

... an Open Letter

From: Tillie the Teller (in the Baltimore Filter Room)

To: Polly the Plotter (in the Philadelphia Operations Room)

Date—Any Clear Day

Dear Polly,

This morning our board is a mass of stands. The lights are flashing on and off like stars on an August night. We've got a good shift—but we're short-handed. So our plotters are dashing from jack to jack, instead of standing quietly at their respective posts. Our target clerks are weaving in and out among them like weary gazelles. Our filterers never have a chance to look up, they are so busy.

Up here on the balcony, I've been telling flights for two hours, with scarcely a pause for breath, and my throat feels rather like a nutmeg grater. You think I'm a little slow with my telling, I'm afraid. Well, to tell you the truth, I think you're not too speedy taking what I give you.

As a matter of fact I suppose you and I are both pretty good at our respective jobs. Sometimes, however, circumstances will gang up against us. Perhaps that friend of yours who usually plots on the east side of the board had to stay home and take care of her youngster,—he just broke out with measles this morning. And that means you have to handle both sides of the board.

It looks as if I'm not going to get any relief at all today. Mildred Smith and I usually share this telling position,—she plots the first two hours while I tell, and then we shift around. But Mildred isn't in today. Her fiance is leaving for overseas duty next week and this is her last chance to see him. You can't really blame her for staying out, can you?

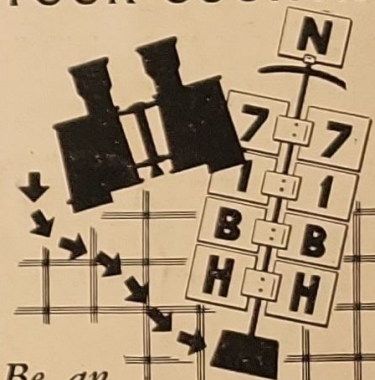
Those things shouldn't happen, of course. The Philadelphia Information Center and the Baltimore Filter Center ought to be so crowded with volunteers that no matter what happens—no matter how many of us are unavoidably absent—our boards should be manned to the last position. But somehow, there are still too many people in these great cities of ours who don't know how badly we need them, and they haven't reported for duty yet.

We'll get them all right. But it's going to take a little time. So meanwhile, I'll try to realize what you're up against and be patient. And you'll do the same for me.

So long. I'll be telling to you.

TILLIE

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