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DANBURY, CONNECTICUT

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"I prefer that the lines of the News should be a chronicle of the good deeds of my own townsmen rather than a record of their weakness and follies."
—J. M. Bailey.

They Wouldn't Fight

Granting that most of those now serving prison sentences because they refused to fight for their country when it was in deadly peril believed they were right, it is still true that whatever portion of liberty and decency they will enjoy once they are freed will be theirs, because other men fought and died for them. If the thirteen millions of redblooded Americans who took up arms to kill the Germans, Italians and Japanese who, bound together as The Axis powers, attempted to enslave the world, had refused to fight because of conscientious qualms, the world today would be under Hitler, Mussolini and Hirohito, and there would be no liberty of either conscience or body. Even if we respect the beliefs of the pacifists and others who refused to fight, that doesn't alter the fact that those who refused were able to escape the battlefield, escape danger, escape wounds and death. And it doesn't alter the fact that their consciences saved their skins and their lives, and that today they are alive, while hundreds of thousands of boys who didn't want to fight either, nevertheless did fight, did save our country, and today lie dead. The conscientious objectors are alive.

Hence we haven't too much patience with mass demonstrations and picketings and highpressuring of government to gain the release of those objectors who are behind the strong walls and thick bars of the Danbury Federal Correctional Institution.

Probably not one boy in a thousand in the armed forces enjoyed the idea of going into battle, on land, on the sea, under the sea or in the air. Those boys didn't want to die. Nor did they ache to kill the enemy. But they had a job to do, and they did it, unpleasant as it was, fearful as it was. Of course they were afraid. Every normal man is afraid when he faces the enemy. Self preservation is the first law of nature, and to want to

for the average man to kill anyone. Altogether it was a horrible job, that of risking one's life to kill the enemy. But our boys did it because they knew it had to be done. They did it to protect their homes, their country, their families. The conscientious objectors would not fight either to protect themselves, their country, or their wives, mothers and daughters.

We confess that we do not quite "get" the philosophy of the conscientious objector. Nor do we "get" the philosophy of relatives and friends who would parade and picket to get these fellows out of prison. So far as we are concerned we think they are in prison because they deserve to be, and we should think those with "conchies" in the Correctional Institution would go quietly about their private concerns, and wait until the sentences of the inmates had expired.

It is a free country today—no thanks to the conscientious objectors.

honorable service in the Navy, and Lodge after long and honorable service in the Army. Stassen resigned as governor to enter the service, and Lodge resigned as senator for the same purpose. Both are young, both are progressive, both have excellent records in politics, both are veterans. And each is believed by the politicians to have a political future. Moreover, each is credited with being politically ambitious.

Whether there is any good foundation for the story that veterans intend to form their own independent party and run veterans as their candidates we do not profess to know. Nor do we know how much interest the veterans take now, or will take, in politics. However, inasmuch as some thirteen million men and women were in the armed forces during the war, it is clear that they can exert a vast influence in politics, if they elect to do so. Their strength is more than that of their own numbers, of course, for most of them could influence one or two members of their own family — and that would "run into votes," as the politicians say.

Independent parties do not have much success in American politics, as history proves. They seldom elect their candidates. But they have influenced elections tremendously, as did the Bull Moose party in 1912, when it took so much strength from the Republicans that Woodrow Wilson became President.

The whole interplay of politics and veterans will be a thrilling political spectacle in the coming elections, with 1948 showing the full and mature strength of what doubtless will come to be known as "the veteran vote."

Danbury Living Space

Mayor William J. Hannan is to be commended on his decision to appoint a housing advisory committee to coordinate actions aimed at the relief of the acute shortage of houses and apartments in Danbury. This is in accordance with the recommendations of the Truman administration, and, as the Mayor pointed out, Wilson W. Wyatt, Mr. Truman's housing expediter has said: "We are going to need the advice and active participation of courageous community leaders in cities and towns throughout the country." Hence, in compliance with this suggestion, Danbury's mayor is to appoint a local committee to see what can be done to ease the local housing shortage. He has not announced his appointments as this is written.

It is the mayor's idea that the local committee will work with, or at least consult with, state and national agencies, with particular reference to obtaining housing for veterans and their families. With more than four thousand Danburians, in the armed services of their country during the war, returned or returning, the outlook for many of them is drab indeed. Many of these men are married. Some were married before they went into the

Japanese as a barbarous and ruthless people. Yet some of them must have traits of decency, if these are allowed to develop. The trouble has been, doubtless, that the war lords, taking advantage of the myth of the divine origin of the emperor, made the Japanese people believe that it was the God-Emperor who was moving for world conquest. The ignorant and subdued common people, believing that they were under divine guidance, followed stupidly and blindly where the militarists led.

Yet this episode of the flowers proves that not even the brutal leaders, such as those generals we have just convicted of horrible responsibility for mass atrocities, could stamp out all decency and all generosity and all the finer feelings of all the Japanese. The simple peasants who strewed flowers on the graves of fliers who had come thousands of miles to bomb their country cannot be the only people in all Japan with some spark of humanity left in their hearts.

We must not allow this feeling to influence us to be soft in our dealings with the Japanese, of course. They must be kept in hand for some time to come, and the education of the rising generation must be along lines far different from those used to inculcate false ideals in the present Japanese people. But, if this flower incident is typical of the attitudes and characteristics of many of the Jap working people, surely there is hope that, under democratic instruction and leadership, Japan may one day take an honored place in the family of nations.

Mackenzie's Column

By DeWitt Mackenzie

The Hague, Feb. 14—Prime Minister Schermerhorn has paid this column the compliment of asking it to perform a friendly mission for Holland by emphasizing to America his assurances that not only his government but the people of the Netherlands as a whole are anxious to see Indonesia gain self government and within a fixed period freedom of choice for its own status.

This is by way of being a historic request, for it is indeed a striking recognition of the great politico-social tide which is sweeping our world. It isn't often given a reporter of foreign affairs—even if he has been dealing with statesmen for a generation, as has your correspondent—to hear the prime minister of an empire thus emphasize the mother country's desire to see one of her most cherished possessions become a sovereign state.

Led Dutch Underground

Here it may be useful to interpolate that Dr. Schermerhorn has a wide republican and liberal leaning. During the Dutch Underground the Germanization can be seen. Recently he has been in the Labor party for years, he is a personality at least as much as a captive. The pri

husband was away. Others broke up the little home and went to live with "his" or "her" parents. These want a home for the reunited family now, of course. Some of our boys married while they were away from Danbury, and now want to return with their wives to take up their new or old jobs, and to raise their family in the old home town. Some Danbury boys are returning to marry Danbury girls to whom they have been engaged for a long time. All these young people, and many civilian young people, want homes, either by themselves or in apartments. And there just are not sufficient homes to accommodate them.

It is a hard task that faces the housing advisory committee and all others who undertake to remedy, at least in part, the current distressing situation concerning housing. Yet it is a situation that must be faced, and the way to face it is to bring to bear on it all the intelligence, effort and determination possible.

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