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WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE NEWSPAPER READER

BY WILLIAM J. MILLER

Whenever two or more newspapermen get together the talk sooner or later turns to the sad state of the nation's press, and what should be done about it. That was true of every one of the nine groups of Nieman Fellows so far. A majority in nearly every group felt that the press generally was doing an inadequate, and too often a biased and venal, job. Like the weather, everybody talked about it endlessly but found no solution for it.

Many reasons have been advanced for the publishers' cussed persistence in continuing to publish newspapers that are far from being as honest, as fearless or as outspoken as most of their writers would wish them to be. One possible reason is perhaps too simple to have merited much discussion, and that is that the general public may not want a better press. I have come to the conclusion that the people get about as good a press as they deserve.

By the same logic, I persuaded myself that India did not deserve independence. "Look," I would say to friends who argued that India should be free day after tomorrow, "when we Americans wanted freedom, we damned well took it. It wasn't something we asked somebody to give to us. About the Indians: there are 400,000,000 of them, and only 40,000,000 Englishmen. We have just finished a war in which, for a good solid year, England was uncertain whether she could succeed in hanging on to her own little island, let alone India. During that time, if there had been as many as 5,000,000 Indians who could have agreed on the kind of freedom they wanted, you couldn't persuade me they couldn't have taken it."

The trouble with the Indians was that they couldn't stop fighting among themselves long enough to unite against the English. The trouble with the American newspaper reader, however, is, I believe, that he does not like to read anything that forces him to think. That, and that alone

could account for the fact that all through the war the American newspaper with the yargest circulation, the New York Daily News, was the one which consistently filled its columns with Nazi propaganda. The propaganda evidently did not have any effect, for the Daily News' readers went on about their business of winning a war, but the fact that they continued to read the News instead of dancing up and down and tearing it to pieces is an indication that they read it mostly because its contents were short, simple, and quickly and easily read with no cerebation whatever.

If you will make a careful study of newspaper readers on street cars, subways, busses, or elsewhere, you will quickly note that the moods which conflict with the always tepid desire to be informed are almost as varied as the scenery. At the time when most people read papers, either going to work or going home from it, they tend to be absorbed in day dreams, either planning the triumph they are going to put over, or else thinking up logical excuses for the rebuff they have just suffered.

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There are not many newspapers interesting enough to compete with a man's own mind, where the world's most fascinating character stages a continuous and unbelievably skilful performance for an audience of one. When the dream has fully sway, the paper falls and the reader nods until a sudden stop jolts him back into the present.

As you watch the various newspaper readers, they sort themselves out into types. One man is torn between a desire to read and a desire to look at girls' legs. This forces him to keep jerking the paper sideways. Usually he settles on a particular girl and thereafter maneuvers his paper in such a way that he can pretend to read it and at the same time watch her.

Then there are the two readers who habitually ride together. As one talks, the other unfolds his paper and hastily scans the headlines. When he replies, the other takes a fugitive glance at his. When their discussion reaches an animated stage they roll up the papers and rap the seat with them for emphasis.

There is another type who goes through the whole paper as if he is looking for something he lost. He scans one column up and the next one down so rapidly he appears to be nodding his head. One seldom knows the object of his search, but it is a safe bet that he is looking for his own name.

I once shared an apartment in Cleveland with a photographer who, every night before retiring made it a ritual to go out and buy the bulldog edition of the Plain Dealer. When he returned, he laid the paper on a table and went to bed. This had become such a matter of his life that I doubt he could have slept if he had not done it.

It was also in Cleveland that I encountered the most discerning newspaper critic I have ever met. He was an elderly gentleman of moderate wealth. When his son told him I was with the Cleveland Press, he said he had always preferred the Plain Dealer. "When we are through with our paper," he said, "we use it to wrap the garbage in, and to spread on the kitchen linoleum when we mop. I don't know whether it is because you use a poorer

William J. Miller, of the staff of Newsweek, was long a crack reporter, rewrite man, and finally a war correspondent for the Cleveland Press. He was a Nieman Fellow in 1940-41.

grade of paper, or what, but the *Press* simply does not have the staying qualities of the *Plain Dealer*."

But to return to my thesis: the majority of American newspaper readers do not like to read anything which forces them to think. That is why *PM* has made such a miserable showing. Even the most faithful of its 150-odd thousands read *PM* with something of the same emotions with which they take castor oil. They believe it will be good for them but they are not sure they are going to like it. *PM* has been plugging along for seven years with the notion that so long as your heart is on the side of the angels, your news does not have to be either fresh or interesting.

There are now about 15,000,000 members of labor unions, whose leaders constantly complain about the unfair treatment labor gets in the press. Any one of the four biggest unions—the Mine Workers, the Steel Workers, the Machinists or the Auto Workers—has a membership of more than 500,000. Yet *PM*, which has constantly leaned over backward if it has not fallen on its fanny to be fair to labor, was unable to obtain, out of the entire labor movement, the 200,000 readers necessary to keep it breaking even without ads. Any one of these unions, with a \$1 assessment per member, could raise enough money to start a daily paper which presumably could, by pristine example, put the "kept press" to shame. Yet the unions have consistently, and one is inclined to think, cannily, kept out of the daily publishing field. So long as they are unrepresented, they can continue to complain. With their own paper, they would have to make it interesting.

The organized newspapermen themselves discovered that that was not as easy as it sounds; the *Guild Reporter*, while it has diligently guarded the members' economic interests, has never kept anybody awake reading it from cover to cover.

For at least a decade, American writers have been complaining about the *Readers Digest*. They felt that there was something indecent about a magazine—which was, in the last analysis, nothing but flapping and calculated corn—making such an embarrassment of riches than its owner could not give them all away. Some of them also felt that it was biased, and was a dangerous influence in its seeming inclination toward authoritarianism. Yet it was not until 1946 that some 380 writers, artists and photographers discovered that, by subscribing some \$500 to \$1,000 each, they could publish their own magazine. The result, called "47—Magazine of the Year"* has just appeared, with a greater initial

circulation, and certainly a greater reader interest, than *LIFE* Magazine had at the beginning. Whether this can be sustained, or whether, indeed, writers at their uninhibited best can be interesting to the mass, remains to be seen.

It does, however, indicate that any time a sufficient number of people become really dissatisfied with the daily newspaper they are getting, they can pool their money and roll their own. The Communists did it a long time ago, but they do not put out any better a newspaper than they did leaflets. The Mine Workers can do it any time they get ready. So can the Auto Workers, so can the Steel Workers, so can the Machinists and the Ladies Garment Workers. So can Jehovah's Witnesses. And so, for that matter, can the newspapermen who are always complaining about how bad the press is. There are now 20,000 in the *Guild*. If each one of them put up \$100—you see what I mean. Indeed, if 20,000 newspapermen could ever get together long enough to put up even \$10 apiece, I have no doubt that at least three or four venturesome millionaires could be found who would willingly match their money or double it. There is more venture capital afloat today than there are brave and inspiring ideas to claim it.

However, if newspapermen could own and publish their own paper, and make it as honest, free and unbiased as their various lights could agree upon, it would be a mistake for them to undertake to tell the public how to think. The public prefers not to think. It prefers to be entertained. So let the perfect newspaper be short, simple, sexy and full of pictures. Let it devote one fourth of its space to a lavish coverage of sports, including who is bribing whom, and another fourth to comics. I predict it will sell like hell. If, on top of that, it is also honest, unprejudiced, and unslanted, the public won't mind. The press the American people get today is pretty bad, and it is just what they deserve.

Answer to Advertiser

The movie theatre manager in Laramie objected to an editorial in the paper. Failing to impress the editor he ended by threatening to withdraw his advertising.

"You pull out your ad," rejoined the editor, "and I'll start reviewing your shows."

The advertising stayed in.

What the Public Wants?

The following "poll" story by the *UP* was printed on the first page of the *Boston Evening Globe*, January 29:

Sex and Disaster News and Comics Choice of 200 Girls

By the United Press

Take it from 200 feminine high school graduates, the modern gal wants sex, disaster and L'il Abner in her newspaper.

A poll of girl students at Boston's Kathleen Dell Secretarial School revealed 40 percent selecting "Man Attacks School Girl" 'as tops in interest among a collection of sample headlines offered for their perusal.

Some were willing to take "Twenty Killed in Plane Crash" as their second choice, but a blood-tingling scare-head about the atom bomb aroused only polite interest. No one seemed worried about "Russia Balks at United States Terms."

"Tot lost in the woods" didn't get a tumble.

More than 97 percent of the student stenographers said they liked the comics best of all. In fact 33 percent read the funnies first and then "took in the sports section and worked forward through the paper, ending up with the front page."

Two tall girls with glasses said they read the editorials first.

Most of the lassies preferred home town papers, but 57 percent said they relied on a news magazine to supplement the reading. Three cents was considered enough to pay for a paper, but they said they would part with more to "get the news that interests us."

Forty-two percent said they wouldn't buy a paper without advertisements. Half the group liked the fashion ads, 22 percent preferred the classified ads and 15 percent said they "read 'em all."

World War II rated as the most important news event during the past two decades with one third of the group. The atom bomb was second. The rest of the girls said they could think of no single outstanding news event within their lifetime.

The students were almost unanimous in saying they "questioned the accuracy" of news published in papers, but more than half of them admitted their opinions were "influenced by material in newspaper columns."

★ ★

"Your City Tomorrow" by Guy Greer, MacMillan Co, N Y, published Feb 18, is a book to reinforce the editorial writer who must deal with such urgent issues as the decentralization of cities, housing, planning and the problem of local taxation.

*Yes, the writer is a stockholder.

THE SPRINGFIELD NEWSPAPER SITUATION

BY RUSSELL COLLINS

(In Springfield, third city of Massachusetts, all four newspapers have for long been under one control. On September 26, 1946 the mechanical forces struck. All four papers immediately stopped publication and through the ensuing months Springfield went without local newspaper

service. The following account of the complex newspaper situation there was obtained from a veteran Springfield newspaperman after more than four months of the news famine. This is the second time within a dozen years that Springfield has experienced a prolonged strike under

the complete newspaper monopoly in that city. Whether or not newspaper publishing in Springfield is resumed before this article is printed, it is useful as describing one of the most peculiar situations in American journalism. As we go to press Springfield is still without newspapers.)

The strike started on September 26, 1946, when three AFL mechanical unions—the stereotypers, the pressmen and the compositors—walked out. The four Springfield papers—the Morning Union, Evening Union, Republican and the Daily News—immediately suspended publication. Sherman H. Bowles had said he would do just that.

The issues with the pressmen and stereotypers were largely demands that they get a signed contract. Previously, they had operated for years with an oral contract. Now, they decided, was a good time to demand a signed contract. They also wanted some fairly small salary raises which they probably could have gotten. However, the chief issue with them was a signed contract. The typo union, AFL, also, however, wanted in addition to a signed contract, to break a situation here that they are afraid of nationally. For years, Bowles has had special typewriter keyboards built over Linotype keyboards, to make it a simple matter to train a girl to operate a Linotype machine. In fact, they turn out operators in six weeks in Bowles' school. The ITU has feared this thing for a long time. When they felt they were sufficiently organized, they went to bat with Bowles for a signed contract (which they had never enjoyed) and demanded equal pay for the girls who operate the special keyboard machines—the scale they demanded was about \$60 for a 40-hour week, with a slightly higher rate for night work. Bowles has since refused to give them a signed contract and refused to consider paying the girls (who can be trained in six weeks) the same wages that a journeyman printer would receive.

The unions also bucked a GI training program that Bowles scheduled. The result was that the government would not approve it. Bowles went ahead with it anyway, paying every GI in every dept. \$50 a week regardless of his lack of skill or training.

Bowles has said whatever happens only two newspapers will resume publication, instead of four, when the strike is over. That will mean that 50 per cent of the employees will be jobless. The unions, on the other hand (especially the typo union) are demanding a signed contract that all help will be taken back for at least a year. Bowles says no. Actually, the ITU is in a tough spot because the strike was called by international organizers, without a vote taken by the local membership, and now it appears that 50 per cent of the workers will lose their jobs whatever else results.

About six weeks after the three AFL unions walked out, the Guild went on strike. Up to that point, all editorial employees had been paid even though they didn't even go near the office. Then, after about six weeks, 75 per cent of all the editorial employees (total; about 80) received notices they were being dropped from the payroll. The notices advised them to seek other jobs. The 25 per cent who were retained on the payroll included a total of 11 Guild members among the four papers. The Guild held a hasty meeting and then—after having been fired—voted to go on strike. When that happened, three Guild members who had been retained, resigned from the Guild and a fourth was thrown out after he walked through a Guild picket line. The other seven Guild members who had been retained by the management, walked off the job. (Those who had been retained were putting files into shape, etc.)

There are today about 30 or 40 editorial employees still on the payroll. None of those still on the payroll is, of course, a Guild member.

After the Guild joined the other three

striking unions, the Guild said it would not return to work until all four unions got signed contracts. The three mechanical unions had had such an understanding since the beginning and have stayed with it. They have not, however, completely accepted the Guild, although on the surface everything is all right. Some Guild members will admit they wouldn't be surprised to see the three mechanical unions, if they get what they want, go back to work and forget the Guild.

Sherman Bowles took the unions by surprise with the claim that he could not negotiate with them because he is not the responsible publisher of any of the papers he has run for years. This baffled the strikers and also the community. Bowles's position is that he doesn't know who owns the four papers; that he is only an employee; that there is no stock in his name; that he doesn't draw any salary. Technically most of this appears to be true. The stock that he doesn't control is scattered through several branches of the Bowles family and the branches don't know how much stock they would control if they pooled their resources.

The four papers have been under single control since 1926.

Uncle Sam would like to know the name of the controlling concern. It appears that an organization known as the Valley Trust is the controlling holding company.

There was a strike on the Springfield papers called May 15, 1935, that lasted for six months. Actually, not one edition was lost and most of the employees began to straggle back before the strike was officially ended. That involved only the composing room. Many of the Guild's strongest members today went to work for the Springfield Newspapers as strike-breakers in the proof room during the earlier strike. They eventually were given jobs in the editorial department as a pay-off by the Bokwles organization. Then they joined the Guild, some years later.

Very little has happened to the news-

Former city editor of the Springfield Daily News, Russell Collins had left the Bowles papers before the strike. He is Springfield correspondent of the Boston Globe.

THE NIEMAN REPORTS

paper editorial staffs since they went off the payroll. I don't know any who have moved away. About a dozen tried to get jobs on bigger out-of-town papers in Boston, New York, etc., but were not taken on either because they were not competent enough or because there was a shortage of jobs. Actually, one of the most significant things about the newspaper situation here was the general lack of competence of editorial employees—which was a direct result, of course, of poor pay and working conditions. Most of the editorial employees are still available here. Those who have taken other jobs number about 15. Most of them are in temporary situations such as in the expanded news rooms of radio stations, etc. They would probably go back to work if the situation is cleared up. Many are content just to collect their \$25 a week unemployment compensation.

Business has not suffered greatly because of the strike, merchants claim. Hardest hit are florists and this is because when people die here some of their best friends don't know of it for weeks in the absence of any local newspaper. Thus fewer flowers are sent to funerals. A survey I conducted recently for the Boston Globe, incidentally, disclosed that obituaries are the news items that are missed most. Norman Wallace, an executive of Forbes & Wallace, leading department store here, tells me that actually sales in Springfield, compared to the same period a year ago, are showing slightly greater gains than in most New England cities. The merchants were fortunate in having, however, a Shopping News of 70,000 circulation which filled the breach fairly well. Wallace said his store misses, for example, only the opportunity to advertise spot stuff—like a sudden purchase of 10,000 yards of cotton goods at an unusually low price. The radio, he says, has been a flop.

Wallace hit hard, though, at the social and civic damages done by lack of newspapers.

First move to substitute for the lack of papers was made by this city's two radio stations. Unfortunately, though, with an excellent chance to prove their worth, they missed the bus. They hired inadequate staffs of inexperienced men. The results are what one would expect. Variety, the amusement magazine, had a long article on this angle, pointing out how the radio missed its chance here. One station, for instance, doesn't even schedule news at the same hour daily. It's broadcast at any old hour, the theory being that "people will stay tuned to our station all day, just to hear the news."

The only other attempt was undertaken starting Jan. 25, after this city had been without a daily newspaper for 123 days. The Guild now gets out a daily "paper." One sheet 11 x 17 inches. It sells for three cents and they only print 3000 copies. The four Springfield papers had 146,000 circulation. The paper was greeted with disappointment by the public because it was built up over the radio for two weeks before it appeared. The public thought it was going to get a regular newspaper.

Chief obstacle in the way of publication of other newspapers has been the lack of newsprint and equipment. The nearby Holyoke Transcript rushed into the breach early in the strike and started putting out a Springfield edition. It did a good, workmanlike job and was supplying about 50,000 copies. This wasn't enough, but it helped. Then the ITU threatened to pull its members off the job in the Holyoke paper's plant unless the special edition was stopped. It was stopped quickly.

Outside papers from Worcester, Boston and New York, sent in a few extra copies but it didn't meet the demand. The Globe, for instance, hasn't had enough newsprint to send them here in any quantity until just recently. There is a terrific demand for out-of-town papers, especially on Sunday. You can't buy a New York Times or Herald Tribune on Sunday unless you are pretty close to the dealer.

It's impossible to tell what the wage scale was in any department before the strike because there wasn't any scale. Reporters of more than five years' experience ranged from \$45 to \$65-70 depending upon many things, mostly the whim of the department head. Copy readers, etc., were in the same position. Everybody was underpaid although the raises in the one or two years before the strike were more frequent than ever before in the history of the place. Also, there was no premium on competence. A reporter who had been there for 27 years or so was drawing down high pay (proportionately, of course) just because he had managed to hold his job. Many others with less seniority but much more competence earned far less.

The Guild wants to establish a scale of about \$60 or \$65 for reporters with five years' experience. At first they came in with demands much higher than that, but have been gradually cutting them.

In the composing room, pay ranged from about \$28 a week to as high as \$65 or \$70. There was no rhyme nor reason to the variations. The pressmen and stereotype operators, though, had an orally-agreed scale which paid them roughly what is

paid in other cities of this size in New England.

Bowles being the rugged individualist he is (and rated at worth \$32 million by Dun & Bradstreet) my best prediction of what will happen is this, pessimistic though it may sound: Eventually, enough employees will straggle back to work at the terms they had when they walked out, and publication of two newspapers will resume, employing about 50 percent of the employees previously on the payroll. Thus Bowles will have killed off two of the four newspapers (which he has wanted to do for a long time) and blamed the labor unions for it—assuring himself of no more labor trouble for quite a while.

On the 125th day of the strike, Mayor Daniel B. Brunton organized a citizens' committee of prominent industrial and professional leaders in Springfield, devoted to the task of trying to settle the strike. The committee met twice that week with Bowles. At the first meeting, Bowles informed the committee he had just given stereotypers. This was confirmed by a resigned contracts to the pressmen and representative of both unions they waited approval of the contracts by international headquarters. The unions, meanwhile, were saying they wouldn't return until the ITU also got a contract.

Actually this means far less in the way of progress than appeared on the surface. Last September, when the strike started, Bowles told the pressmen and stereotypers that he would give them signed contracts, but would not do business with the ITU. Thus, the citizens committee action only brought into being what Bowles offered months before.

At the second meeting, Bowles walked out on the citizens' committee before the two-hour session was finished. Before he left, though, it was brought out that two managing editors (acting for Bowles) Frank Kelly of the Daily News and Paul Craig of the Union, had flatly informed the Guild that the management had no intention whatever of negotiating further with the Guild or providing the Guild with a contract. Kelly and Craig claimed, according to John Ullman, Guild organizer, that the Guild members weren't on the payroll any longer and thus the Guild could not be a bargaining agent for anybody.

Incidentally Springfield has held, since the 120th day of the strike, the national record for consecutive days without a daily newspaper. Previous record of 119 days was established in Reading, Pa. There have been longer newspaper strikes, but never before has a city been so long without a daily newspaper—131 days to Feb 3.

The Hawk and the Pigeons

BY ED EDSTROM

Even as he stood there at the city desk listening to Masterson's rasping voice, Merle was glad that he hadn't taken that third drink before reporting to work. With a third drink under his belt he might have resented vocally the tongue lashing Masterson, the city editor, was giving him and that wouldn't have done at all—not with this chance to get back on the Blade again.

"So you're sober!" Masterson exclaimed in mock surprise. A fat-jowled, big-bellied, rump-sprung sadist, Masterson fondly imagined that Hollywood had formed its city editor type from a mold much like his own. He rested back in his swivel chair and contemplated Merle, a bent, round-shouldered little man in a shabby sixteen-dollar suit. "Well, you always are sober the first day."

Masterson leaned forward in the chair and thrust his fleshy jaw at Merle. "But get this, Merle. This is the last time. One more drunk and you're through forever. Understand?"

"Yes, Mr. Masterson."

"If it weren't for the manpower shortage you wouldn't be back this time," Masterson continued. He picked up a clipping from his desk. "Now here's an assignment. Ordinarily I'd send an office boy out on this one but we can't get office boys these days—all we can get is you."

There was embarrassed silence in the city room except for a snicker from McGrath, the assistant city editor, who aped Masterson in everything. Merle's face flushed but he accepted the clipping. Damn, damn, damn, damn, he thought bitterly, why can't Masterson for once be decent. He forced his attention to return to the clipping. It was from the Morning Press, which, with the afternoon Scimitar, formed the Blade's opposition. He read rapidly. The story said:

"The hawk which has terrorized City Hall pigeons for the last week struck again yesterday. Hundreds of startled passers-by saw the bird hurtle from the sky to

claim his sixth victim from the City Hall lawn.

"Patrolman Harold Gillespie, crack rifle shot of the Police Department who has been stationed atop City Hall to shoot the hawk down, said he was unable to fire at his quarry because of endangering pedestrians."

There was more but Masterson's voice cut in: "Now this is a story with a lot of human interest. People are worked up about those poor defenseless pigeons getting blitzed by this hawk like it was Hitler and the Poles." Masterson paused and a creative gleam lighted his eye. "Say," he exclaimed, turning to McGrath, "why don't we christen this hawk 'Hitler,' huh?"

McGrath said enthusiastically, "That's a swell idea. 'Hitler the hawk.' But those lunkheads at the Scimitar won't think of that. Boy, will it burn 'em up!"

Pleased with this proof of his own genius, Masterson forgot his baiting of Merle. "You go over to City Hall and camp with this Dead-Eye Dick. Call me every hour. If he kills this hawk, we'll banner it."

"Yes, sir," said Merle and hurried from the city room. He stopped at the cashier's cage on the first floor to turn in a twenty-dollar voucher Masterson had given with a hint of rain in the air, Merle felt good. He was back on the Blade, he had an assignment and he had money in his pocket. The last year had been tough—a lot of cheap stinking press agent jobs and working on little neighborhood papers and helping out in department stores during holiday rushes. Merle shuddered. That wasn't ever going to happen to him again. This time, he told himself virtuously, he was going to make it stick. He'd stay on the wagon, take everything Masterson handed out and make something of himself.

The two drinks he had had earlier were wearink off and as he neared City Hall, he felt a little chilled. He saw the familiar sign at the corner—"Regan's Bar & Grill." Merle hesitated. "Just one," he said. "One to warm up on and to celebrate by." He walked in.

"Hi, Regan," he said gaily. The bartender looked up. When he saw that it was Merle, he said suspiciously, "Hi." "Gimme a bourbon and soda," Merle said.

Regan didn't move. "You got any money?" Merle was annoyed. "Sure," he said, slapping the twenty down on the bar. "I'm back on the Blade." Regan was more friendly and mixed the drink. Merle drank it quickly, picked up his change and said: "So long." Then, more importantly: "I've got an assignment."

He walked across the street to City Hall, turned down the right corridor and past a door marked "Press." The poker game was in progress. There were five reporters in the game and a sixth slouched in a chair, reading the Press. He was Harris, the Blade's City Hall man.

"Hi, fellows," said Merle. The players nodded. Merle sat down beside Harris. "Howya doing?" he asked. Harris replied, "O. K." "I'm back on the Blade," Merle said. Harris was unimpressed. "Yeah, I heard about it. What are you doing over here?"

"Oh, nothing much. Just the hawk story. I'm doing a death watch on him. What goes on?"

Harris shook his head. "Nothing this morning. This afternoon we all trail His Honor while he inspects the new housing project."

It was good to be back in the fellowship again. They talked a little more. Merle stood up. "Duty calls," he said. "See you later." He took the elevator to the top floor, then walked up the little flight of stairs to the roof. With his rifle crooked in his arm, Patrolman Gillespie sat on a box, scanning the skies for the hawk.

"I'm Merle of the Blade." It was wonderful to say that again. "Any luck?"

"Nope," said Gillespie. "Not a sign. I think maybe the cold scared him away. Or maybe he thought it was gonna rain. Or maybe he just went back to the country. I don't know."

Merle gazed over the stone railing. Tall buildings circled City Hall.

"Ya see," Gillespie explained. "I gotta be awful careful. Every time I get the range on him there's people around. And if he's flyin' I gotta consider them people in them office buildings. About the only safe way I can shoot at him is if he flies right over City Hall. Then he'll be a dead duck." Gillespie laughed. "Dead hawk I mean."

After the first hour passed, Merle went down to the press room and called the city desk. "Nothing doing," he told Masterson. "O.K.," said Masterson. "Stay with it. Still sober?" Masterson hung up before Merle could answer. The drinks had worn off and the jibe depressed him. He went back up the roof.

Several times during the morning he or Gillespie thought they spied the hawk approaching but always it turned out to be merely another pigeon.

"Ya know," Gillespie said. "This is all kinda silly. Here I been on the force twelve years and never get my name in the paper except a little squib when I win a rifle-shootin' contest. Now this hawk comes along and I'm all over the front page. And ya know what?"

"What?" asked Merle. He was bored and cold and thinking how he could really use a drink. From where he stood he could see Regan's.

"I kinda like that hawk," Gillespie said defiantly.

"Whaddya mean?"

"Well, just look down there at those pigeons." Gillespie pointed to the lawn and the sidewalk. "See those damn fat lazy bastards struttin' around, so fat they can hardly walk, let alone fly. All they do is eat and then fly up here and crap all over the City Hall." Gillespie was indignant. "Yesterday one of 'em decorated my uniform, damn him. I figure it's a good thing to have that hawk on their tail. Maybe he'd kill 'em all off. It's a sorta law of survival of the fittest."

Gillespie and Merle had lunch together at a hamburger stand. Merle was proud of himself for staying away from Ragan's where he had thought of eating. After lunch he called the office again. The press room was deserted because of the housing project inspection. Merle again felt depressed. With the other reporters gone he lost his sense of comradeship. He went up to the roof. It was drizzling. Gillespie and Merle had long since talked each other out. Merle's nerves were screaming for a drink.

"Look," he said suddenly. "Do you think that damn hawk will show this afternoon?" "I don't think so," Gillespie replied.

"I'm going down to Regan's for a quick one," Merle said. "Tip me off if anything happens, will you?"

"Sure," said Gillespie. "Wish I could go with you."

But outside Regan's, Merle stopped, his good intentions nagging at him. After all, it was only a few more hours. If he went into Ragan's he might take one too many. But if he stuck it out today, maybe tomorrow would be easier. He had fifty minutes before he was to call the office again. He didn't want to go back up on the roof. Yet if he stayed down here Regan's might tempt him.

The movie marquee down the street caught his eye and decided him. A movie ticket was cheaper than a drink and a much safer way to kill time.

He stayed a little longer in the movie than he had intended. When he got out he ran to the City Hall press room. He paused to get his breath, then called Masterson.

"No sign of the hawk yet," he said. There was no answer. "Did you hear me, Mr. Masterson?" he asked.

Masterson's voice, sweetly sarcastic, came over the wire. "Yes, I heard you, Mr. Merle. Did all you boys hear Mr. Merle?"

Merle could hear a clicking sound. The whole city room must be cutting in on the conversation. He began to worry.

"Now tell us, Mr. Merle, just how you carried out your assignment. Some of the younger members of the staff are listening in and I want them to get the benefit of your vast reportorial experience, Mr. Merle."

Merle got a little sick to his stomach. "I . . . uh . . . well, I been on the roof at City Hall all day with Gillespie, just like you told me to."

"That's fine Mr. Merle. A reporter should always carry out his city editor's instructions. Go on, Mr. Merle."

"Well, every hour I came down and called the office, like you told me to, like I'm doing now."

Masterson's voice got a little edge to it. "And did you see the hawk?"

"No, sir."

"And there was no shooting?"

"No, sir."

Masterson was almost yelling. "And you didn't take a drink?"

"No, sir. Is . . . is something wrong, Mr. Masterson?"

Masterson cursed wildly for a full two minutes. ". . . and don't ever come into this office again, you dirty stewbum," he concluded. The receiver banged in Merle's ear.

Merle knew where he could find the answer. He ran outside and bought a Scimitar. It was on page one . . . "The pigeon-killing hawk was shot dead this afternoon . . ." If only he had gone into Regan's instead of that movie! He'd have caught the Blade in time . . . but what was the use thinking about it!

We walked into Regan's. "Gimme a double bourbon," he said dully. He drank it and then another. He introduced himself to the man at his side. "I'm Merle of the Blade," he said. "Will you have a drink?" He bought quite a few drinks. When his money was gone, Regan gave him a drink and then led him to the door.

On the sidewalk a pigeon waddled by. "Damn fat lazy bastard," Merle said and aimed a kick at it. He fell flat on his back. He rolled over to the curb and managed to push himself up to a sitting position. His head dropped to his arms. Quietly he began to cry.

A Straight Story

A veteran Chicago reporter, famed for his gags, recalls the assignment given him to cover the investigation of the University of Chicago ordered in a Red-hunt resolution of the Illinois legislature. The resolution had been introduced by State Senator Fred Wallgren of the drug store chain.

"Give us a straight story, no gags," said the city editor. "Remember the University of Chicago is a great institution—and so is Wallgren's."

Says Who?

When a small town editor took a leave of absence for a Nieman Fellowship, the publisher hired the wife of a local professor to write the editorials until the end of the college year at Harvard. One day she came out against the Women's Equal Rights bill. This brought on the publisher a storm from leaders of the Equal Rights movement.

Next day the paper carried the announcement:

In the absence of the editor, the editorials are written by a temporary editorial writer and do not necessarily represent the views of this paper.

CRUSADING IN A SMALL TOWN

Pitfalls the Editor Learns to Avoid

BY ERNEST LINFORD

The Laramie Republican-Boomerang which Bill Nye founded three-quarters of a century ago as an outlet for his budding humor, has been identified with some successful campaigns, but it has lost many a fight.

For many months our paper campaigned against smoke and cinders which make life hazardous and unpleasant on the leeward side of the Union Pacific railroad tracks. Cash prizes for letters brought torrid comments and proposals.

Prize-winning letters were published and matched with pointed editorials, causing a mild sensation in a town noted for knuckling down to the Union Pacific, the payroll of which plays a tremendous part in community economics.

As the campaign neared its climax, Union Pacific engineers met with community committees to discuss what to do about roving cinders. Much of the talk was along the old defeatist line but there were some technical discussions of using live steam to dissolve or wet down the black particles.

About this time also the railroad company augmented its slow conversion from coal to oil in some of its big locomotives and "yard goats." The cinder campaign may have had some connection.

But the marked clearing of the Laramie air, figuratively and actually, same not from a spirit of cooperation but by effects of John L. Lewis's "no contract, no work" enterprises, and as transportation fell off, fewer engines spewed unpleasant carbon over the business district.

In a blind retrenchment campaign, blamed in Omaha on the economic situation growing out of strikes and the economics to the end of the war, the Union Pacific all but closed its Laramie shops, furloughing about 300 family heads, some with a 25-year seniority. One has to live in a railroad town to realize the effects of such layoffs, be they seasonal or at the height of depressions. Rumors run wild; men curse the company and predict dire economic repercussions for the community. Business men are drawn into the dark psychology resulting in their own retrenchment programs.

When the layoff list was posted at the roundhouse the editor of The Republican-Boomerang was caught off guard by a sugary feminine voice on the phone which asked, "Would you like to have an item for your cinder campaign?" When he replied in the affirmative, she snapped: "They're closing the shops today. I hope you're satisfied."

Editorials on cinders were not popular during the rest of last summer. Laramie friends wrote this winter that the cinder nuisance was at its height again and many of the furloughed shopmen were back at their machines.

Problem of Success

Seventeen years in small town newspapering, twelve as an editor, have taught me that success is sometimes more troublesome than failure, journalistically speaking. Professional and personal jealousies often take the edge off satisfaction of a job well done. I have learned through experience, at the end of a campaign, to bow out in favor of the Chamber of Commerce and other civic organizations which keep the ball rolling; to lie low while others take the bows; to compliment public officials.

At the end of a successful campaign a newspaper editor often learns that his work is just beginning to get tough, that he has a responsibility to guard and defend the new project, to protect it from attacks and death by lethargy. When the newness wears off a program comes up against hard realities.

In 1942 my newspaper brought to a climax a spirited campaign for council-

manager government. Laramie citizens voted in the first city manager setup in Wyoming. Many factors contributed to success of the drive. The old mayor-council (second class city plan) had become outmoded, unwieldy and illegal. The outgoing city administration, locked in bitter rows, was unpopular and some members under suspicion. The town had outgrown its ancient charter. We hit while the iron was hot and helped convince the voters that they should not only turn the rascals out but bring in an entirely new setup.

But the sponsors of the radical change, including the editorial writer, were not prepared for such sudden success! When the council-manager system was voted in we found ourselves in a dilemma. The state statute governing the system was full of bugs. Nobody had had any experience with the new plan. The constitution forbade hiring anybody outside of the state and the state had no city managers.

Our No. 1 problem was to buck the machine which had picked mayors and councilmen for years and to institute a council of non-partisan business men. Since the city treasury was sadly in the red, it was thought best to get as many business men on the council as possible. We were successful but not without a great deal of finagling which would put the old party ward heelers to shame.

By this time the "rugged individualists" had awakened and a belated campaign of sniping at the new form of government was begun. Court action challenging it was threatened. Some of the town's notorious "pillars of the good society," fearing loss of power, joined malcontents and chronic beefers in a campaign of sabotage. They succeeded once in getting sufficient signers to petitions for a kind of recall reconsideration of the issue at the polls, but no statutory provision could be found outlining "Where to go from here." The undercurrents still continue but meantime Laramie has come out of the red financially, established some municipal improvements and has a better than average city government.

No editor loves the defensive tack, but

An energetic independent editor, Ernest Linford succeeded in increasing circulation and profits of The Laramie Republican-Boomerang and in bringing reforms and many improvements in Laramie. But years of crusading taught him that it isn't enough to be right. He found that no town wants to be bossed by even a good newspaper. He learned many things about a small town. One thing: let others take the credit.

Mr. Linford is a Nieman Fellow at Harvard for the 1946-47 college year.

we joined forces with others interested to watch over the new baby, change its pants and its formula and, on occasion, walk the floor with it. A main bulwark was a citizens committee for good government, similar to the Cincinnati plan, where top-flight business and professional men were sought out and persuaded to run for the council.

The paper vigorously campaigned for these hand-picked candidates and fought the nominees of the opposition, which tried to join up and get control of the council as a means of junking the setup. We elected our men at each succeeding election.

A national city officials' magazine gave The Republican-Boomerang credit for securing the new government setup, but nobody knows better than the editor that it took more than a newspaper campaign. You can't shove a proposition down the throats of the people unless they are ready for it. You can help to make them ready but you must not move too rapidly. In most of our successful campaigns we worked hand in hand with civic organizations and in some cases have had the impetus appear to come from outside sources.

Our campaign for better government started five years before there was any hint of success. We published stories on government of other towns. We ran series of articles on plans available under Wyoming law and discussed their merits and faults. When the time seemed propitious the editor took the protect to the Lions club, whose civic betterment committee he headed. We held a number of panels, discussing municipal governmental problems and climaxed the series with the organizing of a Lions club study committee. The Chamber of Commerce, which often coordinates the work of civic groups of the community, then absorbed the committee, adding other members. After several months of investigation the commission presented a report at a well-publicized mass meeting. The body recommended the council-manager form of government for which we had been thumping for a long time.

The recommendation was placed on the ballot at the general election that fall and then we went to town with our campaign, which from all indications was eminently successful.

Campaigns Can Be Overdone

One of the things I have learned about newspaper campaigning is that the job can be overdone.

What I considered our best campaign, climaxed what we had learned through the years backfired. Yet by going "underground," we finally won a compromise. I

refer to a campaign to secure a new municipal water system for Laramie.

To understand the obstacles we encountered one has to be acquainted with the psychology of the high and dry, wind-swept western town. I hope that some day a psychologist makes a study of the effects of high altitude, a continual wind and aridity on thinking and acting of human beings. In our town people act toward water as women do during war shortages when soap or nylons are offered for sale at a store.

Actually there is plenty of water for household and industrial uses and it is especially good water, but there isn't enough for the householders to pour on lawns twenty-four hours a day. Rugged individualism is blended with a psychosis about growing plants. Every one has an attractive lawn, trees and an abundance of shrubs and flowers which will grow in the cool climate. Many of the residents came from the middle west and east, bringing with them shoots and seeds from the gardens of their old homes and it is a cherished ambition to maintain a patch of green.

The Union Pacific founded Laramie as an end-of-the-track town for two reasons. The mountains (Sherman hill) rise to more than 8,000 feet between Laramie and Cheyenne. (Laramie is something over 7,000 feet.) The hard climb made it necessary to establish shops and service facilities for the railroad in Laramie. At the site was a large, sparkling spring. The legend grew that there was unlimited underground water in the area. As time went on more springs were developed. Artesian wells were created. Early directories said there was sparkling, cold spring water to supply a town of 50,000 - 100,000. The people believed that propaganda. Even after it had been shown that all the outlets tapped the same limited underground streams, a hard-headed faction maintained that all the city had to do was to sink another well.

Laramie's water problem is complicated further by the fact that the Union Pacific railroad owns first right to the flow of the main city springs. (It was traded to the company in the early days by an extremely weak-kneed city council. This is just one of the many acts of kow-towing to the Union Pacific in our community.)

The story of the many ambitions, varied and expensive programs to explore the underground water resources is far too long to be recited here. But the street corner experts refused to believe the geologists and engineers. There was a nigger in the woodpile somewhere, they said.

And when the city announced that it would be necessary to go to the river (Laramie) for an auxiliary supply, it was

like waving a red flag at a herd of bulls! The bond issue was defeated by a whopping majority in 1937 in spite of a threat of parched lawns.

The drouth continued and temporary emergency measures were taken to keep the city and the railroad supplied. The war brought the real crisis. It was apparent to most people in the community that the railroad, engaged in war transportation, could take all of the water, except that necessary for household use, if it came to a showdown. And there were several such brief showdowns during the war.

A desperate city council proposed a new bond issue! A planning commission had made another investigation, hired a nationally-known engineer. His report was read at a mass meeting. There was no alternative. The city must go to the river for water! Since it was doing that it might as well cut loose from the railroad, which owed the spring, reservoir and some of the pipelines. The cost was to be almost a million and one-half dollars.

Little was said at or after the mass meeting. But that silence we mistook for consent was shock!

Assisted by the planning commission, city officials and interested citizens, we launched our most ardent newspaper campaign. We turned the newspaper over to the program of proving that if Laramie was to avoid drying up and blowing away the bond issue must pass.

We gained momentum as we went along. We went overboard! The people seemed to be with us. The mayor, city manager and chairman of the planning board said we were doing a wonderful job. Letters and telephone calls backed up the assumption.

Where Was the Opposition?

Had the diehards lost their leadership? Or had the war emergency and years of water shortages caused them to see the light? We were not dumb enough to believe that.

We became cocky and overbearing in our editorials. We even cast aspersions on the intelligence of any one who didn't favor the plan.

Then one day, toward the final week of the campaign, a chronic letter writer who had opposed most municipal proposals in the past, brought in a letter for publication in the morning paper. (Its news staff is separate from that of the evening paper which was my responsibility.)

The letter was turned down on grounds it yibed city officials. That was unfortunate and unwise.

Word spread that the papers were refusing anything critical of the water plan. (The Republican-Boomerang had received no such letters.)

Suddenly, like a horde of locusts, came a barrage of mimeographed handbills carrying scurrilous, vicious and damning material. Much of the attack was aimed at the newspaper monopoly of the community and personnel. The main authors were two perennial malcontents with a record of fighting municipal programs. Their repeated attempts to get seats on the council had been balked with our newspaper assistance.

The handbill campaign went hand-in-hand with a whispering attack linking the publisher and the head of the utility company in a false and vicious insinuation that all was not honest with the proposed water program. (The affable light company president was chairman of the planning commission and chairman of the Chamber of Commerce at the time.)

We endeavored to answer all question and refute all accusations. We conducted a question and answer column which oftentimes took up a great deal of the front page. During the last days of the campaign the papers were largely devoted to water "propaganda."

It began to appear that the cause was losing but we couldn't seem to let go of the bear's tail. Mass meetings were held almost every night. Canvassers pounded the pavements for both factions. Handbills were piled on porches.

What hadn't been clear at the outset, gradually took form. It was a battle between the people who called themselves "the working men," against the "privileged class." Business men, who would have paid a large part of the bill, were generally for the plan, supported by most white collar people, including university professors. But the railroaders, cement workers, timber workers—"the guys who hadn't gone to college"—were violently opposed.

And at the election the opposition won by a margin almost as wide as they had seven years previously.

Overplayed Our Hand

We had lost more than an election. We had imagined ourselves allied with working men; now we were anathema to them.

Recriminations came thick and fast. Some who had said we were doing a good job passed the word along that we had overplayed our hand. By campaigning so ardently we had lent credence to the suspicion that the bond issue meant more to the paper than community betterment.

(By a twist of fate it was about this time the paper received a Sigma Delta Chi citation for community service.)

The town remained in a state of tense, watchful waiting. But the antiriver faction lost no time in incorporating, and hiring a driller to proceed there's plenty of water in "them thar strata." They nomi-

inated a slate of candidates which if elected would have had control of the city council. They continued their handbill campaign. The Union Pacific, fearing damage to City spring, brought suit seeking an injunction and had the drilling stopped. This gave new ammunition to the group in their efforts to prove that the "interests" were trying to balk an honest and simple water program.

The discouraged, confused city council submitted the same water program again at the regular November election.

The disillusioned Laramie press stood aloof this time, with the approval of everybody. A few editorials allayed any suspicion that we might have changed our mind on the issue but we turned most of our editorial efforts on behalf of the city council election.

This time it was a torrid battle of the throw sheets! The Water for Laramie Committee tried to outdo the Citizens Water Committee in invective, appeal and propaganda. A confused electorate voted the plan down again but paradoxically elected the city councilmen who sponsored the unpopular program.

Water became a topic not to be discussed in polite circles and regulations on irrigation were tightened to near prohibition. The thirsty locomotives, pulling war goods across the continent, increased their demands. Springs were pumped, with the city realizing it was using capital for living expenses.

During the next few months a wise and sober little circle of city attaches and others decided that the crisis was very real and nothing would be lost if the city had another try. After all, a million and a half dollars is a lot of money for a town of 11,500. Maybe some items could be pared. Maybe the river water bugaboo could be eliminated.

The compromise plan, when it emerged, was a unique one. It proposed an exchange of water, gallon-for-gallon, from the river (treated) for the popular spring water to which the Union Pacific claimed first right. The first obstacle was securing the approval of the conservative, unimaginative Union Pacific officials. This uphill endeavor was accomplished but details are still being ironed out.

Emotions had burned themselves out in the community by this time. There was little campaigning on either side. A few handbills appeared but their reading clientele was reduced.

The Boomerang supported the plan strongly in editorials but they were dispassionate, factual, objective pieces. We announced that letters would be welcome from all writers. They came in large numbers, and in spite of the emergency of publishing conditions we printed all of them.

Most were from the opposition. The main theme was that it was the same old plan with some window dressing! The river "slop" would be turned into the city mains if the bond issue passed. But the issue totaled only \$770,000, and that wasn't as frightening as the previous figure.

The vote was small at the new election but the victory decisive. A "lost cause" had been turned into a compromise after long campaigning. It was much better than nothing; maybe better than the original program.

Small Town Factions

Laramie is really two communities—railroad and University. The latter is generally cooperative, progressive. Its members are often the bulwark of civic drives. The other, obsessed with a peculiar kind of inferiority complex, is often uncooperative, vindictive, distrustful. Allied with the railroad groups is the cement worker faction. Timber workers, mostly Scandinavians, take little interest in affairs, and ranchers and retired ranchers are ultra-conservative, frequently throwing their weight with the railroad group because they too have an aversion for increased taxes.

An old-time railroad man once described his fellows this way: "They want everything and give nothing; they have no interest in the community so far as permanent improvements are concerned. Really, they are transients, for few of them plan to live in the community throughout their lives. Their jobs are uncertain for so long that they fail to develop the 'home habit.'"

Railroad men's children group up and attend the University, sometimes join the University staff, but the division remains. To get the two factions together on any issue is a delicate and mountainous task. All the local commissions see to it that a railroad man is a member. The community goes out of its way to woo the faction but without much success. By the same token the community is careful that it doesn't appear that a University man is running things. No more than one professor serves on the city council, school board, or Chamber of Commerce directorate. More would cause antagonism.

Who's A Liberal?

Since coming to Harvard I have become sensitive to the terms "liberal" and "conservative." Just what is liberalism in a small town? We think of the liberal, the progressive, as one who champions the cause of labor, who favors social improvements, change. But other than voting Democratic and insisting that everything pro-labor is good and just, the working man element in our town is anything but progressive. Any movement to increase teachers' pay secure playgrounds, provide

community recreation is usually "bulled through" in Laramie by overcoming opposition or indifference of the "common man" group.

War Bonds Without Circuses

Between water elections, while trying to patch up our fences, we enlisted the assistance of the Lions club and established a Community service award by which we honor a local citizen each year. It is a nice ceremony and The Boomerank furnished a plaque on which names are engraved. Annually we sponsor an essay contest on community betterment.

In a moment of recklessness, at a war bond committee meeting, our publisher criticized methods high-pressuring people to buy bonds, which they often cash in before the year is out. We asked the committee to eliminate all canvassing and auctions and circus stunts and put bond buying on a voluntary basis. The persuasion was to come from newspaper publicity. The committee agreed. The state chairman was aghast and evaded a promise that if it began to look, toward the end of the bond drive period, that success wasn't certain the committee would resort to the more usual means of achieving the quota.

We devoted generous space every day on behalf of local bond sales, stressing each day the previous day's figures. We indulged in flamboyant journalistic stunts which need not be outlined here.

Theatres, which liked the idea of bond circuses in connection with picture programs, were unhappy. But the local committee stayed with us.

When the totals were all in, we were always well over the quota—without a single parade, without auctions, without personal solicitation! And the county took pride in the achievement.

We ran front-page plugs—with daily coupons—in an effort to uncover between 800 and 1,000 "spare rooms not regularly in use" for emergency housing for single University students. Many other pressure were used and at the end of the summer every student the University had room for had a place to sleep, nearly 1,000 of them in rooms not ordinarily offered for rent.

Safe Milk Was "Touchy"

On one occasion we became alarmed at

the lackadaisical attitude and setup relative to the way milk was being handled. Our editorial screams, augmented by work of citizens, brought the head of the state office to Laramie. There was a great todo.

About this time some doctors and others met with city councilmen and threw a scare into them with the result that a city sanitary department was set up. While this was not, at the outset, a newspaper project, we lent aid in a program of educating the public and the dispersers, a touchy project indeed. Laramie now has a full-time city sanitarian who has done much to clean up the milk and restaurant situation. A number of operators quit, adding to the local milk shortage. But while tension was high a case of typhoid fever broke out in town. This added impetus to the fight. Two milk distributors cancelled or curtailed their advertising and railed about the sanitarian, the editor and the city manager, but Laramie today is a safer place to live and bring up children than it has been in the past.

Over the protests of "friends of the University" last spring we campaigned vigorously for the calling of a special session of the legislature for emergency funds to provide veterans' housing, increases in faculty and staff salaries, and for additional instructors. The University was facing its largest enrollment in history with inadequate staffs, housing and a low treasury. The crisis was real, but many thought a special session would solve nothing.

The special session was the only solution. Timing was an important thing. The session was called, nearly a million dollars appropriated. The University stopped the alarming exodus of faculty members in search of greener pastures, hired additional instructors, and provided emergency housing for veterans.

Years ago we campaigned for a unified city garbage collection system. The service was established at long last but because of the heavy drain on the general fund every administration has sought ways to curtail the program. We have steadfastly resisted any such move. The housefly problem was alleviated by the program. Likewise, we have watched over Laramie's municipal skating rink, one of the finest recreation centers we have ever seen. It also is a "white elephant" and unpopular

among the city's budget makers. But it furnishes grand recreation, free, to hundreds of children. And there's hardly a kid in Laramie over eight years old who cannot and does not skate.

Nobody Loves a Bossy Paper

Years of crusading have convinced me that the small town newspaper's leadership should not be too obvious to the reader. And when a campaign is won, silence or passing the credit to others is a good way to insure success in the next campaign.

One of our main handicaps today is the suspicion on the part of a number of citizens that the newspaper is trying to "boss" the town. Needless to say, we haven't always been bosom buddies of some mayors, city managers, Chamber of Commerce officials, although we all had essentially the same aims.

We have found it effective to stir up the populace, to point with alarm, to indulge in torrid name-calling if necessary to get action, to make a big fuss until the community is well aroused, then retire to the bleachers and let the committee of citizens which has been appointed complete the job.

An editor has to keep in mind the long-term project, the campaigns which cannot be won in a few months or years—the drive that is never entirely won. His responsibility is to jog the community conscience, to keep ever vigilant, to do all possible to make honesty and responsibility the thing. If the would-be political boss knows that the press will fight him if he turns dishonest or does something which is not for community benefit, he will be more cautious at least.

It would be more comfortable to sit on the moon, and raise hell in complete objectivity when hell-raising was indicated. But the editor who plans to live in the community the rest of his life has to think of the long-time results and his future effectiveness.

It is a hard job to trample on the toes of a fellow-citizen in the editorial column and meet him socially that evening or the next. Small town citizens take their editorial column seriously. It takes courage to jump on the police department—even demand that the chief be fired—and go around the next day in search of news.

I ALWAYS WANTED MY OWN NEWSPAPER

BY WILLIAM TOWNES

I always wanted to publish my own newspaper.

I wanted the opportunity to prove that an alert, honest and aggressive newspaper devoted to serving the public would be successful in a technical and effective sense—and profitable.

For the past two years I have had this opportunity with the financial backing of Smith Davis, a newspaper broker, whose description as "fabulous" by newsmagazines is an understatement about a phenomena of perpetual human motion.

Davis—known to publishers, financiers, sports figures, cartoonists, politicians, theater stars and most everyone else as Smitty—went all the way with me after I first went to him to seek his help in purchasing a small daily of my own.

We, mostly with his money and financing prowess, bid on four dailies in three Southern cities and came out with the morning Herald, evening Journal and Sunday Herald-Journal in Spartanburg, S. C.

This city of 35,000 in the rolling red hills of the Piedmont, 26 miles below the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, is a cotton mill, farming, peach orchard and railroad center, the seat of a county by the same name with 135,000 people, 40,000 of whom are Negroes.

The papers had been owned by the International Paper Co. for some 20 years. Early in that period the purchase of the papers by the then International Paper and Power Co. brought about litigation which attracted national attention. One of the individuals involved was arrested while hiding on the roof of The Herald-Journal Building.

After this episode the papers had had a succession of publishers and had operated a large part of the time in the red. For six years prior to our purchase a former Scripps-Howard business manager had been publisher on a salary and profit-percentage basis.

William Townes did everything on a newspaper for 20 years, starting at 14 as a \$10 a week reporter and becoming assistant city editor on the Cleveland Press before he bought the Spartanburg S C Herald in 1945. He was a Nieman fellow in 1942-43.

The papers were undistinguished editorially. The morning paper frequently had no local stories on page one and was a typographical hodge-podge. The war had further lessened whatever news initiative the papers may have had earlier as most of their experienced staff members were in the service.

The Sunday paper religiously published an "inspirational column" by the president of the American Cotton Manufacturers' Association.

Perhaps an index to the public's regard for the papers was an admonition to me shortly after taking over. Sponsors of a progressive, political reform candidate came to me and urged that the papers say nothing that would indicate editorial support for the candidate as this would be detrimental to his chance of election.

It was into this type of newspaper operation that I plunged, uninhibited, into my career as a South Carolina publisher on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1945.

First Day

That was a momentous day. I moved my family from a Tryon, N. C. hotel into a \$110-a-month "furnished" farm house five miles from Spartanburg near Camp Croft and then went down to the office to write a statement of policy and completely transform the appearance of the Monday morning paper without previous experimentation and with a news staff and printers I had hardly met.

All the hairline condensed Gothic, Bodoni, Chelt and miscellaneous other typefaces were discarded for Memphis and Karnak head type. My desire to actively contribute to the promotion of the city and backcountry was asserted in a nameplate overline: "Spartanburg—the Natural Center of the Great Agricultural and Industrial Piedmont."

Everyone cooperated. We thought we had a live and attractive issue to launch our new deal in Spartanburg journalism as we looked with satisfaction upon a paper the like of which never before had come off the big, four-unit press. The news staff, printers and I were ready to go to the all night beanery at 2:30 a.m. that Monday when the managing editor noticed the front page date line:

"Sunday, April 1, 1945."

Several hundred copies of our first proud effort were thus dated before we could

stop the press. Because of the newsprint squeeze we sent those copies out on "distant mail."

The next morning my office was besieged by well-wishers of a friendly—if skeptical—community. I had little time to supervise the news handling in the afternoon Journal.

No one in the newsroom told me about the wire story of James F. Byrnes' resignation as War Mobilization Director and his plan to come home to Spartanburg for a rest.

To my astonishment the first edition carried the wire piece under a routine single column head. By the second edition it carried a streamer and above the nameplate was eight columns of a two-column, 10-point-set editorial calling for a civic welcome for the man who had contributed to the war effort as "assistant President."

Covering Byrnes

Three days later at Charlotte, N. C. a Herald-Journal reporter and photographer boarded the train bring Mr. and Mrs. Byrnes home. They carried flowers from the publisher for Mrs. Byrnes and the first information of what was to happen when the train reached Spartanburg. Between interview questions and answers Mr. Byrnes scribbled a speech in the shorthand he had learned on South Carolina court circuits many years before.

A half dozen men and girl photographers, all I could muster, perched on building tops and elsewhere along the route from the depot to Morgan Square to get a full picture coverage of the homecoming.

In addition to an eight-column page one strip of pictures in that afternoon's Journal (the train arrived at noon) the next morning's Herald had a full page of art on page three besides a page one "relaxation picture" of Mr. Byrnes and his dog Whiskers which was used by AP papers throughout the country.

I was surprised again, this time to learn second-handedly that some conservative citizens considered we had "overdone" Byrnes despite the crowd of 6,000 that welcomed him and heard an theretofore untold story of the Yalta Conference. I was to find this kind of criticism cropping up every so often along with the complaint that we were "giving a small town a big city paper."

But the readers increased and soon

learned—to their surprise—that the papers no longer had sacred cows and would publish the names of advertisers in traffic or other violations. Also the names of scores of "best citizens" who profited by ownership of Negro shanties violating the city's health ordinances for lack of indoor toilets.

War developments were coming fast in the spring of 1945. And, in our second week, while I was meeting with mechanical department heads, a shocked telegraph editor banged on my door. President Roosevelt was dead.

Extra on F.D.R.

In less than an hour we had an extra out, complete with a page one editorial and a four-column picture of the President which must have been taken in the Hoover or Landon campaign. The "morque" had had

only three or four undated mats of which there were no proofs and there was no tenth-add obituary copy in type.

I borrowed mats and cuts for a page review from the Greenville dailies. The next day I phoned Columbus, Ga., and learned the funeral train from Warm Springs not only would come through Spartanburg but would stop here. More than 13,000 people, white and black, jammed the right-of-way.

By prearrangement a photographer snapped, from the edge of the track, a picture of the sorrow-stricken faces of men, women and children of both races who were jammed unconsciously together, just as the President's flag-draped casket was visible to them.

The line under this shot was simply: "Friends of the President."

My Idea

My idea from the start of my dealings with Davis had been to produce energetic, good newspapers. I thought many publishers were so concerned with business problems that they neglected the quality and initiative of the end product which they sold to the public. Such newspapers as we planned would prosper, I was convinced.

We had a large, competitive circulation territory. The much larger Greenville papers were published 30 miles to the southwest while the phenomenally successful and boastful Charlotte Observer, covering a good part of both Carolinas, came in from 70 miles northeast. We bumped into the Columbia state capital papers to the southeast and met the Asheville papers to two border counties of North Carolina.

Spartanburg is the least of these trade centers but is in the retail volume range with Greenville and Asheville. Spartanburg is cautious and conservative. It is prosperous, business-wise, almost in spite of itself. Its natural advantages were far superior to Charlotte's though the latter city had trebled in size while Spartanburg grew gradually.

Business property is closely held by a few very wealthy old families and estates, some of whose owners live elsewhere. The principal block of Main Street probably is the narrowest bottleneck on U. S. Highway 29 from Washington to Atlanta and carries all the heavy cargo trucks. The town's topography is somewhat rugged and through streets are few.

Another factor in Spartanburg's conservatism—even among South Carolina towns—was that the depression was particularly cruel to it. Every bank had failed and the cotton mills were shut down or operated only part-time.

However, war demands on the textile industry, rapid development of peach growing with high prices, location of Camp Croft with 20,000 soldiers and a Navy airbase all brought the area to undreamed of prosperity by 1945.

Newsprint Troubles

Unfortunately the previous publisher's rate-boosting and cost-cutting to show profits had included use of minimum newsprint (in spite of a newsprint company's ownership) in the year before Pearl Harbor. This resulted in an exceptionally inadequate wartime paper quota in view of the later business factors just mentioned. No special consideration was obtained by reason of the military camp prior to our ownership and my efforts in that direction failed.

Thus we had acute newsprint troubles from the beginning.

Mechanical, editorial (including syndi-

NOTES

The San Francisco Chronicle opened a Washington bureau the first of the year with Carroll Kilpatrick and Vance Johnson as correspondents. Both are experienced Washington correspondents. Kilpatrick, originally with the Montgomery Advertiser, went to Washington for the Birmingham News after a Nieman fellowship in 1939-40. Johnson, former managing editor of the Amarillo Globe, Tex, was a Nieman fellow in 1940-1, has served with Kilpatrick in the Washington Bureau of the Chicago Sun.

★ ★

Nineteen newspapermen are authors of a book on American cities "Our Fair City", Vanguard Press, N Y, \$3.50, with Bob Allen as editor. It takes apart 17 cities to show what makes them tick if they do, or why they don't.

★ ★

Robert C Elliott, industrial editor of the San Francisco News is recipient of a new kind of "Oscar" awarded by the San Francisco Manufacturers and Wholesalers Association to the newswriter in 1946 "most instrumental in promoting and fighting for the industrial expansion of the West." Elliott was a Nieman fellow in 1942.

★ ★

Richard C Lauterbach, Life correspondent, in his second book on Russia, "Through Russia's Back Door," Harper's, \$2.75, has done a straight reporting job on a 12-day trip across Siberia by train, and put all his editorializing into the last chapter. It is an exceptional example of what a competent journalist can do with plain

everyday reporting. The reader shares every experience and acquaintance of the author on his unprecedented journey to get the feel of the country and the people.

★ ★

When 23 Gulfport, Miss citizens signed a protest against an announced address on race relations by Hodding Carter at the University of Mississippi, the editor of the Delta-Democrat opened his talk by informing his critics of the free speech clause in the Bill of Rights.

★ ★

The Fitchburg Mass Sentinel of Jan 29 carried a front page story about a sign posted by the Lunenburg postmaster in the post office: "Ten Dollars will be paid for the finding and conviction of the DIRTY FILTHY BASTARD who makes a practice of using this vestibule for a urinal-C E Brown." In the Jan 30 issue, a letter from Postmaster Brown defends his notice from the "prudes" who criticized it and announced that sympathizers had enabled him to increase his reward to \$25.

★ ★

Justice Felix Frankfurter of the United States Supreme Court and Frank L Stanley, president of the Negro Newspaper Publishers Association are announced as speakers at the second annual dinner for the winners of the Wendell Willkie awards for the best Negro newspaper work of the year. Douglas S Freeman, president of the Wendell L Willkie Awards Association will preside. The awards were established by Mrs Agnes Meyer.

cated features), and even distribution costs over equal-sized areas are very nearly as much for papers of 32,000 combined circulation (with which we started) as for papers with three times the circulation and three to five times the advertising revenue.

Our papers had two complete crews of union printers and pressmen and published 26 editions weekly of the two entirely separate (except for ads) dailies and the Sunday paper. The fulltime payroll had 130 people working in the papers' own three-story building, a 40-year old masonry relic built for a department store.

The problem was clear that the previously unprofitable (in normal times) papers had to intensify their circulation in the city's logical trading area which was two North and four South Carolina counties.

It also meant that the papers, to be profitable over the long haul were dependent largely upon the progress of the town and its ability to attract and hold rural trade in competition with other and bigger towns. Papers and communities are interdependent.

The Spartanburg papers had notoriously failed to meet their competition except in their own county and Greenville papers were home-delivered in several parts of it.

It was an ideal setup and challenge for a veteran newsman's experiment in newspaper publishing, particularly after a Nieman-year of planning.

Enterprise and Integrity

News enterprise, quality and editorial integrity were the first requirements in my formula. But innumerable business problems pressed down on me from the first day. Even the insufficient newsprint quota had been incorrectly calculated originally.

A handful of favored employees owed the papers nearly \$4,000 in open accounts as they had had the privilege of shopping with advertisers for clothing and furniture and charging same to The Herald-Journal.

Several key business department people had left for better-paying positions. Fifty-five employees were at war.

Some of the business responsibilities that had been handled directly by the International Paper Co. had to be assumed locally.

The advertising department—to my good fortune—was headed by experienced Charley Godfrey, one of the best-liked and most effective admen in the South. He had trained an excellent staff of solicitors who did nearly all of the ad layout and copywriting as only one store had its own advertising man.

Godfrey's department translated the improving news product into more and more business. The closing of the camp and

merchandise shortages made no difference. We received nearly \$70,000 in additional advertising, without a rate increase, in our first year under a desperately acute paper shortage made worse by circulation that grew without promotion.

The volume of space devoted to news suffered, but not our efforts for greater coverage, work-ups and civic promotion which carried staff members to Washington, New York and around the South on special assignment.

Added Artist

Early I engaged a staff artist, Jim Morgan, a discharged soldier who had grown up in the county and had studied art in New York before the war. No other Carolina paper had such a luxury.

To stimulate interest in the San Francisco Conference on the opening day we framed the entire Herald front page in individual, column-width flags of all the nations represented and removed the column rules from the six column remaining inside the flag border.

This created such an appearance of "open-ness" and easier reading that shortly thereafter we added slightly to the space formerly used by column rules and discarded them from both papers except around ads.

It was not long after this that Jimmie Byrnes was to become Secretary of State. In preparation I took a photographer to the home where he was visiting. I had earlier suggested for him to become the first new member in the Chamber of Commerce's campaign to double its membership to 1,000.

Morgan drew a strip of small figures which we duplicated into enough strips to represent a thousand men and women. This took nearly all the lower half of a front page under a caption: "This is what 1,000 People Look Like—Think How Much They can accomplish Working Together for Their Community."

The best picture of Byrnes was an informal shot of him in an easy chair in his friends' home, reading this paper.

This was Thursday and the announcement was not expected until the following Tuesday but as a precaution I had our engraver make a six-column by 15-inch cut. This was lucky because the announcement came Saturday evening.

Add Death Notices

In spite of an offer by a group that planned to continue publishing the Waterbury Democrat, that paper was sold at the end of the year to its competitor, the Waterbury Republican, which promptly killed it off to add one more city of 100,000 population to the lengthening list of American cities under newspaper monopoly.

Expose

This was another of our big days. I was working up an expose of the governor's having written to the Spartanburg court clerk ordering him to change a judge's sentence of a prominent businessman who had been convicted and sentenced for aggravated assault on a young woman.

The governor had ordered the sentence on the clerk's record changed from eight month's imprisonment and a \$300 fine to read simply probation for a year upon payment of the fine. The order, without the judge's knowledge and over earlier objections of the prosecuting attorney, was unprecedented. It was outside the governor's lawful clemency powers.

I had photostatic copies made of the governor's letter and of a letter signed by a county judge (who had not tried the case) who had circulated a petition for leniency which had been signed by "leading citizens."

The Sunday morning page one was hard put to carry the news. The 72-point Karnak caps and lower case two-line main streamer under the nameplate was: "Spartanburg's Jim Byrnes Named Our Nation's Secretary of State" with the story leading off one-column to the right of the six-column Byrnes cut.

Over the nameplate, in 48-point Karnak, went The Herald-Journal's exclusive: "Gov. Williams Orders Court Records Changed To Reduce Pickens' Assault Sentence to \$300 Fine."

To further complicate things a Main Street store wall had fallen over on a Saturday afternoon shopping crowd and Mr. Pickens had been arrested again for "driving an automobile under influence of liquor" and had forfeited a \$52.75 police bond.

Among other efforts to provide enterprising papers was the V-E extra. A two-inch deep eight column illustration at the top proclaimed: "In Europe the War is Over BUT—." At the bottom of the page another strip drawing cautioned: "—In the Pacific the Fight Must Go On!"

The top and bottom strips were all fixed in advance of the Kennedy AP story. We had cleaned the fountain one one unit of the press. We were going to have a two-color job on a one-color press. This was a mistake. Our venerable press foreman hand-daubed in the right places for the color strips, but our sales were cut by a tortuously edious process. We never tried red again.

Community Service

I have recounted some of the more memorable news episodes, but the things I am immodestly proudest of—more than the financial record and profitable sale—are our individual and community service

undertakings which were numerous and successful.

One of the first of these was a work-up series on Spartanburg city and county's woefully inadequate and antiquated library containing only 30,000 books for 135,000 people and operating on the munificent budget of \$6,500 a year for all purposes, including salaries, purchase of books, maintenance and utilities.

County and city officials were slow to move so the Junior Charity League adopted the papers' crusade for a rural bookmobile as its 1946 project for which an annual hometown follies' proceeds would go. I read a wire story that Lady Astor was in Charleston and would later visit a sister in Tryon so I wrote her a letter and sent two emissaries to urge her to make a personal appearance in Spartanburg in behalf of the bookmobile.

This she did to a full house which provided \$3,500 and the bookmobile. At the same time she pleaded for a "Spartanburg Belles Vigilantes" to carry out several other Herald-Journal-initiated community cleanups such as ending the practice of locking child delinquents in the county jail. I had carefully supplied her with a complete set of clippings on our various crusades a few days before her appearance at the Follies.

A new librarian, more adequate appropriations and plans for an addition to the present library and branch libraries throughout the county also have resulted from this effort.

Helping Gene Atkins

In the battle to recapture Luzon a Spartanburg County dirt-poor sharecropper's son killed 44 Japs and himself was badly wounded as the sole survivor of his platoon in an all night engagement. He won the Congressional Medal of Honor and same home to use his discharge pay to buy a mule and a second-hand stock of farm tools to go into the sorry and hopeless business of "farming the other fellow's land."

A country doctor wrote me that "editorials are fine but won't help this young man to earn a living." He volunteered to contribute \$100 if other business men would do likewise to help Gene Atkins get a start.

I went out on the Tobacco Road-like cotton farm where Gene and his mother and father and eight younger brothers and sisters lived in a tumbledown three-room shack near Hogback Mountain. The next day we had a picture of Gene in a cotton field and a story under an overline head: "Let's Say Thank You With a Farm."

I timidly set \$5,000 as a goal and started a newspaper-fund raising drive to buy

the hero a farm of his own. Staff members warned it couldn't be done. In less than three weeks \$7,000 was poured into The Herald-Journal office, most of it in quarters and dollar bills, some wrapped in cheap tablet paper, and nearly all from mill workers and farm families.

All together more than \$9,000 was contributed for "Thank You Farm." The U. S. Soil Conservation Service gave Gene technical farm planning assistance. A model "little Mt. Vernon" concrete block bungalow with electricity and plumbing was built and a frame tenant house on the place was taken over by the Atkins parents and their brood.

Agriculture Secretary Clinton Anderson came to dedicate the farm for the generous people of the Piedmont and 10,000 turned out in the rain for the newspaper-arranged ceremony.

After the Thank You Farm drive had succeeded a sister of a young South Carolina sailor who was blinded in one eye and losing the sight of the other at Charleston Naval Hospital asked me to help get his New Zealand wife and two small children, one of whom he had never seen, admitted to this country.

The invalidated young man's wife and children had been denied a visa under an ancient immigration rule that a citizen's alien spouse and dependents may not enter the country unless it can be shown they will not become public charges. The sailor had entered the service from high school

and could not, due to this and his blindness, assure support.

I wrote a page one open letter appeal to Attorney General Tom Clark and shortly an admiral's plane was placed at the family's disposal and they were flown from New ealand to Charleston. A Bronx veteran read of the appeal in the New York Daily News and wrote me offering to give the sailor one of his "two good eyes."

Although Spartanburg is the center of a large farming section it had no farmers' curb market and an inadequate and only partially used wholesale market out in the country. We brought in Federal Government marketing experts, gave a lunch for farmers, business and women's club members and launched a market survey and campaign for better farm marketing facilities.

The county and city, as a result, have bought a \$20,000 site near the heart of town and a large market will be erected.

Similarly the papers have obtained voter approval of a city manager form of government and a \$500,000 bond issue as the city's share of a 5,000-seat memorial auditorium which the community badly needs; directly assisted hundreds of veterans to obtain jobs by listing their individual qualifications; won commitments for a juvenile detention home and promise of a ward for detaining and treating venereal disease victims.

The head of the Community Fund credited the papers' efforts with the 1946 campaign's raising \$120,000 on a \$99,000 goal while many cities' funds failed. Building campaigns for two colleges and conversion of some Camp Croft barracks into apartments for veterans and their families are among the dozens of civic promotions we initiated or actively supported. One hundred underprivileged boys were provided a two-week mountain camp vacation last summer through a Herald-Journal fund raising effort.

Save the Soil

Most important of all such attempts at being public service newspapers was our farm neighborhood soil conservation contest to save the worn-out and eroding farmlands of the six counties in our circulation territory. I arranged for the papers to buy six \$1,300 grain combines to award one each to the winning farm group in each county to own and use as community property.

In a 44-page Sunday paper mailed to every farm boxholder in the six counties we announced the two-year contest last July 14 with a goal of 10 organized farm communities of 10 or more farmers as contestants in each county by the enter-

From the Paris Herald-Tribune

News vs. Comics

To the Editor, European Edition:—

I am certain that readers of your paper would gladly pay double or more for the Sunday edition if you included a section of the most popular comics. Would it be possible?

Paris, Jan. 13, 1947.

Claude R. Myers.

(Note.—A small number of our American readers—who constitute a minority in the circulation of the Herald Tribune's European Edition, by the way—have asked us to institute a comic section. The position of this newspaper on the question is simple: So long as newsprint is as drastically restricted as it is in Europe today, so long as the need for objective information about the world today remains so pressing and, on the whole, so inadequately met by the European press operating under present difficulties, it would be criminal for this newspaper to sacrifice news for comics.—The Editor.)

ing deadline of Dec. 31. We detailed all the various AAA allowances, free trees and other assistance available and set forth the benefits to be derived from scientific land use and other soil conservation practices.

When the entry date came 1,148 farms with 203,477 acres had been pledged to a complete program of soil conservation farming in 89 farm communities. Merchants and others had joined with us to offer a total of \$12,602 in prizes, including a tractor.

The objectives, beyond the stopping of poverty-producing soil erosion, are to get traditionally individualistic farmers to cooperate in neighborhood groups to bring about crop diversification, more dairy and beef cattle raising all for a generally higher standard of living. Farms in the Piedmont are small. To compete with commercial farms of the Delta and Southwest the small farmers of the Southeast will have to buy the more expensive pieces of mechanized equipment in community groups or lose out to the big, lower-operating-cost farms.

Editorial Influence

The extent of progress in editorial influence, in addition to community projects, may be shown by the Herald's editorial support of J. Strom Thurmond for governor in the second or run-off Democratic primary election last fall. We took no stand in the first primary campaign when 14 candidates stumped the state.

James McLeod, an ultra-conservative doctor who had supported Byrd over Roosevelt in 1944, had the frenzied backstage support of most textile and other large business interests. McLeod led the field in Spartanburg County and was 4 to 3 over Thurmond in the first primary. In the second race Thurmond carried the county 3 to 2 over McLeod with strongest support in rural and mill village boxes in the greatest shift of votes in the entire state.

The theme of our support was "Thurmond for a Progressive South Carolina... The opposition Bilboed the race issue against him in a fantastic and frantic effort to defeat him.

Thurmond, a former judge, was elected and in his inaugural address pledged to work for elimination of the poll tax as a prerequisite to voting and for a secret ballot, better Negro education, reorganization of the state's archaic government, stricter child labor laws, liquor control reforms, power development and several other goals our newspapers had fought for for nearly two years.

Financially what happened in these 22 months of this type of newspaper operation?

Advertising became observably more effective in a respected and believed newspaper as Godfrey will attest.

City and trading zone circulation of The Herald grew from 19,100 to 22,687; the Sunday paper from 27,626 to 32,373 and the combination daily from 31,304 to 34,919 in spite of the loss of 1,400 daily sales at

Camp Croft, a frozen press run and a 20 percent rate boost.

Balance Sheet

Street sales were cut in half to take care of continuously growing home-delivered and farm mail subscriptions. Without newsprint troubles the 32,602 overall March, 1945 circulation certainly would have approached 40,000 in December, 1946 instead of the 35,333 we were able to print.

Gross revenue was \$590,000 in the last year of the old operation and \$810,000 in the second year of ours. Fifteen to 25 percent of the available advertising in 1946 was rejected, most of it rationed, whiskey advertising was eliminated completely and one week we were forced to run adless due to lack of paper.

We had drawn three carloads of paper over our allotment from an exclusive supplier by the end of 1946 and were faced with a 30 percent cutback in supply in the first two months of 1947 to make up for our earlier overuse. Paper and payroll costs were at a rate \$100,000 a year over the same period of the year before.

Smith Davis sold the papers at a profit to us equal to several years' continued operation. And we had paid "too much" for them only 22 months before.

I think the kind of newspapers Nieman Fellows and other working newspapermen visualize can be profitable. Less than two years' effort in that direction with The Herald-Journal proved it for me.

SURVIVAL OF A FREE COMPETITIVE PRESS

Summary of the Murray Report

Every city in Montana with a daily newspaper is a one-newspaper monopoly. All the daily newspapers are controlled directly or indirectly by the Anaconda Copper Company.

Against this background of monopoly and absentee control, Senator James E Murray of Montana published a report titled "Survival of a Free Competitive Press" as his last act as chairman of the Senate Small Business Committee. Subtitle of the Mur-

ray Report is "The Small Newspaper: Democracy's Grass Roots."

The report graphically presents the trend toward concentration of ownership of American newspapers and the handicaps of the small paper. Along with his own report, Murray secured the release of a hitherto secret Government report on the structure and operations of the newsprint industry in North America. Both concern the very basis of a free press. Neither has been

extensively publicized in the press.

The two documents are Senate Committee Print No 17 "The Small Newspaper," and Senate Committee Print No 18 "Newsprint Industry." These run to 72 and 101 pages of fine print, and cannot be reproduced here. Here are printed three reports: 1 Senator Murray's news release on the newsprint report; 2, His news release on the small newspaper; and 3, His conclusions on the competitive situation in the press.

I. GIANTS CONTROL NEWSPRINT

Washington, Jan. 30—A hitherto secret Government report on the structure and operations of the North American newsprint industry was made public today by Senator James E. Murray, Democrat, of Montana, and retiring chairman of the Senate Small Business Committee. Special clearance for the publication was obtained from the Federal Trade Commission and Attorney General, Tom Clark.

"Three groups of corporate giants," Senator Murray commented, "are revealed in the Federal Trade Commission's Newsprint Paper Decree Investigation as controlling newsprint industry policy on production, price and distribution. They are the big newspapers, the mass magazines, and the great newsprint mill operators. There is almost no such thing as an open newsprint market in which small papers may bid for and buy the paper which they need. During the war, the Government protected their supplies and held the price for them. But now thousands of small labor, trade, fraternal, foreign-language—publications—daily, weekly, religious, farm, big publisher-big mill arrangements which are defenseless in the face of growing cut small users out."

Two documents are included in the volume printed for the use of the Senate Small Business Committee. One is a brief statement on war-time concentration in the paper industry taken from a previous report on Economic Concentration and World War II. The other is a confidential FTC study made at the request of the Department of Justice. The FTC traced conditions found earlier studies of the newsprint industry, bringing the facts down to the immediate prewar year 1939.

"What this report proves," Senator Murray said, "is that only Congress can do the job of breaking the bottle-necks on newsprint for small papers. It shows that the prices of newsprint for part or all the United States are set at private meetings in Canada, outside the jurisdiction of the

Anti-trust Division or the Federal Trade Commission. Newsprint is an important Canadian industry. Congress must take the lead in cooperating with our Northern neighbors to see to it that monopolistic pressure—from Canadian mills or U. S. publishers—is taken off small papers."

Only 20 percent of the newsprint consumed in the United States in 1938 was produced here, according to the report. Almost all the rest came from Canada. The FTC report discusses in detail the "efforts of Canadian manufacturers to avoid U. S. jurisdiction" over possible monopolistic practices.

Three Chairs Take 25 Percent

Both of the studies in the Senate Committee's document cover the concentration of production and consumption. Of 17 U. S. companies making newsprint in 1937, three, Great Northern Paper Co., Crown Zellerbach, and Maine Seaboard, produced 62 percent of the total U. S. production. (Maine seaboard has since been purchased by Time, Inc., re-sold to the St. Regis Paper Co., with Time, Inc. getting the total output.)

On the consumption side, the report quotes FTC statistics showing that the Hearst, McCormick-Patterson and Scripps-Howard chains consumed "about 25 percent of the total newsprint consumed in the United States" in 1929.

The immediate purpose of the FTC study was to report to the Attorney General whether increases in the price of newsprint to \$50 a ton (it is now \$84) was the "result of price-fixing activities of newsprint manufacturers." The Attorney General, as well as other Government officials, had received complaints "from small newspaper publishers, wholesale distributors of newspapers and magazines," and units of the International Typographical Union.

In 1917, the major companies in the newsprint industry had signed an agreement with the Government, pledging themselves

to refrain from certain monopolistic practices. The report for the Attorney General finds that most of the parties to that agreement had moved their newsprint operations to Canada, had switched over to slick paper making, or had gone out of business.

Among the activities described in the report are:

The growing number of publishers with financial interests in newsprint mills.

Contracts between mills and large publishers which run for long periods and remove most of the newsprint from the open market which is the source of supply of most small publishers.

Price Agreements

Price agreements, in which "interlocking" contracts make the nation-wide price of newsprint from year to year uniform and dependent on the price quoted by one or another of the industry's dominant firms.

Zoning system of determining prices which "practically every mill is following."

"Newsprint," Senator Murray said, "is one of the immediately essential problems confronting Congress. The future of the competitive press depends on our working out ways of getting enough paper for new and small publishers, so that their chance to survive and expand now is as great, relatively, as large publishers. All business is involved, since the amount of advertising that can be carried is affected.

"On a world scale," he continued, "The pressure on Canadian and American resources from abroad complicates the problem. We want American papers to have all the newsprint they need at fair prices. But we also want to help nations whose presses were shattered by war, and those whose rising literacy will create increasing demand for newsprint for a long time to come. The other report we are issuing, The Small newspaper—Democracy's Grass-roots, makes a number of proposals for dealing with that situation."

II. CRISIS FOR SMALL PAPERS

Washington, Feb. 2—"One great threat to the survival of an American free press runs all through the thousand letters I have received and analyzed in the report, The Small Newspaper: Democracy's Grass Roots, which I am now releasing," said Senator James E. Murray (Democrat, Montana), retiring chairman of the Senate Small Business Committee. "That threat is the vice-like grip of monopoly-big-busi-

ness newsprint manufacturers upon the fifteen thousand small newspaper publishers of the country.

"Their supply of paper is cut to a mere trickle, some are threatened with no more paper, others cannot expand to become solvent businesses," the Montana declared. "Yet the big city dailies buy paper mills, or enter into favorable long-term contracts giving them competitive ad-

vantages which drive the smaller papers to the wall."

The report is based on the responses of newspaper publishers to a letter of inquiry sent out by the chairman of the Senate Small Business Committee, plus staff work. It reveals ominous trends in the newspaper industry, caused by a pile-up of forces beyond the control of the individual publisher.

In a series of ten charts, figures in the report show that less than one out of every ten cities in the United States now has a second competing newspaper. In the smaller communities, only one out of four towns has a competitive source of news and editorial comment. While the combined circulation of all newspapers had gone up a sixth in the past fifteen years, a tenth of all our dailies have gone out of business during that time.

Vital To Democracy

"The newspaper is not only a private business venture, but is also a basic institution of Democracy," said Senator Murray, in urging Congressional investigation and appropriate action. "With each disappearance of a competitive local newspaper, some vital part of democracy is lost." He gave four main reasons for immediate attention on the part of Congress, as follows:

1. The newsprint crisis, which investigation shows is not temporary, and which must be resolved so that small and new papers get a fair and proportionate share of available newsprint.

2. The newspaper industry is caught in high capital and operating costs, resulting in business failures in this vital field which are not the result of bad business personal management but of general conditions requiring nationwide correction.

3. Impending technological changes, and the application of new inventions, such as off-set printing and FM-Facsimile newscasting, forecast a revolution in news publication which threatens with doom and possible extinction the newspaper enterprises of the Nation.

4. Consolidations, and other concentrations of newsprint manufacture, newspaper publication, and radio businesses raise a serious question concerning monopoly of the avenues of communication which no democracy of free people committed to an economic system of free competitive enterprise can permit to develop.

Senator Murray continued, "I am releasing this report on these problems so that the small publishers and the public generally may be better informed as to conditions confronting American newspapers. The report entitled, *The Small Newspaper: Democracy's Grass Roots*, suggests an action program for Congress to undertake covering six broad fields. They are offered here for public consideration."

1. Newsprint Shortage

An immediate, full scale study to determine.

a. Whether it is a temporary or a continuing problem;

b. If, as seems most likely, there will be a continuing shortage, what international action, if any, is required to guarantee our papers and magazines their fair share—neither more nor less—of the world's supply;

c. What steps the newsprint and publishing industries are taking to see that small consumers and new ventures are given their fair share of what is available;

d. Whether anti-trust violations mark the price or allocation situations in the regular newsprint market, and in the spot newsprint market;

e. How much newsprint is being diverted from the open market by exclusive contracts of publishers with mills for the sale of "total output of mill" or by the direct ownership and control of forest rights or mills by large publishers;

f. Whether new legislation or international agreements are necessary to control the monopolistic practices of newsprint corporations in other lands, particularly those alleged to be doing United States business from Canada to avoid anti-trust actions;

g. How the development of an Alaskan newsprint industry can be speeded and how newsprint consumers with no other sources of supply, and all small users can first and fullest benefit from the development;

h. The quickest way for the 80th Congress to establish a regional Alaska Authority to provide the large volume of cheap power which a newspaper industry will need;

i. Whether the price and allocations patterns are likely to become so difficult for small consumers because of large users' indifference to greed, that some resumption of government controls will need to be considered;

j. The prospects for new processes using new raw materials;

k. If there is any prospect that higher prices for newsprint will induce mills, which have converted to the production of heavier stocks, to reconvert.

2. Technological Change

Technological change which may relieve the small papers from their high and still rising mechanical production costs, must also be studied:

a. Present state of competition in the manufacture of printing and type-setting equipment;

b. Duration of the present war-born shortage of equipment;

c. Prospects of applying war-developed techniques and processes to the manufacture of printing, type-setting, folding, mailing and other equipment especially appropriate to the smaller publisher;

d. Status of research into small paper technology by the equipment manufacturing industry, to determine whether a government research program by the Bureau of Standards of the Department of Commerce is called for;

e. Study, with the consultation of union and industry leaders in the printing trades, of necessary private and government action necessary to cushion possible technological unemployment in the industry or the smaller units;

f. The impact of facsimile (the FM radio broadcasting of newspapers directly into homes) on the small newspaper business; the development of a national licensing policy with the Federal Communications Commission which will enhance local competition rather than monopoly (thus it might be possible to split Frequency Modulation licenses so that at least two papers would have different ownership).

Report on Concentrations

3. AN ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONGRESS BY THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION ON "COMPETITION, CONCENTRATION AND OWNERSHIP IN THE NEWSPAPER RADIO INDUSTRIES."

b. The extent of horizontal concentration in these industries, that is the Over the next decade, many of the laws to be considered by the Congress will have a sharp impact on the state of competition in the newspaper and radio industries. To make certain that its actions foster the kind of economic and political diversity in which we all believe, the Congress will need a systematic, annual report on:

a. The number and size of newspapers, periodicals and radio stations in the country and the various states; stringing together of papers under one ownership, and radio stations under one network;

c. The extent of vertical combination, that is the extent of the interests of

some newspapers and periodicals in forests, newsprint mills, shipping facilities;

d. The extent of cross-channel combination, that is the extent of the interests of papers in radio stations, facsimile ventures, features syndicates, book publishing houses, etc;

e. The concentration in control and distribution of the advertising revenue which makes the profitable survival of small papers, magazines and stations possible;

f. The complaints—whether actionable or not—made to the Federal Trade Commission or the Department of Justice's Anti-Trust Division about practices in restraint of trade in any area affecting concentration in the newspaper industry;

g. The trends in newspaper and radio ventures and deaths and factors affecting them;

h. The state of competition and monopoly in the local and national publishing industries;

i. The ownership statements filed by the licensees of radio broadcasting stations with the Federal Communications Commission should be published as a supplement to the document;

j. The ownership statements filed in the Post Office by daily newspapers, and periodicals above a certain size should be published as a supplement to the document.

This report should be made on the basis of the information collected by the various executive agencies, as well as whatever supplemental information is made available by industry sources. It should be prepared by the Federal Trade Commission and submitted for publication to the President of the Senate. The Commission should be directed at once to prepare an estimate of the budget required for this work.

4. Government Forms

To cut down the number of forms which the government requires or asks small newspapers to fill out:

a. The review authority of the Bureau of the Budget ought to be extended to the matter mailed out by the Treasury Department and the War and Navy Departments;

b. A study should be authorized to see whether a single form could be hammered out which would provide all of the information required by all of the agencies at once. The data could be filed in a central office, and duplicate sets of punch cards turned over to each of the agencies affected. Confidential information could be requested on a perforated sheet attached to the single questionnaire, and kept by the responsible agency;

c. The Bureau of the Budget should be requested to work out, with the advice of Congressional, agency and industry specialist, standard definitions of terms such as "publication" "newspaper" "periodical" "printing" and publishing establishment or concern," etc. In this way the various data collected could be made comparable.

5. Restrictive Practices of Syndicates

Complaints reaching us indicate the need for an immediate study by the Anti-Trust Division of the Department of Justice of:

a. Contracts for the sale of features by syndicates to chain or other papers with which they are affiliated which provide for exclusive distribution over a certain number of miles;

b. Termination of contracts for feature sale to small papers published within the circulation area of larger ones which carry the features;

c. Possible mis-use of copyrights in connection with the operation of feature syndicates.

6. Postal Rate Revision

Extended study should be undertaken by the Civil Service Committee of the Senate of the second class mailing rates to determine:

a. Whether the effect of the dates is to carry out the mandate of the Congress to encourage the diffusion of knowledge;

b. Where the greatest losses occur in the carrying of second class mail—in carrying newspapers and small periodicals or in carrying nationally circulation magazines;

c. Feasibility of measures to simplify the second class rate structure by carrying "basic quota" of any publication's circulation—somewhere around 10,000—free regardless of weight or destination;

d. A change in the second class rates to encourage new ventures by carrying up to 50,000 copies of any new publication for the first three years of its life.

In and of themselves, the report says, these measures may not save the small press or bring about the continuous burgeoning of new publications so vital to other small businesses and to democratic public opinion. But, they would place this high priority economic problem where it belongs—in the Congress, which can deal with the problem without in any way raising the fear of abridgment of freedom. A secure supply of newsprint and the reduction of mechanical costs by more efficient production will make possible the economically sound existence of papers which will otherwise die or never be born. Systematic reporting on competition in the newspaper and radio industries, and convenient disclosure of ownership and control will make informed Congressional action possible. Elimination of possibly restrictive syndicate practices will remove an unfair obstacle to competition of small papers with large ones that blanket their localities. Postal rates below costs should help those most who need it most.

Other proposals in the report call for loans or loan guarantees to small papers and radio stations by Federal lending agencies, on the same basis as for other small businessmen. Senator Murray further proposes that the industry's labor problems be submitted to the kind of temporary Senate commission on labor relations which he has already proposed.

III. PRESS MONOPLY CANNOT STAY FREE

Murray's Conclusions

One disturbing thing about the future of the competitive press is the sanguine attitude apparently gaining currency in the newspaper trade associations and the trade press. The whole economic history of America demonstrates that a privately monopolized or highly cartelized press cannot remain free of Government regulation for long. Yet these private agencies, which should be the leaders in the fight against the trends towards concentration, are curiously unconcerned about them, strangely cold to even the study of the problem by Congress. Progressive business leaders in other industries have learned that enlightened self-interest demands that they honestly work to maintain a free and open market place. In this industry, there is the added goal of maintaining a free and open public forum.

In Defense of Competition

In the power, transportation, and communication industries the public has demanded that the Government undertake economic and rate regulation. Where private industry has permitted competition to die or where access has been closed to newcomers and competition restricted to establish giants, the public has insisted on balancing private monopolies of quasi-monopolies with Government regulation.

If the large units of the press and their spokesmen are prepared to accept common-carrier status, with regulation of their economic affairs, they will continue their short-sighted opposition to efforts to save competition and freedom of entry in the publishing industry. It is naive to believe that such status would necessarily violate the First Amendment. It would be equally naive for believers in a free press to look forward to such status with anything but repugnance.

A number of arguments have been advanced against an immediate congressional study of what needs to be done to preserve the small, competitive press. First, it is argued on economic grounds that nothing can be done. Competition from newer advertising media has threatened the prosperity of large and small papers alike. The impulse to mergers and consolidations is inevitable. Small papers cannot compete with large ones covering their territories; independents cannot compete with chains. Cities of certain sizes seem able to support only so many papers.

It is because there seems to be some truth in this position that Congress needs to learn whether it is inevitably true, and

to determine the consequences. But this line of argument does not have the ring of revealed truth about it. If the economic position of small business generally is strengthened, and its managerial skills increased, the independent local press will find its sources of advertising revenue increased. The small publishers who have written to the committee do not fear competition from large papers. Nor do they ask for crutches. All they ask is that they shall not have to bear extra burdens because they are small. Some small cities support several papers; some large ones support only one. There does not seem to be any economic inevitability there. Finally, in an age of swift technological change there is always the possibility that the engineers might completely alter the economic characteristics of small newspaper operation with new low-priced low operating cost equipment.

Some of the arguments about the economic inevitability of local newspaper monopolies sound suspicious when they come from those with established interests to protect. This position, after all, is a complete denial of the doctrine of free enterprise to which the press has rendered such great homage.

Moreover, the economic effect of local monopoly, as some of the data given above indicates, has in this business, as in others, been to raise advertising prices as soon as competition has been killed. Were this situation to become sufficiently widespread and uneconomic, other businesses might well begin to ask for either competition or rate regulation.

Opposing Argument

Another position is that Congress should not study the special needs of small papers or take action to help them. This position says large papers offer better service. This position has, of course, been used to defend the growth of economic empires and concentration of control in other industries. It has yet to be proved that large units are more efficient or socially useful in every way, or even in most ways. As was pointed out above, there are certainly many ways in which the small paper fills needs—either neighborhood, community, small business, or special interest—with the large paper, the radio, and the magazine cannot fill. Above all, the small newspaper provides a means of expression for a man or group which has something to contribute to the stream of ideas, opinions, and facts. Op-

portunity to enter the field must be maintained so that we may continue to benefit from the competition of ideas, as well as the competition of newspapers.

The urgency of maintaining access to the communications media through small papers is further complicated by the coming of facsimile and allocation of FM licenses which give the holders the right to broadcast newspapers. What significance, if any, this new technique of publishing will have for the present newspaper press it is difficult to predict. It is obvious, however, that Congress must begin to consider the problem of maintaining a free press in a limited medium, regulated by a government agency. Cross-channel combination tying newspaper, AM radio, FM radio and possibly television into a series of giant or local monopolies would effectively end any chance of preserving the traditional position of the press.

It has been further argued that the problems of the press cannot be solved by maintaining or extending competition. The real need is alleged to be raising the level of performance of the sprawling giants of journalism. Certainly we want the press to achieve the highest level of performance as a purveyor of complete, truthful news and adequate, balanced opinion about public policy. But are we prepared to place a diminishing number of publishers in a position where they can present what they think is factual information and intelligent opinion to vast audiences with not even the threat of competition from small publications? Of course not.

The premises from which it is argued that Congress should not and cannot make efforts to keep the small press alive, vigorous and growing are faulty. It is not too far-fetched an interpretation of the first amendment to say that Congress has an obligation to maintain a diversely controlled newspaper industry. This, as other industries, operates under the laws made by Congress. The Supreme Court has held that labor and other economic laws apply to it as to all other businesses. Congress must be sure that the effect of its tax laws, labor laws, antitrust laws, patent laws, communications laws, tariffs, reciprocal trade treaties, postal regulations, Federal financing statutes is to effectively strengthen the freedom of the press. Strengthening that freedom means insuring diversity of ownership, stimulating competition, and encouraging a constant growth of new ventures.

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This Publication

The 96 newspapermen who have held Nieman fellowships in the past eight years organized the Society of Nieman Fellows in 1946 and their Council voted to start a publication in journalism. It is intended to publish a quarterly about newspapering by newspapermen to include reports and articles and stories about the newspaper business, newspaper people and newspaper stories. The Nieman Council hope to make it of enough interest to the newspaper profession so that newspapermen generally will want to subscribe to it and write contributions for it. It has no pattern, formula or policy except to seek to serve the purpose of the Nieman Foundation "to promote standards of journalism in America." Believing that this purpose is shared by most newspapermen, the Nieman Council invites their support as subscribers and participation as contributors. It starts very modestly but hopes to grow both in content and circulation. The first three issues will be sent free to persons requesting them. Thereafter the rate will be \$2 a year. The address: 44 Holyoke House, Cambridge.

Free Press Report

The Commission on Freedom of the Press has announced publication of its report for March 31. It will be a supplement to Fortune for April and come out separately as a book by the University of Chicago Press. The Commission was formed and led by Pres Robert M Hutchins of the University of Chicago, on the suggestion of Henry Luce that an inquiry be made into the freedom of the press, its present state and future prospects. Luce made \$200,000 available. Another \$15,000 was supplied by the Encyclopedia Britannica. The distinguished commission assembled by Hutchins has worked for three years on the study.

A Positive Democracy

Not in a long time has a story vibrated through the press as did David Lillienthal's affirmation of his belief in democracy at a Senate committee hearing Feb 4. Goaded for days by Sen. McKellar, enemy of everything connected with TVA, Lillienthal seized upon a question to declare that democracy is a positive, not a negative thing, and to rebuke all witch-hunters.

Anthony Leviero of the New York Times described the "solemnity" that fell upon the hearing room. Carl Levin of the New York Herald-Tribune described his "quiet thoughtful monotone" and the "hushed" room as Lillienthal made his extemporaneous statement with a slow-consuming fire. Alfred Friendly of the Washington Post wrote of the "pin-drop silence" during the talk, and of the quiet voice of Sen. McMahon of Conn, saying "That was the statement of a real American."

The Memphis Press-Scimitar, in TVA territory, and McKellar's home State, said on its front page that "this statement will go down in history as one of the finest definitions of democracy ever uttered." It printed the full statement in the news columns the 5th and again on its editorial page the 6th. The Times and Herald Tribune carried the full stenographic text. Thomas Stokes made the text his column on Feb 5. Doris Fleeson wrote her column on it that day.

Some of Lillienthal's sentences: "My convictions are not so much concerned with what am I against as what I am for.

"Traditionally, democracy has been an affirmative doctrine rather than merely a negative one.

"I believe—and I so conceive the Constitution of the United States to rest upon, as does religion—the fundamental proposition of the integrity of the individual; and that all government and all private institutions must be designed to promote and to protect and to defend the integrity and the dignity of the individual; that that is the essential meaning of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, as it is es-

entially the meaning of religion.

"It is very easy to talk about being against communism. It is equally important to believe those things which provide a satisfying and effective alternative. Democracy is that satisfying, affirmative alternative.

"Its hope in the world is that it is an affirmative belief, rather than being simply a belief against something else and nothing more.

"One of the tenets of democracy that grows out of this central core of a belief that the individual comes first, that all men are the children of God and that their personalities are therefore sacred, carries with it a great belief in civil liberties and their protection, and a repugnance to anyone who would steal from a human being that which is most precious to him—his good name—either by impugning things to him by innuendo or by insinuation. And it is especially an unhappy circumstance that occasionally that is done in the name of democracy. This, I think, can tear our country apart and destroy it if we carry it further.

"I deeply believe in the capacity of democracy to surmount any trials that may lie ahead, provided only that we practice it in our daily lives."

Progress

I was the cub reporter and got the sour assignments.

This time it was to promote the Community Chest drive with a story about a member agency, the Florence Crittenden House of Mercy, home for unwed mothers.

The matron was breathless at the prospect of publicity. She took me through the place proudly, exhibiting its facilities, its crop of babies, and even an unwed mother or two.

"I declare!" she said, summing up as I prepared to go. "I'm so encouraged! Every year it seems like our girls are of a higher and higher type."

—A. B. G. Jr.

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