



**FACED BIGGEST PROBLEM** — Abraham Lincoln, prairie lawyer, minority president of a nation cracked by secession, and a man with no administrative experience, faced the biggest problem of the time in early March, 1861—what to do about Fort Sumter. Lincoln was beginning to doubt the loyalty of Maj. Robert Anderson, commander of the

**Lincoln Studies Sumter Crisis**

By MERTON T. AKERS  
UPI Correspondent

A man of 52, with no administrative experience, whose national career consisted of two years as a back bench congressman, went to work the morning of March 5, 1861, on a new job and head-on into the biggest problem of the time—what to do about Ft. Sumter.

The man was Abraham Lincoln, prairie lawyer, minority President of a nation already cracked by secession. His predecessor, James Buchanan, had grappled with the problem of Sumter most ineffectually, then tossed it into the lap of the newcomer from Illinois and turned with obvious relief to the quietude of his own Pennsylvania estate.

The cabinet was new, too, and almost as inexperienced in national affairs as the President.

On top of the pile of papers before the President that March morning was a message from Maj. Robert Anderson, holding out at Ft. Sumter with a handful of men against the ever-constricting lines of South Carolina militia.

Anderson reported he had bread for 28 days, and plenty of salt pork, but coffee, beans, rice and sugar were dwindling and would last from eight to 40 days.

The major, standing alone against the gathering forces of secession, went further in this report, then he had previously. He wrote: "I confess that I would not be willing to risk my reputation on an attempt to throw reinforcements into this harbor within the time for our relief rendered necessary by the limited supply of our provisions, and with a view of holding possession of same, with a force of less than 20,000 good and disciplined men."

He enclosed estimates of his officers backing this up. The report shocked the new President. Earlier he had received from Ulysses Doubleday, brother of Capt. Abner Doubleday, second in command at Ft. Sumter, information which did not square with this.

Lincoln was beginning to doubt the loyalty of Anderson. Perhaps the commander was exaggerating the force needed and the strength of the South Carolina troops so that the fort could be handed over to the secessionists. He asked Joseph Holt, who was carrying over as secretary of war until Simon Cameron arrived. If there was any question of Anderson's loyalty, Holt said no, admitting later that he was not as sure as his answer indicated.

The President turned to Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott, commander-in-chief of the Army. "Evacuation seems almost inevitable," the old warrior replied. Lincoln told him to give the question more thought.

In Lincoln's words this seemed to reduce the question "to a mere matter of getting the garrison safely out of the fort."

The President was on record, privately and in his inaugural address, as taking a firm stand in holding the southern forts and government property. Ft. Sumter already was taking on in the North the shape of a symbol of government strength or weakness and would become even a greater one.

To start off an administration by giving up the last vestige of the government's prestige was unthinkable to Lincoln. As he would do so many times later, he played for a break.

Calling the cabinet into a meeting March 9, Lincoln posed this question and asked for written answers: "Assuming it to be possible to now provision Ft. Sumter, under all circumstances, is it wise to attempt it?" By March 16 all the cabinet

had answered—five against provisioning the fort, on in favor and one "maybe."

The only cabinet member in favor was Montgomery Blair, postmaster general, who had been reared in the tradition of Andrew Jackson, the president who strangled nullification at birth.

The "maybe" answer came from the secretary of treasury, Salmon P. Chase. He voted "yes" if it could be done peaceably and "no" if it meant war. Simon Cameron, secretary of war; Gideon Welles, secretary of navy; Caleb Smith, secretary of interior; and Edward Bates, attorney general, voted "no." Seward voted "no" because he believed the South was bluffing.

Lincoln at this point, facing a dissident cabinet, seems to have been undecided and groping for an answer. According to one account, Montgomery Blair walked across the street to Blair House and told his father, F. P. Blair Sr., a Kentuckian who had worked with Jackson, of the cabinet vote.

The elder Blair went to see Lincoln, asked him directly if Sumter was to be evacuated. Lincoln was quoted as saying "he thought that would be the result." Blair, always candid, told the President, the account continues, that the American people would not stand for such a decision, that it would ruin the Republican Party and perhaps even result in the impeachment of the President.

Welles thought Blair's visit "aroused and electrified" Lincoln. Whatever aroused Lincoln—if indeed he needed any arousing—he began checking into the problem himself, a characteristic that would grow with the years.

Shortly thereafter Mrs. Abner Doubleday, living in



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**Better Hunting, Fishing Seen in New Forest Plan**

Portland — Sportsmen can look forward to better hunting and fishing in the national forests during the next 10 to 15 years because of a new wildlife habitat management program, according to J. Herbert Stone, regional forester, U.S. forest service, Portland.

The plan, called National Forest Wildlife, is part II of Operation Outdoors, a program to provide new areas and facilities and renovate existing ones to relieve overcrowding by outdoor recreationists.

Operation Outdoors is a more detailed presentation of the wildlife phase of the program for the national forests

**Moroccans Charged With Disguising Raid**

Madrid—Spain charged Saturday that the kidnapers of three American and seven other oil technicians were Moroccan Army troops who staged a Spanish Sahara border raid disguised to look like the work of Nomad rebel bands.

A communique from the foreign ministry accused Morocco of "a flagrant violation of all international law, and of peace and good neighborliness."

Stone explained, "It is designed to improve fish and game conditions and meet the growing public needs. Planning of improvements for each area will be carried out in cooperation with the Oregon and Washington fish and game departments."

Highlights of the program include planting shrubs, grasses and herbaceous plants on 1.5 million acres of game range; clearing openings, food patches, and game ways for wildlife in dense vegetation on 400,000 acres; and improvement of 7,000 miles of fishing streams and 56,000 acres of lakes by stabilizing banks, planting streamside

cover, and constructing channel improvements. The cost of improvements nationwide is estimated at \$25.6 million over a 10-to-15-year period.

The forest service also plans to improve hunting and fishing by more carefully coordinating wildlife management with the development of other resources, the regional forester said.

Selective cutting of timber, for instance, or cutting in small blocks will open up dense stands and provide food for wildlife. Leaving small clumps of conifers will provide protection for wildlife. Roads will be located to

provide access to hunting and fishing. Livestock watering places will be constructed and located so they will also benefit deer, turkey, grouse, and quail. Range seeding will include browse and other plants for wildlife food and cover.

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