius of 20,926,200 feet, and a polar radius of 20,854,900! That would reduce the absolute altitude of their lofty plateau to a point several miles lower than the deepest abyss of the Pacific Ocean and, in fact, make the polar plateau the loftiest depression ever discovered on the face of the globe. That would have given the story a meteorological flavour in keeping with its point of origin, and might also have had a moderating effect on the wave of inflation engulfing the rest of the world. More, it would have avoided the possibility of an open rupture with the Tibetan delegation at the next plenary session of UN.

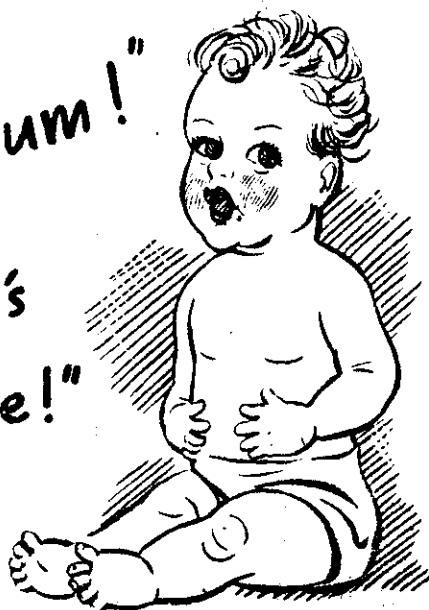
ON the face of it, of course, the story was a good one. Any news item with superlatives in it gets the groundlings where they live. It's just that the most was not made of it.

It was the same with the message about the flight around the world in 10 minutes. Here again we have the touch which approaches genius, but just doesn't quite get there. And all because those responsible forgot something elementary which they learned at school. If the Admiral's planes had only flown from west to east, instead of from east to west (or should it be vice versa?), Little America could have stunned the world with the news that they had flown round it in minus 10 minutes (or minus 23 hours 50 minutes, we are not quite sure which).

(continued on next page)

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, MARCH 7

"Fill it up again Mum!"
"My tummy's as flat as a Pancake!"



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In my cheeks, in my bones
in my teeth, in my sturdy
legs."

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