Government Pays for News in French Papers, Ernest Hemingway

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System Quite Open and Understood—Other Countries Pay for Their Space, Too—Prominent Men Oppose Occupation, But Do Their Duty as Patriots.

MAYOR OF LYONS DARK HORSE FOR PREMIER

The following is the third of a series of articles on the Franco-German situation by Ernest M. Hemingway, staff correspondent of The Star.

By ERNEST M. HEMINGWAY. Special Correspondence of The Star.

Paris, April 10.—What do the French people think about the Ruhr and the whole German question? You will not find out by reading the French press.

French newspapers sell their news columns just as they do their advertising space. It is quite open and understood. As a matter of fact it is not considered very chic to advertise in the small advertising section of a French daily. The news item is supposed to be the only real way of advertising.

So the government pays the newspapers a certain amount to print government news. It is considered government advertising and every big French daily like the Matin, Petit Parisien, Echo de Paris, L'Intransigeant, Le Temps, receives a regular amount in subsidy for printing government news. Thus the government is the newspapers' biggest advertising client. The railroads are the next biggest. But that is all the news on anything the government is doing that the readers of the paper get.

Pays Extra For Special News.

When the government has any special news, as it has at such a time as the occupation of the Ruhr, it pays the papers extra. If any of these enormously circulated daily papers refuse to print the government news or criticize the government standpoint the government withdraws their subsidy—and the paper loses its biggest advertiser. Consequently the big Paris dailies are always for the government, any government that happens to be in.

When one of them refuses to print the news furnished by the government and begins attacking its policy you may be sure of one thing. That it has not accepted the loss of its subsidy without receiving the promise of a new one and a substantial advance, from some government that it is absolutely sure will get into power shortly. And it has to be awfully sure it is coming off before it turns down its greatest client. Consequently when one of these papers whose circulation mounts into millions starts an attack on the government it is time for the politicians in power to get out their overshoes and put up the storm windows.

All of these things are well known and accepted facts. The government's attitude is that the newspapers are not in business for their health and that they must pay for the news they get like any other advertiser. The newspapers have confirmed the government in this attitude.

News Written in Foreign Office.

Le Temps is always spoken of as "semi-official." That means that the first column on the first page is written in the foreign office at the Quai D'Orsay, the rest of the columns are at the disposal of the various governments of Europe. A sliding scale of rates handles them. Unimportant governments can get space cheap. Big governments come high. All European governments have a special fund for newspaper publicity that does not have to be accounted for.

This sometimes leads to amusing incidents, as a year ago when the facts were published showing how the Temps was receiving subsidy for running propaganda from two different Balkan governments who were at loggerheads and printing the despatches as their own special correspondence on alternate days. No matter how idealistic European politics may be a trusting idealist is about as safe in their machinery as a blind man stumbling about in a saw mill. One of my best friends was in charge of getting British propaganda printed in the Paris press at the close of the war. He is as sincere and idealistic a man as one could know—but he certainly knows where the buzz saws are located and how the furnace is stoked.

Public Opinion Backs Occupation.

In spite of the fact that great Paris dailies, which are so widely quoted in the States and Canada as organs of public opinion, say that the people of France are solidly backing the occupation of the Ruhr, it is nevertheless true. France always backs the government in anything it does against a foreign foe once the government has started. It is that really wonderful patriotism of the French.

All Frenchmen are patriotic—and nearly all Frenchmen are politicians. But the absolute backing of the government only lasts a certain length of time. Then after his white heat has cooled the Frenchman looks the situation over, the facts begin to circulate around, he discovers that the occupation is not a success—and overthrows the government. The Frenchman feels he must be absolutely loyal to his government but that he can overthrow it and get a new government to be loyal to at any time.

Marshall Foch, for example, was opposed to the Ruhr occupation. He washed his hands of it absolutely. But once it was launched he did not come out against it. He sent General Weygand, his chief of staff, to oversee it and do the best he could. But he does not wish to be associated with it in any way.

Similarly Loucheur, the former minister of the liberated regions, and one of the ablest men in France, opposed the occupation. Loucheur is a man who does not mince words. During the period when France was pouring out money for reconstruction with seemingly no regard as to how it was spent or for what, Loucheur did all he could to control it. It was Loucheur who told the mayor of Rheims: "Monsieur, you are asking exactly six times the cost of this reconstruction."

Loucheur Against Opposition.

A few days ago M. Loucheur said to me in conversation, "I was always opposed to the occupation. It is impossible to get any money that way. But now that they have gone in, now that the flag of France is unfurled, we are all Frenchmen and we must loyally support the occupation."

M. Andre Tardieu, who headed the French mission to the United States during the war and is Clemenceau's lieutenant, opposed the advance into the Ruhr in his paper, the Echo National, up until the day it started. Now he is denouncing it as ill run, badly managed, wishy washy and not strong enough. M. Tardieu, who looks like a bookmaker, foresees the failure of the present government with the failure of the occupation but he wants to be in a position to catch the reaction in the bud and say: "Give us a chance at it. Let us show that properly handled it can be a success." For M. Tardieu is a very astute politician and that is very nearly his only chance of getting back into power for some time.

Eduard Herriot, mayor of Lyons, a member of cabinet during the war, and dark horse candidate for next premier of France, after supporting the occupation in the same way that Loucheur is doing, has now sponsored a resolution in the Lyons city council protesting the occupation and demanding consideration of a financial and economic entente with Germany. This demand of Herriot may be the first puff of the wind that is bound to rise and blow the Poincare government out of power.

Why Are They Opposed?

Now why are these, and many other intelligent Frenchmen, opposed to the occupation although they want to get every cent possible from Germany? It is simply because of the way it is going. It is losing France money instead of making it and from the start it was seen by the longheaded financiers that it would only cripple Germany's ability to pay further reparations, unite her as a country and reflame her hatred against France—and cost more money than it would ever get out.

Before the occupation a train of twelve or more cars of coal or coke left the Ruhr for France every twenty eight minutes. Now there are only two trains a day. A train of twelve cars now is split up into four trains to pad the figures and make the occupation look successful.

When there is a shipment of coal to be gotten out, four or five tanks, a battalion of infantry, and fifty workmen go and do the job. The soldiers are to prevent the inhabitants beating up the workmen. The official figures on the amount of coal and coke that has been exported from the Ruhr and the money that has already been given by the chamber of deputies for the first months of the occupation show that the coal France was receiving on her reparations account is now costing her a little over $200 a ton. And she isn't getting the coal.

The Labor Problem.

At the start of the occupation certain correspondents wrote that it would be easy for France to run the Ruhr profitably, all she would have to do would be to bring in cheap labor—Italian or Polish labor is always cheap—and just get the stuff out. The other day I saw some of this cheap labor locked in a car at the Gare du Nord bound for Essen. They were a miserable lot of grimy unfit looking men, the sort that could not get work in France or anywhere else.

They were all drunk, some shouting, some asleep on the floor of the car, some sick. They looked more like a shanghaied ship's crew than anything else. And they were all going to be paid double wages and work half time under military protection. No workmen will go into the Ruhr for less than double wages—and it has been almost impossible to get workmen for that. The Poles and Italians will not touch the job. If you want any further information on the way it works out economically ask any business man, or

any street railway head who has ever had a strike, how much money his corporation made during the time it was employing strike breakers.

Now that we have seen in a quick glance the forces that are at work in France in this war after the war, the situation of France, and the views of her people, we can next look at Germany.

The End