CONTACT

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Lobster and Ice Cream

THE *Committee on Publicity Methods in Social Work* quotes an interesting quotation from the *Mailbag*, inspired by an article in *The New York Times* concerning the eminent psychologist, Dr. Hollingworth. (We give this lengthy credit line with pleasure, because it shows through what diverse channels a single thought may be carried to the innumerable groups that make up the public.)

" 'The average man is, of course, an abstraction. He does not actually exist. What do exist are statistical averages of qualities which even before intelligence tests and statistical summaries, were assumed by such every day expressions as "any man of average intelligence."

" 'The composite portrait of the average man as drawn by Dr. Harry L. Hollingworth of Columbia University has, however, real importance for the advertiser who appeals to the masses.

" 'The average man has a vocabulary of about 7,500 words. Words like "dilapidated" and "philanthropy" are just a little beyond his mental reach', says Dr. Hollingworth in a *New York Times* interview, 'and he cannot put into words the difference between "poverty" and "misery". . . .

" 'The average man leaves school at the eighth grade. He has a smattering of local geography, a little bit of history and a few elementary facts of physiology.

" 'He believes that a couple of quinine pills and a stiff drink of whiskey will cure a cold, that a Masonic order goes back to the days of King Solomon, that it is practically fatal to eat lobster and follow it with ice cream, that all Swedes have thick skulls and are stupid, that red-headed people always have quick tempers, that tan shoes are cooler than black for summer wear, that dew falls, that morals were purer twenty years ago, and that the winters were longer, the snow heavier and more frequent when he was a boy.

" 'The average man, in other words, believes a lot of nonsense and superstition . . .' "

The Right to Know

IN an article on *Otto H. Kahn—Maecenas* by Libbian Benedict in *The Reflex*, the attitude of the financier towards the public is discussed. It shows graphically how greatly the entire field of public relations in finance and industry has developed in the past few decades.

"Although in no way too noticeably communicative on financial matters, Kahn has always been one of the most approachable interviewees and speakers of the financial canyon. Long ago, when he first came into contact with that famous and maligned railroad brain—Edward Henry Harriman—Kahn expressed his belief in the right of the public to know both what goes on behind the golden gratings and something about the men who superintend the goings on. Harriman, according to Kahn, was unjustly maligned, and a great part of the blame could be laid to his secretiveness and his insistence on seclusion. Harriman's taciturnity had made the public suspicious of him, and when he had been taught to come off his high horse, and the public saw that he was flesh and blood after all, the suspicions died away and he became a genuine idol.

"Finance (Mr. Kahn has said more than once in his various speeches) instead of avoiding publicity in all its aspects, should welcome and seek it. Publicity won't hurt its dignity. A dignity which can be preserved only by seclusion, which cannot hold its own in the market place, is neither merited nor worth having, nor capable of being long retained. The eminently successful business man should beware of that insidious tendency of wealth to chill and isolate. We [illegible] more and more get out of the seclusion of our offices [illegible] into the rough and tumble of democracy, out—to get to know the people and get known by them.

"Never once has Kahn deviated from the principles he has so rigidly laid down. He is a frequent public speaker, and it is said that he has more to do with the creation of his speeches than most public men have. Nor does he believe that his utterances, once made, should perish with the moment that heard them spoken. They are all neatly published and bound in pamphlet form, then sent out to the morgues of newspaper offices and to public libraries with slips pasted on the inner flap which bear the message that they have arrived with the compliments of Otto H. Kahn."

"Leather Goods Mfrs. Re-elect All Officers"

"CHICAGO, Nov. 10.—All officers of the Association of Trunk, Luggage and Leather Goods Manufacturers were re-elected at the annual convention which closed yesterday. The public relations program, started last May, will be continued. E. L. Bernays, of New York, heads the publicity movement."

Women's Wear Daily.

Viscera

"THE groups fighting for the Pure Food law staged, at the St. Louis Exposition of 1904, one of the most effective bits of propaganda ever achieved, for pure food or for any other purpose.

"A large space had been allotted there to manufacturers of preserved foods, who put on display practically every brand and variety of canned and bottled goods manufactured in the United States. The pure-food workers, chiefly from the Association of State Food and Dairy Departments, secured from the Exposition officials permission to open a booth near by. Then the State chemists of Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, North Carolina, Minnesota, Utah, Oregon, Connecticut, South Dakota, and Nebraska set to work. They took samples of well-known artificially colored foods. From each they extracted the dye. With the extracted colors, they dyed pieces of wool and silk. To each bit of cloth they attached a properly attested chemist's certificate, explaining the nature of the dye, and giving the name of the food sample from which it had been taken. Then they shipped the whole exhibit to the pure-food booth at the St. Louis Exposition.

"When the exposition opened, visitors by the thousands filed by the beautifully arranged display of the food manufacturers—and then paused at the pure-food booth. Here they saw duplicated many of the cans and bottles on view in the food manufacturers' booth, each having a placard naming the deleterious substances used in its coloring and preservation. On a table, in a brilliantly hued lay-out, were the silk and woollen cloths that had been colored with dyes extracted from the foods. The subtle purpose was that the passer-by would reason that silk and wool are animal tissues, that a human being's intestines are animal tissues also, and that a dye which would bring a brilliant green, or carmine, or yellow to wool and silk, might, when swallowed in food, bring the same color to the passer-by's insides.

"The passer-by was moved to reflect that a color might be agreeable and harmless when used where it could be seen, on one of the detachable ornaments of the outer periphery of the human organism, as on a necktie, for example; but that the same color, when used on the lining of one's insides, was at best useless from the point of view of ornamentation, and at the worst might have adverse effects on one's health.

"As it happened, many Americans had an exceptional familiarity with the tints of the viscera, and a concern about them not shared by the non-medical laity of other nations, for the reason that some fifteen or twenty years before there had been introduced into many of the public schools a new branch of learning, physiology. The science was imparted through vividly illustrated text-books and colored charts, of which the purpose was not merely to teach hygiene in the broadest sense, but particularly to inculcate the desirability of total abstinence from alcoholic liquors; to which end the illustrations included a colorful profusion of pictures of portions of the human anatomy which, but for the laudable design of promoting total abstinence, would have been, in the normal American attitude about the less obvious organs of the human body, decorously concealed from youth, rather than pressed upon their consciousness. Many of the pictures in the physiology text-books were in pairs, in the 'before and after' manner. The 'before' pictures showed the normal coloration of the mechanism for metabolism. The 'after-taking' pictures showed the coloration of the same organs and tissues as they would be when transformed by the consumption of specified quantities of alcoholic liquor. Since the impression meant to be made by the 'after-taking' pictures was designed to be one of restraint, it followed that the colors in which the 'after-taking' results were pictured, had such a vividness and variegation as would have been, but for this detail of American education, unfamiliar to all except those who chanced to have made, because of their vocations or otherwise, unusual adventures into the farther reaches of the spectroscope.

"The result of familiarity with the tinting of the viscera thus brought about, and the concern about it that had been implanted, was that many Americans felt an acute disquiet about any departure from the conventional in the coloring of the internal organs. In short, the average American examined that display in the aisles of the St. Louis Exposition with intentness and minuteness, and passed on with a readiness to listen favorably to any agitator who thought Congress ought to do something about the use of artificial coloring in food. Nor were great masses of average folks impressed. 'Congressmen and Senators', R. M. Allen wrote me in 1927, 'State legislators, delegations from women's clubs, newspaper and magazine writers and editors flocked to the exhibit. Some of the food manufacturers considered getting injunctions against us and against the management of the fair, but decided this would only increase public interest. Toward the close of the fair one of my associates in the direction of the exhibit said: "It has kindled a fire of public interest which no power on earth will be able to put out."'

Our Times—America Finding Herself
By MARK SULLIVAN.

Endorsed

"FEW problems of editorial policy and practice are more difficult than the problem of free publicity. It cannot be dismissed by the writing of a pretty phrase or the laying down of a set rule, for it involves delicate distinctions between what is news and it touches upon important relations between the newspaper and its friends. But it is a problem of daily urgency. It must be faced. It demands a general rule of conduct that may be followed uniformly, even if it cannot be stated concisely.

"It is commonly understood that *The Daily News* does not publish free publicity in its news columns. This is not strictly so. *The Daily News*, for instance, in its financial, real estate and even in its general news columns is constantly dealing with business concerns, giving publicity to corporate enterprise and mentioning private interest wherever news values warrant. No newspaper that pretends to give a picture of the world we live in can afford to ignore business. It is too much an important factor of life.

"On the other hand, no newspaper that values the respect of its reading public can give an undue proportion of its columns to business. Especially is it dangerous for a newspaper to make the business of its friends and advertisers a major concern, directing, modifying or coloring its news to suit private interests. The public of the newspaper is not the public of Barnum. It does not like to be fooled. It will not be fooled. The newspaper that attempts it inevitably loses more in prestige than it gains in temporary advantage.

"The answer of *The Daily News* to the free publicity problem is the policy of unqualified editorial independence. We mean by that that the editors of *The Daily News* are charged with the responsibility of editing the news as it comes to them, whether from the regular news sources or from the desks of friends and advertisers, with but one idea in mind . . . to present to the readers of *The Daily News* the best possible summary of what is true, clean and important in the news of the day. There are no strings to their discretion. Considerations of profit or personal friendship have no part. Their judgment is final.

"Let us see in a practical way how this policy applies to free publicity. To the desks of the editors of *The Daily News* come daily many requests for free publicity. Some are brought by mail, some come through advertising solicitors, others are brought by those personally interested in their publication or by their publicity representatives. Regardless of their source or the manner of their coming they receive the same consideration . . . they must measure up to a single news standard.

"There are two items on the editor's desk. The first is an out-and-out free advertisement . . . what the advertiser used to call a 'puff.' In the guise of a general news item it carries a clever sales message. It is well done, of course. The writing of free publicity is a profession nowadays. The trained publicity agent knows how to inject his propaganda subtly, sometimes so subtly that even the most astute editor has difficulty in finding it. But it is none the less free advertising because sugarcoated. The item is NOT news. The editor quite properly rejects it.

"The other item is of a different nature. It deals with a business enterprise, but it IS news. The business concern is doing something that, in the opinion of the editors of *The Daily News*, is of interest to the reading public of *The Daily News*. It has not been published elsewhere. It is timely. It contains no cleverly hidden sales message. The editor, quite properly, without consulting the records to see how much advertising that business buys in *The Daily News*, decides that the item submitted is worth publication if space limitations will permit. He sends it to the proper department where it enters strictly on its merits into competition with the other news of the day for space in that day's publication. Usually, if it cannot find space in that day's issue it is dead. Nothing is so stale as yesterday's news.

"One thing few readers or advertisers understand fully is that for every word of news published there are at least ten words that cannot be published. Every inch of newspaper space is at a high premium.

"Let us take *The Daily News* for the month of May as an illustration. In the average issue for that month there were about 46 pages with 368 columns. *The Daily News* has found that the most practical ratio between news and advertising is from 60 to 65 percent advertising and 35 to 40 percent news. The advertising average for this month was 64 percent. (It is interesting to note that the advertising average in the leading Chicago morning newspaper for the same period was 69 percent.) This percentage leaves *The Daily News* with approximately 133 columns of news space to be filled . . . for every inch of space in every news department are available many hundreds of columns of news. Cable, wire, post and telephone are bringing into the editorial office stories of importance and urgency. There is a deadline to be met almost every hour. These hundreds of thousands of words must be trimmed down to their ultimate news value, sifted, balanced and so displayed that the readers of each edition shall have the best possible picture of the happenings of the day presented in the order of their interest and importance.

"Into this competition all publicity matter that has an actual news value enters. Frequently it finds its way to publication. Sometimes it is crowded out by news of greater importance. From the minute it is received to the minute it is rejected, eliminated by necessity, or published, it travels strictly on its merits. It receives the same consideration that any other item of news receives . . . but no more.

"In so far as this practice can be expressed as a definite policy, Victor F. Lawson, the late editor and publisher of *The Daily News*, expressed it in a brief and memorable form:

" 'The fact that an individual, or an advertiser, happens to be directly interested in the publication of a particular article is no reason why it should be published. Neither is this fact a reason why it should *not* be published. The value of the article as news is the sole consideration involved.' "

A Definite Answer To The
Free Publicity Question.

—*The Chicago Daily News.*

"Ballyhoo"

"THE counsel in (or on) public relations differs from the commercial and personal press agent, and from the publicity director, in more than name. Among the leaders of the craft in this country are Messrs. Lee and Bernays" . . .

"Of the counsel in public relations he (Bernays) says frankly: 'Essentially he is a special pleader before the court of public opinion.' He has suggested (and is by no means the first to suggest it) that the Federal Government create a Cabinet post for a publicity man. If that were done, Bernays says, Europe would not think ill of our policies, and our adventures in Nicaragua, China, Central America and Mexico would not be understood as imperialist. This is the day, he asserts, when the minority must, through organized propaganda, guide the majority to its way of thinking. In his house organ, *Contact*, he writes: 'Propaganda has assumed vast importance in its effect on the lives of peoples, and with the growing democratization of the world, there will be more and more organized appeals made to the people directly on behalf of national and international interests, on behalf of every kind of idea or product which any one group desires other groups to accept.' "

Ballyhoo by SILAS BENT.

From Dude Cane to Big Stick

"BY the rule that usually governs, that early conception of Roosevelt" (at first pictured as a dude) "should have remained to the end. The public's initial impression, the role the newspapers give a man when he first appears in the news, almost always sticks. To alter the public's first conception of a man is almost more difficult than to alter personality itself. There is a fatality about it: A person is introduced to the public as having certain characteristics, is tagged with certain adjectives. That first characterization has, in the popular mind, the tenacity of all first impressions. In the mechanism of newspaper work, there is a process that perpetuates it. The first items about any one newly emerged into public notice are clipped, indexed, and filed away in that repository of personal information which newspapers call their 'morgue' or 'obituary department'. Upon the subsequent appearance of the man in the news, reporters and editors turn to the morgue. Unconsciously they absorb, indolently they accept, automatically they repeat, the early adjectives. For newspaper writers and cartoonists, and consequently for the public, a character's personality is commonly fixed forever by the initial impression he makes. He is put into a mold; to wrench himself out of it, to take on a new role in the public eye, is almost impossible.

"Nevertheless, Roosevelt changed that picture. More accurately, the times changed, the mood of the people changed, and the newspapers reflected the transition. In the early 1880's, the forces Roosevelt attacked were seen as those that had fought the Civil War, abolished slavery, preserved the Union; that were resisting the economic heresies of greenbackism and free silver; and, as business leaders and railroad builders, were opening up the country. By the early 1900's 'opening up the country' was called 'stealing the public land', and in all respects the forces Roosevelt opposed were seen in a very different light. The writers and cartoonists of the 1900's portrayed Roosevelt at the height of his Presidency as the fighting champion of the people, a combination of Rough Rider and fire-eater, fists clenched, chin thrust forward, hair bristling, eyes glaring, and—final touch of belligerency—teeth made to symbolize a steam-shovel biting into an ogre labelled 'The Trusts', teeth gnashing defiance at Wall Street, or gloating in triumph over it—the outstanding, incomparable symbol of virility in his time. Of the elements that entered into the transformation, comparatively little is to be ascribed to change in Roosevelt's personality. Much more potent was a change that came in the conditions of the times and the mood of the people."

Our Times—America Finding Herself
By MARK SULLIVAN.

Civil Examination for Press Representative

THE United States Civil Service Commission announces an open competitive examination for the office of chief of press service for the Federal Radio Commission. Applications must be on file with the Civil Service Commission at Washington not later than November 29. The entrance salary is $3,800 a year, and his duty will be to keep newspaper correspondents informed concerning the activities of the Federal Radio Commission. A probationary period of six months is required, after that advancement depends upon ability. Competitors will not be required to present themselves at any place for examination, but will be rated upon education and experience, with a thesis and published articles to be filed with the application. Full information may be obtained from the civil service secretaries at the postoffice or customs house in any city.

Alas, Poor Benito

JOURNALISM students at Northwestern University voted Mussolini is not the most important man in the world's news according to an A.P. dispatch to the *New York Evening Post:*

"The distinction instead has been given to Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh and Henry Ford among the men and to Queen Marie among women. Ranking next among men were President Coolidge, Mussolini, the Prince of Wales, Mayor Thompson, Thomas A. Edison, Gene Tunney, Al Smith and Babe Ruth. Mrs. Coolidge, Ruth Elder, Helen Wills and Jane Addams received several votes."