

RADIO DIARY

(Continued from page 5-H.)

The other dozers will be working out to O'Neill. Up until now the O'Neill area itself probably has had less equipment working than was intended. The Army people say, but delays in transportation have slowed the job here.

Army officials urge people to replenish their supplies as soon as a road is opened by their place. How long the roads will remain open, of course, cannot be determined.

When dozers are working in your neighborhood the Army wants you to make your service available. Tell the crews where the small bridges are. Help them with the terrain.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5—

WJAG (Norfolk), 9:30 a. m.
Good morning, everyone. Your announcer is Bill Beha. It's a typical winter's morning here in O'Neill. The sun rose clear in the East; temperature at eight o'clock was two degrees below zero.

Well, the Burlington railroad is back in the news again. It's rotary snowplow is plowing and churning westward once more. Early this morning the plow is reported to have reached Belden, a point less than half-way between South Sioux City and O'Neill. Out here in O'Neill, the Western terminus for the branch line there hasn't been a Burlington train since December 28—something like 39 days.

Meanwhile, North Western main line service is slowly getting back to normal. Today's Westbound train is expected to reach here at 10 o'clock.

Well, the American Red Cross miniature air lift is still going strong from out at the O'Neill airport. Until last night, 328 mercy missions had been flown for the Red Cross out of the O'Neill port. Of course, the Red Cross is sponsoring similar flights from other towns and in other counties. The 328 figure represents O'Neill activity alone.

Carl Hubel, 33-year-old Ewing rancher and a veteran of World War II, is going to return to his mercy mission work today and will be using a brand new airplane. Four nights ago young Hubel, who lives 10 miles Southwest of Ewing, was returning from Omaha to Ewing with some vital bulldozer repair parts. Leaving Omaha, he doubted seriously that he could make Ewing by nightfall. But he decided to have a go at it anyway—the dozer parts were needed badly.

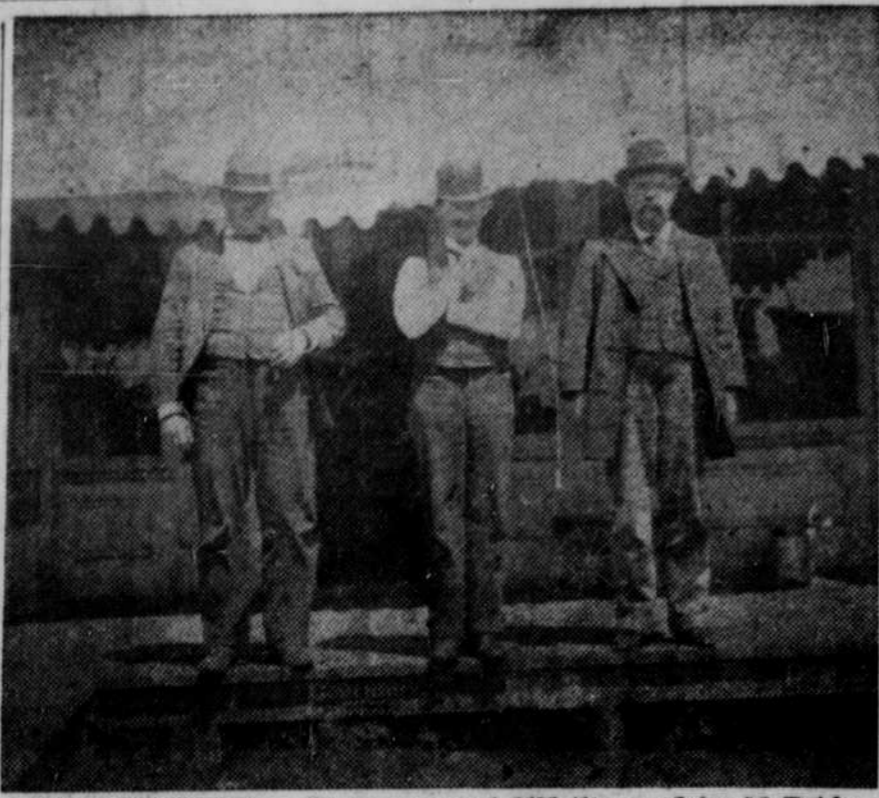
Coming in for a landing at Ewing, in the dark, his wing brushed a treetop, the plane crashed and when the machine came to a stop it was pointed in the opposite direction. Hubel picked himself up from the wreckage, unhurt, and told friends what had happened.

Citizens of the Ewing community, knowing full well the value of a mercy messenger of Hubel's type, proceeded to raise about three thousand dollars. A spokesman for the group told Hubel to pick himself out an airplane to his liking and write a check. The money, he said, is in the bank!

Last night at the O'Neill airport Mr. Hubel patted the fuselage on a shiny new airplane. It was his—a gift from the citizens of Ewing! The craft is getting a new set of skis and this morning Ewing's Carl Hubel will take-off—ready for more mercy missions!

A six-by-six Army truck is loaded and is ready to set out this morning for Gibson rural school, four miles East of Opportunity. A stockpile will be built at the school so nearby residents can replenish their supplies.

Well, Operation Snowbound in Holt county at last is moving into high gear. Forty-eight big bulldozers are already at work in this county alone—bucking the snow and ice in a relentless, endless war.



THREE MAYORS . . . First mayor of O'Neill was John McBride, who is pictured (above) at right. Others in the photo are: O. F. Biglin (center) and R. R. Dickson (left.) Before O'Neill became a city, there had been early chairmen of the village board—counterpart to a mayor. Photo was taken in 1890's.



ORIGINAL CHURCH . . . Methodists were the early Protestant sect to establish. Their original church (above) was built in 1882 on the site of the present church.

Fifth army's sub-area headquarters in O'Neill advised us a few moments ago that at least 30 more dozers are enroute to Holt county and are expected to arrive and get into action today or tomorrow. When these reinforcements get into the battle, Operation Snowbound will finally be going at full speed.

Maj. James H. Harper, sub-area commander, points out that many of the residents can be very helpful in the snowplowing work. Because practically all of the dozers operators are military or other government personnel, they do not know the terrain, they do not know where the weak bridges and culverts are, and these operators would appreciate assistance.

So, if you see caterpillars at work in your neighborhood, why not make your way down there, offer your services.

It is also pointed out that the road behind the dozers must be kept open for refuelling trucks and maintenance men. Residents are asked to help keep the road open while the dozers are at work in your neighborhood.

As a matter of policy, the Army stresses that it is liberating communities and groups of farm and ranches first, and individuals will come later.

Right now the Army is desperately trying to open as many roads as possible to enable people to replenish their supplies.

Everyone has their fingers crossed lest another wind should come up. The Army is keeping an eagle-eye on the weather man and if a storm should develop the equipment will have to withdraw.

Four dozers were at work yesterday relieving the beleaguered residents of the Chambers community, and Fifth Army sub-area headquarters reports today that four more will get into the battle down in the Chambers locality today.

Right now only four "cats" are at work in Boyd county. But the situation in Boyd is getting under control and additional machinery is not to be

sent there unless a new storm develops.

Three pairs of dozers are working East of O'Neill this morning, and three pairs are working North of O'Neill.

A group of "cats" are expected to liberate the Dorsey locality today. Several were nearing Dorsey from various angles yesterday, but ran low on fuel and had to abandon the work until this morning.

So, this bright February morning it appears that, at least, we're going to get on top off this snow situation.

I know this is little consolation to the isolated farmer or rancher who has been cut-off from the rest of the world for many weeks . . . but I think I can honestly say that the Army has the situation well in hand . . . barring a fresh storm.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7—

WJAG (Norfolk), 9:30 a.m.

Good morning everyone. This is Lyle Ohrmund. It appears that the weatherman is going to cooperate with Operation Snowbound today. The temperature at eight o'clock was 15 degrees above zero.

Fifth army sub-area headquarters reports this morning that the roads already opened by Operation Snowbound fared better over the weekend than anticipated, considering the winds and the blowing of snow that was going on Saturday and Sunday.

Most North and South roads that had been opened by Army bulldozers remained opened, though some East and West roads were closed.

It is estimated this morning that 80 dozers are now at work in Holt county alone under Army direction. More equipment is arriving daily. Ten dozers arrived last evening and 10 more are expected to arrive today.

Roads behind the dozers must be kept open for purpose of refuelling and maintenance. The Army wants sight-seers to stay off the opened roads.

A stockpile of fuel, food and other supplies has been built

at the Gibson rural school, four miles East of Opportunity. After dozers had opened the road, Army six by sixes carried American Red Cross supplies out there. Supplies include 10,000 pounds of coal, 1,200 gallons of fuel oil, and at least 10 boxes of staple foods.

The stork visited the home of Mr. and Mrs. Will Conway, 10 miles Northwest of O'Neill, last night. Dr. W. F. Finley, of O'Neill, made the trip to the Conway farm by weasel. Doctor Finley reports the Conways "really snowed in" and the mother and her new daughter "doing nicely."

Two weasels are now working out of Chambers. The machines are under the direct control of the Chambers district headquarters. One weasel is working out of Ewing and one weasel and several sleds are working out of O'Neill.

One caterpillar is at work in the Opportunity community and is cabling stacks of hay. It is a government machine operated by Alfred Olson. The "cat" was sent here in response to so many requests from farmers in that area.

The rotary working on the Sioux City to O'Neill Burlington branch has reached a point West of Randolph in its struggle to open the line to O'Neill. The two derailed locomotives, six miles East of O'Neill, are still buried in the snow. There has not been a Burlington train out of O'Neill since December 28.

About six planes are expected to be operating out of the O'Neill airport this morning, where the miniature airlift is still going strong.

One aircraft, being piloted by Will Doughty, of Grand Island, landed in a slush near Amelia Saturday, nosed over, and broke a prop. The slush by the way, was a lake. Neither Doughty or Captain Richard Rector, of the Army Engineers, the only passenger, was hurt.

We're going to give you a brief resume now of the progress being made by Operation Snowbound out of the O'Neill sub-area headquarters.

The O'Neill sub-area is directing snow-relief work in Holt, Boyd, Rock, Brown and Keya Paha counties and is headed by Major James S. Harper, assisted by Captain Richard C. Rector.

These officers a week ago yesterday received 45 minutes' notice at the Army Engineers center at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, where they were stationed. They were ordered to report to Maj. Gen. Lewis A. Pick's headquarters immediately at Omaha. Boarding a plane, they reached Omaha a week ago, they were briefed . . . and came immediately to sub-area headquarters here in district II, arriving in O'Neill last Tuesday night.

At that time, equipment was very limited and highway 20 was the only highway that available equipment could work from. In an interview Capt. Rector stated that in starting out the main purpose was—and still is—to block out an area and with several units of snow plowing equipment work off the main highway at various points—gradually working out the side roads. In all instances, one road is tied in with another.

At the present time, there are 200 pieces of snow-removal equipment working in this particular five-county area and more is arriving every day.

At present about 700 men are at work manning this equipment to cover 6,000 miles of road.

As added equipment arrives it is directed to the most outlying communities. For instance four days ago it was believed at sub-area headquarters that units would work off of highways 23, north and south in Holt county—with equipment coming in it has been possible to start working from the southern part of the county toward O'Neill and from the Northern boundaries South. The same is true in the other four counties.

Calls for assistance have been coming in from northeast of Page. Machines have been dispatched to that community and within a matter of two days roads will be all well on the way of being cleared there. In some cases farmers will be liberated north of Page in a matter of hours, according to Captain Rector.

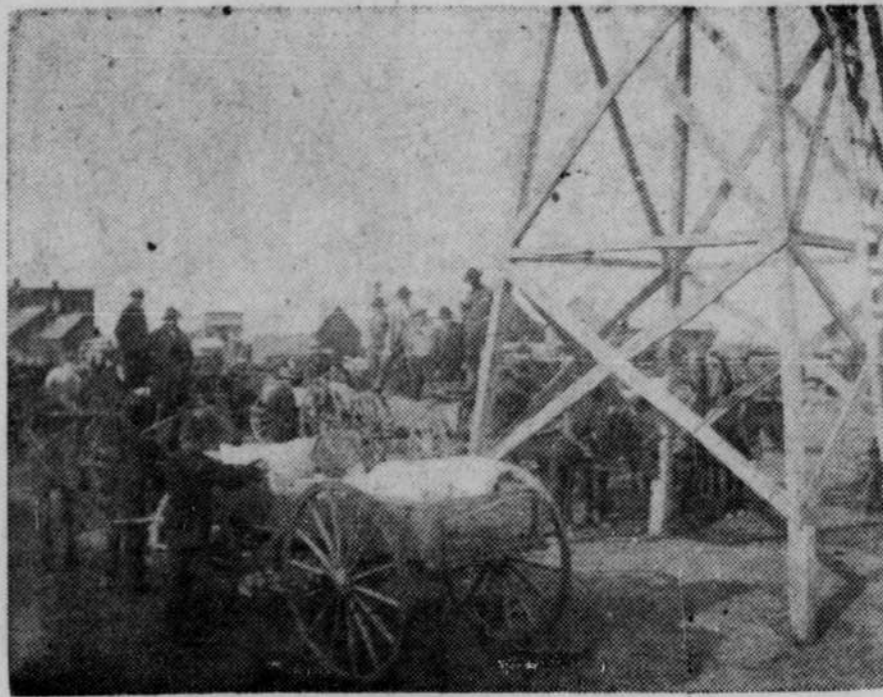
Of course, it must be kept in mind that additional snow or winds will hamper operations and cause delay in the schedule. It was necessary Saturday to go back over some roads five or six times because of drifting snow. Progress hinges on the weather.

South of Atkinson, the biggest machine one company builds, is on the way, or has already arrived, at the lower end of the county to tie into snow removal work there. Other units are working north of highway 11 and 281.

Local people are just as important as the big machines in getting the job done.

The key to the whole snow removal operation is the co-operation that the farmers and ranchers themselves give the engineers working the roads in their communities.

Capt. Rector states that when these operators near a farm they will be glad to break way to hay for livestock if possible. They will also knock out a road around the barn so that stock can move around more freely if it is requested. Do not for-



FAMINE OF '94 . . . Worst drouth in history of Holt county came in 1894. Rain fell practically every day in April, then hot winds in July and August erased the crops. Relief supplies are being doled out in the above photo.



MISSOURIAN ARRIVES . . . James Greenstreet (near team) and his family arrived in Holt county from Missouri. They traveled in the rig pictured above, and settled near Chain lake.

get to invite the operators in at mealtime.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9—

WJAG (Norfolk), 9:30 a. m.

Good morning, everyone. Your announcer is Bill Beha. It's another one of those clear, crisp February mornings out here in O'Neill where the temperature reading a few minutes ago was 15 degrees above zero!

The rotary snowplow working on the Burlington's Sioux City to O'Neill spur has reached a point near McLean and is slowly battling its way towards O-

Neill. Progress will be slow from that point West, because these drifts have not been touched for many weeks. The plow is expected to encounter a great deal of difficulty with ice and frozen snow, and the Army with its bulldozers may be called on to help clear the railroad track!

Well, the already-famous Operation Snowbound today enters its second phase. To explain to you what the Fifth Army means by second phase, I must explain the first phase.

In tackling this gigantic snow-removal job in this five-county sub-area which is being directed from O'Neill, the Army fixed highest priority on opening first the roads that would enable people to get to town and replenish their supplies by walking or by slogging a relatively short distance—say up to three or five miles.

Army officials late last night, in studying their maps at their office in the Holt county courthouse, estimated that the big percentage of people in the sub-area now are less than five miles walking distance to a passage that has been cleared.

There are, of course, exceptions. But by and large, the Army says, the first phase of operation Snowbound has been completed, and this morning equipment is on its way to the expected localities mentioned a moment ago.

Phase two of Operation Snowbound the Army explains, will see the criss-crossing of secondary routes until virtually every family has a path to its front door.

Phase three . . . and that remains some days a way . . . will witness the uncovering of haystacks, the bringing of cattle and feed together, the clearing of snow around the buildings, and feed yard, and a thorough "mopping up."

All in all, Operation Snowbound is progressing "highly satisfactorily," the Army reports and since the Army has been in the picture in force, the weatherman has been very cooperative.

Well, we've been telling you a lot about what the Army has been doing and certainly the Army has been doing a lot. I have some figures here concerning activity of the American Red Cross in O'Neill alone up until now in this storm-stricken disaster area: 9,000 pounds of food have been flown by plane to isolated families in need; 28,000 pounds of fuel, including coal and oil, have been flown; 3,400 pounds of food have been hauled by weasels; 37,500 pounds of fuel have been hauled by weasels; over five thousand pounds of food have been delivered by caterpillar-drawn sleds; and over three tons of oil and coal have been transported by tractor-drawn sleds.

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O'Neill



AIR FORCE TO RESCUE . . . Stuck in 34 inches of snow and ice is an Air Force "snow-go". After several abortive missions, two of these machines finally cleared the airstrip 50 yards wide and 4,000 feet long.—The Frontier Photo by John H. McCarville.