

THE LISTENING POST

By THE VETERAN

Recent tabulations reported a high percentage of withdrawals from the newspaper field in the United States, the war years from 1939 to the present having accounted for mergers and abandonments that reduced the Press count by more than three hundred in the daily editions and something less than five hundred in the weekly publications. But, if there had been inclusion of new weeklies, semi-weeklies and bi-weeklies in the Labor field, and issues out of governmental bureaus, it is practically certain that the actual presentation of news that includes propaganda would have shown a decided gain in prints of all kinds.

Labor news has only official coverage in the privately owned daily and weekly editions. Even with censorship there is so much output of war-related wordage that the union leaders have found it necessary to organize editions of their own as a matter of self-protection, not alone for themselves but for their millions of members and the causes they represent. It would be no surprise if with the naming of Joseph Walsh as CIO chief in Luzerne County there might come into being the kind of Labor newspaper he is capable of editing.

Elsewhere the national and international unions have been printing their own organs of publication, and according to reports from the printing trades there are new editions being readied up and down and over and across the entire nation. Add to these the hundreds of publications from the bureaus at Washington, together with scores of periodicals that have been brought out for the farmers, and the result is on the side of tremendous new gains for the output of linotype and press. The tendency is expected to have a marked effect upon conditions relating to what America will be after the war.

It is no secret that men in the services, when they are normally supplied and free of enemy interference, are eating about twenty percent more than the food total to which they were accustomed in civil life. Copies of menus from scores of camps showed a plethora of meats, fish, soups, vegetables and desserts dished out for Thanksgiving in conformity with a plan prepared more than a month in advance. But the regular diet too is more than what is considered richly average. A contract eagerly sought in numerous camp localities is that covering acquisition of the left-overs.

Exceptions occur to almost all rules. In the case of holiday feasting there were many thousands of exceptions. They were the men who were caught a-field on training work when the holiday dawned. A letter from a First Lieutenant has reached this column with the following information: "We were on active training over Thanksgiving. Our feast, if you would call it that, consisted of iron rations and an added delicacy composed of buns and bologna. It was fortunate for us that at the end of the day we were within reach of a town with adequate restaurants. As many of us as could be spared took advantage of the fact by buying our own meals at night."

The same officer strongly seconded the motion of President Roosevelt to have all men over thirty-eight years freed from the draft, with those already in service allowed to file reasons why they would be of more use back at their old jobs. Says the lieutenant: "On these training expeditions my heart goes out to the men who have reached their fortieth year of life or are within a year or two of that milestone. They just can't take it. The best possible army will be one that will omit all these oldsters."

For relief of a school situation that is very serious right now and seems destined to become worse, study is being given proposals that have reached departments of education in the national capitol and in a majority of the States of the Union. More than three hundred public schools have closed their

doors, while in scores of other instances there have been so many mergers of classes that teachers are over-worked. In war-plant centers the lack of new buildings amounts to total deprivation for children of migrated workers.

The proposition to leaders of education under the law is that teachers be recruited from men and women past fifty years of age, with only temporary certification of their abilities. Excepting in a few backward population centers there are no idle teachers, no applicants for jobs among persons who have made education their vocation and who hold certified qualifications. But, there are thousands of men and women who have practical education and experience. Their availability would be for the lower school grades where the greatest shortages and deprivations occur.

The strongest argument is that any person of normal intelligence and tact could handle the several grades of fundamental education. It is also stressed that those who have come out of long experience with family-rearing and earning of livelihoods might even be of greater economic advantage to the children than the young men and women they would displace. There is no present indication of relaxation of school laws, but if the war goes on the change may become necessary.

County leaders of the Democratic Party found scant consolation for decisive defeat in conferences called at Hotel Sterling on Sunday night. Where such gatherings had brought out hundreds in the hey-day of the New Deal in Pennsylvania, the attendance this week could be counted in units. Enthusiasm was plainly at the lowest ebb in a dozen years.

For the many who stayed away there was the explanation that only re-organization can bring any chance of future success to the party in Luzerne County. Present leadership has been from the top down, they say, meaning that the Law-Mundy plan of campaign is to fight for high office instead of building from the bottom in the manner adopted by the Republicans. GOP success starts with the election of constables, councilmen, commissioners, school directors. With that nucleus for each test of balloting the Republicans gradually have overcome the Roosevelt influence.

Other complaints of the once enthusiastic New Dealers include the direct charge that only a selected few of the Democrats have ever been given real consideration. Bad choices for county chairman and worse choices for district chairmen have been permitted to stand without correction and there even have been instances where jobs and party commands actually were handed to individuals sympathetic with the GOP. The OPA organization in the district, with Tom Leahy as chief, has repeatedly given its nod to known Republicans.

What is needed, the complainants say, is to go back to the methods adopted in 1932 and 1934. Those two years marked the organization of the Independent Republicans. They based their confidence in the necessity of social and economic reform and threw in with the Democrats to achieve their goals.

Wary of the bungling of party management, most of those decisive voters have gone back to Republican strength or have refused to vote in county and municipal elections. A majority of them assign themselves as lost, without chance to guide policies in the direction they would like to seek. They consider Luzerne County as strong as ever in majority sentiment for the New Deal, but they are bitterly opposed to the greed and mismanagement at the party's top.

The Mundy-Law leadership announced that it wanted to find the weak spots. What was wrong needed no exploration whatever. When a party backed as strongly as the Democrats were in Luzerne County goes gradually and inexorably down to minority consideration, despite rich office-holdings, despite actual depression long-continued under Republican successes, then the only weak spots must be among the individuals who have usurped the power of command.

Unless there is a complete change of personnel among chairmen the great likelihood is that the Democratic Party in Luzerne County will find it very hard to bring out candidates for the next county elections. Republicans right now are counting on sharp reluctance of popular Democrats to be sacrificed to the bunglers. The one hope, a slim one, is that the Independent Republicans can be brought back to the activities that won here for Roosevelt and his followers.

NAPPY

THE GANGSTERS HAVE BEEN CAPTURED AND EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL BUT THERE IS STILL ONE DOUBTFUL ISSUE IN THE MINDS OF THE POLICE - "WHAT HIT THE GANGSTER, SLIMMY, IN THE EYE?" WE NOW FIND NAPPY AND GOOBER ENLIGHTENING THE POLICE ON THAT POINT.



By Irv Tirman

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1.00

Sheer White Linen hand-made hankies with pretty colored embroidery touches in pastel shades.

50c

Lovely Cotton Hankies with snowy white centers and colored borders in several smart patterns.

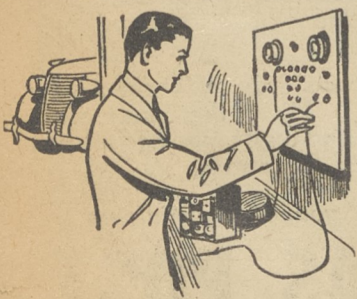
29c

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