

Currie Has Had Wide Experience

Worked As Mining Engineer In Russia

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Because we consider him one of the outstanding candidates for public office in the Back Mountain Region and because we would like to see other men of his stature also enter the lists, we asked Robert Currie a few weeks ago to give us some material for a biographical sketch.

This week we received it in the form of a letter. Although Mr. Currie never intended his letter for publication, we feel that much would be lost if we were to rewrite or edit it, or use the modest sketch he enclosed with his letter.

Mr. Currie is a candidate for school director in Kingston Township. This should make his letter doubly interesting to citizens of that community, but it will also hold interest for all who cherish the Ideal that, without political backing or pull, a man can start from the bottom and get to the top in America—if he will it.

—Editor.

Editor, The Post:

I am enclosing a biographical sketch, in outline, for your information; to supplement this I will try to give you a little of the detail of the things which have interested me most and which I remember and think of as worthwhile in my career.

My mother and father were both natives of Scotland and came to this country as children with their parents. Both the Currie and the Park families were Scotch Presbyterians; both families were connected with the coal mining industries in Scotland and in this country, and both settled in Snow Shoe, Center County, Pa., where my mother and father met and later married in Winburne, Clearfield County.

At the time I was born Admiral Dewey was making a name for himself at Manila, and my father, together with several of his friends, thought the name of Dewey should be perpetuated somewhere in our family; so they decided that my middle name should be Dewey, and I was duly baptized, Robert Dewey.

Because my father was ambitious to succeed in his chosen field as a mine official in this newly adopted country, he enrolled in the Scranton Correspondence Schools, and it is reported that he wore out many pairs of trousers while his friends and associates were wearing out their shoes seeking entertainment in the evenings after work. That his studies were achieving results was proved by the fact that at frequent intervals he moved, or was moved from mining town to mining town, to bigger and better jobs in his chosen field. As a result of this the children of the family received their common school education in many of the public schools in Central Pennsylvania, including Winburne, Arcadia, Nanty-Glo, Robertsdale and Cresson.

Early Schooling

My family moved to Cresson, Pa., September 1912, and I entered the Cresson High School as a freshman. School activities included football, baseball, orchestra and band, in addition to school plays. I was never considered a good student in high school, but I graduated along with the class in 1915 from a three year high school. This school was changed to a four year school the following year and I attended this until the end of the football season, when I got a job as a laborer at the coal mine at Cresson.

My practical experience in coal mining was assured through my father's ambition to have me learn all of the details of every job connected with mining. My evenings were spent following my father's foot-steps through two courses from the Scranton Correspondence Schools—one in Mining Engineering and one in Electrical Engineering. I had pretty well decided that I wanted to be an Electrical Engineer, but two near tragedies changed my mind about that, although I continued to do a lot of electrical work about the mines, and am still very much interested in that particular field.

When the war came to us in 1917 my family thought I was too young to enter the army, although I had my heart set on being a Marine. In September 1918, however, I left home to be inducted into the Army at Grove City, Pa., as a member of the Student Army Training Corps at that institution. It was while I was there that I learned that it was possible for a young man to get a college education in this country, if he wanted it, even though he had no great financial backing. When I received my Honorable Discharge from the U. S. Army on December 23, 1918, I hurried home

to announce to the family that I had decided to go to Penn State and study Mining Engineering. I was eager to get started and tried to enter Penn State at the Mid-term, but found that my three year high school education had been short one half credit in mathematics and one half credit in language to enter the engineering schools at State. The school recommended that I enter the Summer School there in June to pick up the needed credits, and to get properly started in text book grinding after my four years absence from school work.

My first three years of college passed without too much excitement, although I continually found myself in "hot-water" with my Spanish, which was recommended to me because it was the one language most likely to be needed by a Mining Engineer, and because it was very easy. When I got home at the end of my third year at State I found that my father was a very sick man, and when time came to go back to school in the fall I decided that I was needed at home. My father died in December of that year.

Becomes Fireboss

I continued to work at the mine at Cresson until the following fall; in the meantime I studied mining law, mine gasses and the many things a mine foreman and fireboss was expected to know to pass the State Examination for certification. I took the examinations conducted by the State and received my certificate as a fire-boss and mine foreman-2nd Grade.

In the fall of 1923 I realized that without my diploma from Penn State the education I had received there counted for naught in getting a job, and so decided to go back and complete my fourth year as a student. I was then 25 years of age, and many people in my community probably thought I was foolish for continuing school. I eventually graduated in June 1924 with a B. S. Degree in Mining Engineering.

In the meantime, I had taken the State Examination for Mine Foreman, and obtained a Certificate as Mine Foreman-1st Grade. This certificate, together with my studies at Penn State, was responsible for my getting my first job after graduation at the St. Michael Shaft of the Berwind-White Company at the

unheard of salary of \$247.50 per month.

Goes to Russia

I found the job at St. Michael interesting at first; the town of St. Michael is located in the old lake bed of the dam which let go and caused the Johnstown Flood. Parts of the breast of this old dam still stand after all of these years. The mine is a shaft, located in the valley, and is 800 feet deep. After two years here, however I decided that I would have to get out of St. Michaels if I ever expected to be more than a good mine foreman, and it was then I decided to take the job in Russia.

My work in Russia was interesting, and at times exciting, although for the most part, it was one of those experiences I would not have foregone, but would not like to repeat. My memories of Russia are of filth, poverty and bed-bugs. They were the constant reminders in Russia of the cleanliness, prosperity and good things I had left behind to take this job in a foreign country, and I was anxious to get home to the better things at the first opportunity. The Soviet Government was undergoing great changes at the time I was in Russia, and the company I was working for, the Lena Goldfields Limited was having considerable difficulty in getting the Government to live up to its commitments. We finally came to an impasse in our dealings with them in December 1926, and I started for home. I arrived in Berlin, Germany, December 25, 1926 and spent the day there enjoying the mild weather after leaving Russia where we had been having temperatures as low as 23 degrees below zero for over a month.

Mine Rescue Work

I arrived in the United States in January 1927 without a job and with no prospects, but through the good office of my friend, Dean Holbrook at Penn State, I got a job in a few days with the United States Bureau of Mines as Foreman in Charge of the Mine Rescue Car operating in Western Pennsylvania. This job was to prove to me the need for greater efforts in mine safety and was to open up a new field of endeavor which I have followed ever since. I left the Bureau of Mines while I was stationed on the Mine Rescue Car at the Woodward Mine, Kingston, following the

terrific explosion which wrecked that mine in 1927, and took a job with the Pittsburgh Coal Company as Safety Engineer. I stayed on this job one year to the day, and went to the Bureau of Mines as a Mining Engineer.

Taught Special Courses

During my 12 years with the Bureau of Mines I had many exciting and interesting experiences, including teaching special courses in mine safety at the University of California, Columbia University, Penn State and Lafayette College, conducting safety work on the Hetch-Hetchy Water Project—a 72 mile line of tunnels which is now bringing water into San Francisco from the Yosemite Park Area in the high Sierra Nevada Mountains, which is more than a mile higher in elevation than the San Francisco Bay Area. During my stay in California I was almost persuaded to stay there and become a Californian, but the appeal of home and friends in Pennsylvania were strong and I returned to continue my work in connection with coal mining.

In 1931 the Bureau of Mines opened an office in Scranton and I was placed in charge of this office, which had jurisdiction over the mining and tunneling work in the Northeastern United States. This office was later moved to Wilkes-Barre with the building of the new Post Office Building, and we moved to Kingston. In 1937 we moved to the Back Mountain Area, and lived in the Earl Tremayne home until we decided that this was the place of all places to build our permanent residence.

During my years with the Federal Government and since coming with the General Reinsurance Corporation, I have had occasion to write a considerable number of articles on mine safety; many of these have been published and distributed by the U.S. Bureau of Mines as Bulletins, Reports of Investigation and Information Circulars; more recently a number of such pamphlets have been published by the General Reinsurance Corporation.

Electronic Work

Probably the most interesting, and probably the most worthwhile, work in my career is the work now progressing under sponsorship of my company at Lehigh University

where we are developing an Electronic Device to test mine roofs to determine definitely whether or not it is safe for miners to work under. While this work has developed to the point where we feel satisfied with the results, the patent procedure has been delayed and we are not in position to write about it.

During the course of these ramblings, Howard, I have not touched upon my Civic interests and work, because I feel that you know considerable about them. When our Government decided that there was a real danger from enemy air raids in this country there was set up Civilian Defense. As you know I was appointed Zone Warden for Zone 9, comprising the entire Back Mountain Area. Part of the job was training the air raid wardens and others in First-Aid and special training in fire fighting, air raid protection. As you remember, I conducted numerous classes in first-aid throughout this area, and helped to train about 200 men and women.

When special fire-fighting equipment became available for Civilian

Defense Units I worked with those who "knew the ropes" and helped obtain a fire engine pumper and hose, etc., for Shavertown and Lehman. Incidentally, my name is still on the official receipt for all this equipment, and I presume I am still responsible to the Federal Government for its condition and care.

This spring, with talk of elections and public offices, I decided—against my better judgement—that it was time I tried to take a hand in improving our public school system in Kingston Township. My son is in Fourth Grade at the Shavertown schools, and it is my desire that he complete his grade school and High School work in the Public Schools. However, I have not been satisfied with the conduct or standing of our schools, and feel that as a taxpayer in the community I am entitled to expect the best possible education for the children of this community that we can afford. We find that our schools do not rate with the average of the State and that our children leaving Kingston Township High School to enter college are handicapped greatly when they

compete with children coming from other high schools in the country. Perhaps I, as an individual can afford to take my boy out of public schools and send him to a private preparatory school, but what of the many who cannot afford this, because of financial difficulties or because of large families?

As an aspirant for the office of School Director I have made no commitments to any individual or political party. As you know I have always shied away from politics as such—probably because of my many years as a Civil Servant in the employ of the Federal Government. However, I am telling you that if I am elected my main job will be to try to make the Kingston Township Schools the pride of this community in scholastic rating. I feel that the youth of these Back Mountain Communities deserve a break in better schools, better recreational facilities, better libraries and I am willing to give of my time, energy and money to see that they get them.

With best regards,
Yours very truly,
Robert D. Currie

MERRICOURT KENNELS
MARGARET McL. COTTLE
Announces a litter of **SMOOTH FOX TERRIERS**
(THREE MALES, THREE FEMALES)

Sired by BOB SAWYER	{ Champion Farleton Fusilier
Noted English and American Show Dog	{ Dunsperfection, by Champion Corrector of Notts
Out of HOPE OF MERRICOURT	{ Champion Desert Deputy
	{ Brass Top of Wissaboo, by Champion Brass Tacks

30 East Center Street SHAVERTOWN, PA.

7 ROUND TRIPS

to TOKIO!

Every day in the U. S. transport planes fly 80,000 miles, using Sinclair Pennsylvania Motor Oil. That's a distance equal to about 7 round trips from this country to Tokio.

And these Sinclair-lubricated planes carry almost a third of all the passengers flown by commercial airlines in this country.

Use aviation-tested Sinclair Pennsylvania Motor Oil to save wear on the motor of your car—help make it last longer. See your Sinclair Dealer.

SINCLAIR PENNSYLVANIA MOTOR OIL
JAMES L. LENAHA, Agent
Schuyler Avenue, Kingston, Pa.
Telephone Kingston 7-5213

Acme Super Markets
OPEN LATE Friday and Saturday Nights!

HERE IT IS -- THE LOAF

You've Been Waiting For!
A BREAD VALUE YOU WILL LONG REMEMBER.
Why pay more, when you can get such good wholesome quality bread at such a low price? You really save every day when you buy

Freshly Baked . . . ACME
Super Bread

jumbo 26 1/2-oz. loaf **11c**

ENRICHED for better nutrition. One-half pound of this bread supplies you with at least 55% Thiamine, 17.5% Riboflavin, 5 milligrams Niacin and 40% Iron, of your minimum daily requirements.

Selected Fresh Fruits & Vegetables
We're Proud of Our Large Displays of Quality Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Fancy, Solid, Red Ripe
Tomatoes lb. 23c

Spinach Fresh, Crisp Tender **2 lbs. 17c**

Nearby GREEN bunch 5c	Large, Juicy dozen 39c
Calif. Eating lb. 43c	Fancy Calif. 1ge. 19c
Georgia 2 lbs. 3c	Crisp Red bunches 10c

E2 Through Z2 Red Stamps
Now Valid

Meat is important in the diet. Not all meats are available—but all cuts of meat are high in nutritional value.

Tender Skinless **Franks lb. 37c**
Assorted MEAT **Loaves lb. 33c**
Long Bologna } **33c**
Ring Bologna }
Minced Bologna } lb.

Fresh **Trout lb. 19c**
Fresh **Mackerel lb. 21c**

ASCO Coffee
A superb blend. Save coupons for gifts

ASCOC Orange Pekoe Tea 2 1-lb. bags **47c**
A Deep Rich Blend 2 1-lb. bags **51c**
8-oz. pkg. **35c**
Farmdale Evaporated Milk 2 tall cans **19c**

Children love this vitamin fortified food drink. Makes milk taste like tootsie rolls.

Tootsie V M 1 lb. jar **47c**

DETHOL Insecticide qt. can 33c	OAKITE Cleaner 2 pkgs 19c Dissolves Grease	SPIC & SPAN The Perfect Cleaner pkg. 23c
Insure Canning Success! Use BALL MASON JARS (Pints) dozen 59c (Quarts) dozen 69c	HY-TROUS Fertilizer 8-oz. bot. 59c 3-oz. bot. 23c	IVORY Toilet Soap 4 med. bars 23c IVORY Toilet Soap 3 1ge. bars 29c IVORY Flakes 1ge. med. 19c pkg. 23c IVORY 2 Snow 1ge. med. 19c pkg. 23c
SAN-NAP-PAK Napkins 2 pkgs. 43c	CAMAY Toilet Soap 3 bars 20c P&G White Naphtha Soap 3 bars 13c	DUZ 1ge. pkg. 23c 2 med. pkgs. 19c
		OXYDOL 1ge. pkg. 23c 2 med. pkgs. 19c