

**GOVERNMENT'S PROPAGANDA MACHINE
IS NOW IN HIGH GEAR.**

Newspapers in democratic countries are faced with a dual responsibility in wartime. They must maintain a sense of values in deciding what news should be published and what should be withheld as likely to aid the enemy. No Canadian editor desires to print an item relating to the armed forces or their movements which is likely to endanger them or harm the national cause. At the same time the press has a responsibility to the people to watch and report public affairs so that the country will have a true picture of what is transpiring.

In Germany and Italy the rulers destroyed the free press of their countries and set up a gigantic propaganda machine in its place to guide public opinion along the paths they desired. A similar condition is not impossible in other countries when governments at public expense hire corps of writers to turn out propaganda which officialdom wants the people to read.

Canadians generally may be unaware that since the outbreak of the war something in the nature of a press bureaucracy has been established in Ottawa. First of all there are the Press Censors whose purpose it is to scan carefully whatever is published. So long as their efforts are directed toward preventing the publication of anything which would give aid and comfort to the enemy they are performing a useful work. But there have been occasions when they appeared to be over-officious toward some newspapers and lenient towards others. At least, they have displayed little authority in punishing some papers, particularly friendly to the government, which have broken censorship rules.

Alongside the press censors there is being built up at Ottawa a publicity corps whose job it is to get government announcements and statements of policy in the newspapers. Almost every department at Ottawa has its own publicity staff and there is also a central Bureau of Information. From Ottawa comes the report that all this publicity is to be "organized" and placed under Hon. James Gardiner, the same Halfway Gardiner who is such a staunch defender of party government in war time.

The work of the press liaison officers has not stopped at assisting pressmen to obtain information on what is transpiring in the departments (and it is questionable whether it would not be better if representatives of the papers could always get direct access to the source of the information), but they likewise turn out vast numbers of "releases" containing material the Ministers desire published. So far as these releases are factual, they may serve worthy purpose. Unfortunately they are often prepared in a manner which makes them simply a boost for the department concerned.

This is the propaganda machine on which public money is being spent. In salaries and otherwise, it is becoming very expensive. Judged by the quantity of printed material which reaches this newspaper from these government publicity offices the cost of stationery alone must be considerable. It is distributed in bulk. The other day six copies of two directives arrived from the press censors' office—a typical example of the waste that goes on.

103-886-948

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