

(laughter) because by getting it out in this industry, we can get in it with both feet.

We have in process, and it is only fair to tell you about it, although we are not supposed to tell you very much about orders in process, I mentioned earlier tonight—and I must hurry along because I have already taken too much time—that there has been a total lack of any established and organized procedure, whereby the printing plates of the industry were determined to be obsolete by any rule.

I remember very distinctly in the many conferences—I say “many” advisedly—with the various divisions of first O. P. M. and then W. P. B., that we have had on this metals problem, that the attitude seemed to be from the very start, that every printing plate in the printing establishment, whether it was out of use, had ended its useful life, was merely hanging in the bank racks or was stored in the vaults, was already scrap.

Someone picked out of the thin air, and gave voice to an expression which you may have seen in the public press, that there was 800,000 tons of the critical metals of the nation lying around useless in the printing establishments of the country. Well, I don't know where that chap got his astronomical aspirations. I know he is far from being right, but we still believe that our humble attempt at guessing how much will be turned out of the printing plants of the nation, when we put into effect the order we have in promulgation, is somewhat reasonable.

In response to a definite request from the publishing fraternity who own the plates, and particularly the publishing fraternity who publish books, who sent to us the great problem, the great hinderance to releasing these plates, is the fact that so many of our contracts have a clause in there which says that when the plates have outlived their usefulness, they may be purchased by the author, and he must be given the privilege of purchasing them at cost.

Well, I have had some 37 years experience, and I have yet to hear of an author, who ever bought his plates at cost. There may have been thousands of them sold, but the best I have ever been able to do when I was given the privilege of selling some old plates was to manage to get a fifty or one hundred dollar price, when he thought, the buyer, that he might sell them to somebody who would give my good friend Harry Owen a job of running a few million books for perhaps fifty or one hundred dollars.

Anyway, the publisher said, “If you will give us a law which says we must dispose of these, and a procedure under which we can act, we will surprise you by the thousands of sets of plates that will immediately find their way into the scrap pile or through the melting pots of the electrotypers.”

NEW ORDER FOR SCRAPPING PLATES

So, desiring to please, and having one of them say that he had 22,000 sets of plates on his inventory, and mentally computing how many hundreds of thousands of sets of plates, either singly or collectively they might be, we have prepared an order, which we think will produce that result. I am not going to bore you by reading it. I am merely going to give you three high points. The first one will be a mandatory inventory of what you have on hand; the second will be a four months' requirement period, during which in the first thirty days you must notify by registered mail, if you are a publisher, any author or any other part owner or co-owner of any plates you have on hand, and if he fails to buy them within the prescribed period, you must then send them to scrap. In the field of books, a five year end of useful life is pre-

scribed, unless they have been printed on within the five years. In commercial labels and other printing, the end of useful life is three years, unless they have been printed in that period. For all others, the end of useful life is one year, unless—and here is an escape clause—you can justify your desire and your need for keeping those, or your clients may do likewise by showing that they have continuous reprinting value, and are not being held by you merely for it, in the hope that perhaps later you might be able to negotiate a better deal with the government when you turn them in. I can tell you that there will be no toll agreements. That is to say, you are not going to get metal for metal, so you might as well clear it out, and you might as well start now, before the order begins, because the more we turn out, the less drag there will be on the virgin stock piles, and the less curtailment will come later.

ADHESIVES

Those of you who are interested in adhesives, had better watch your animal glues, and especially if you are interested in flexible glues, because glycerine has just been cut to fifty per cent, and while you may in some cases use sabotol in its place, we are anticipating that glycerine will be cut further. We are watching that situation. It may be necessary to issue an order.

I should go back for a second and tell you that our guess, which I outlined, might be given you, is that in the first three months of releasing metals, and it will be reoccurrent you know, because after the first step is taken, it is a one, three and five year reoccurrent end of useful life period, will be something like 4300 tons of copper, 45,000 tons of lead, 1,450 tons each of tin and antimony, 267 tons of zinc and 3 tons of aluminum; and I may say, Gentlemen and Ladies, we consider that we are very, very conservative.

CONVERSION

I will hurry on to the last part of what I want to bring to you. Much is being heard these days about conversion. Don't mix it up with conservation—and conversion is not of the religious type. It has to do with the possible conversion of the facilities of printing and publishing establishments to war production needs, and it is quite evident, I think, to most of you gentlemen who have been in the business most of your lives, that it is a far cry from printing presses and binding machinery and typographic equipment and electrolytic equipment and everything else, to producing shells, tanks, guns, ships and airplanes. But there is nothing to prevent you, first, if you have a machine shop maintenance division, which is probably only working eight hours a day on a full shift anyway, perhaps not at all on the second and third shifts, to do one of two things: To become a sub-contractor and produce some parts of a tank or a gun or a plane or a valve or something else.

Last week, one of the manufacturing publishers of the country just North of Chicago, came down to Washington. We had the privilege and pleasure of putting him in touch with the proper officers in the army and navy, and he went away with an order which we are told was in excess of a million dollars. He had originated in his photo-engraving end of his business, the etching of a gun gauge, which took the place of a gauge that had previously been hand engraved, and most interesting was the fact that the hand engraved gauge was off at times, 3 points, which meant thirty feet off a target at one mile, and his gauge was off less than a tenth of one point. And incidentally, he also got an order, we are told, it is rather secret I presume, to manufacture a very important part of a very important ingredient that goes on