

120 BROADWAY NEW YORK
ROOM 2555

March 4, 1932.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

If I have been slow in redeeming my promise it is because we have ^{had} too many typical days down here. This has been particularly true of the past two weeks. I hope, however, the enclosed may be helpful. You will notice that I have tried to put myself in a sense in your position, and however far short of this aim the effort falls it does give the point of view of the picture. Perhaps, at least, it will add to the raw materials which you have already collected and when your own brush is set to work it may help to make the picture more complete. I hope so.

Faithfully yours,

Ernest Cese

Miss Ida Tarbell,
120 East 19th Street,
New York City.

A TYPICAL DAY

The more one studies Mr. Young's career the more one is impressed not only with the multitude of his interests but with the amazing multiplicity of his activities. ^{A mind?} One wonders how in the world he can get so much done. If one asks him about it he will slowly uncross one leg and cross the other and humorously reply that that is the way his mind gets its relaxation and refreshment. There is something in this, of course, but still I was not satisfied. I determined to find out for myself, and so, unbeknownst to him, I spent several days not in his office but in the offices of his staff. I wanted to see how he operated, how his offices function, what represented a typical day.

^{A H} I think now that I can say with conviction that Mr. Young is one of the best organized men in the world. There is no machinery; it is all very human and unobtrusive. But the organization is effective, nevertheless. Let us look for a moment at the way he is organized before attempting to take him through a typical day.

There are three secretaries. One of them handles all appointments, runs his schedule, handles the important calls on the constantly ringing telephone. If Mr. Young rings or if, as occasionally happens, he appears in the doorway, and quizzically asks "What do I do next?" she tells him. Usually she doesn't give him time to ask, for she is under great pressure from the constant stream of people who must see Mr. Young. Then, of course, she helps to deal with the mail, for which she is initially responsible. Mr. Young may dictate to her in the office; if for several days there has been no opportunity, he will occasionally inquire

if she is busy that evening, and being assured that she is not he will inquire if she doesn't want to come up to the house after dinner and "clean up this mail".

During his career Mr. Young has had to do a great deal of travelling. He ^{frequently goes} ~~is constantly going~~ up-State - to Schenectady or of Canton or Van Hornesville. An important business situation may call him west; a Congressional committee may summon him to Washington. It has become almost second nature to his "travelling" secretary to make all the necessary arrangements, including reservations and appointments and all the host of minor things that make for comfort and convenience on the trip. He knows in general what Mr. Young will want to do and whom he will want to see. He will probably take with him a great stack of mail, because, on these trips, insulated from interruptions in the privacy of the drawing room, Mr. Young will clean up his correspondence. If he has gone up to Van Hornesville alone his secretary is quite likely to go up to Albany to meet him on the way down. If Mr. Young is working on a statement or a speech he is quite likely to leave Van Hornesville full of ideas on the subject and dictate on the train. Thus these trips often afford an opportunity for doing a considerable amount of work.

I have been assured by friends of Mr. Young that few people - perhaps no one - similarly situated spends so little time in the office on his personal and private affairs. If this is true, and I should not be surprised if it were, the reason is that he has another secretary who has complete charge of these affairs. Mr. Young does not go in for trad-

ing on the stock market. His interests are so manifold, however, that this secretary is an exceedingly busy person. His private finances are in her hands. She keeps track of expenses and improvements in all matters for which he is personally responsible, whether it is the school at Van Hornesville, or taxes, or painting the house at Riverside, or a contribution to unemployment relief. When his decision is required she needs only a few minutes to present the situation and get it; so far as possible she works without troubling him. Twice daily she and her staff glean a rich harvest from the newspapers of clippings which touch the varying fields of Mr. Young's interest. She and her staff handle all the filing.

The manager of this modest but competent establishment is Mr. Young's personal Assistant. The present incumbent of that office confided to me that Mr. Young had never made the slightest attempt to define his duties. This is characteristic; Mr. Young always prefers to leave that to the other fellow's imagination, so that in a sense he helps to create his own job. Of course as one operates he sees what must be done. If he is enterprising he sees, too, what can be done or might be done. If he falls short of what is expected of him he is made quietly but uncomfortably aware of it, and that is all.

As office manager, Mr. Young's Assistant must naturally try to keep the wheels running smoothly and effectively. As Mr. Young's Assistant the office manager follows as closely as possible all of Mr. Young's activities. The vast number of people, unknown to Mr. Young or his sec-

retaries, who come to the office with a project to lay before Mr. Young usually see his Assistant in the first instance. It is his job to sift them. On projects which he believes may interest Mr. Young he gets as much preliminary information as possible. On matters which can or should be dealt with by someone else, either in the organization or outside, his Assistant turns the callers over to the proper people or makes suggestions as to whom they might see. To some he explains as tactfully as possible why Mr. Young is not interested and cannot be helpful.

Aside from these visitors, who often absorb much of his time, it is the Assistant's job to gather facts and material on subjects in which Mr. Young is interested and follow up the various outside activities in which he has a responsibility. If Mr. Young is writing a speech or making a statement his Assistant may and does gather material and check the facts, but he does not write the speech; Mr. Young writes his speeches himself. In some instances, too, he is kind of liaison man with people in the organization, not only of the General Electric but of the other companies in which Mr. Young is interested. He exercises, too, general surveillance over the mail, for he must see that that is properly disposed of. He has his own secretary who will testify that he has considerable correspondence of his own.

H Of course it is hard to crowd within the confines of a single day a schedule which would give a typical cross-section of Mr. Young's interests and activities - or of the demands made upon him. To give a comprehensive picture I suppose it would be necessary to take at least

a week. A position such as Mr. Young's is always the center of a series of lines converging upon it from every angle. If Mr. Young's situation is unusual it is only because the breadth of his interest is unusual.

Let us suppose it is Monday morning. Perhaps Mr. Young has spent the weekend at Van Hornesville, spending Saturday looking over the herds and going over the farm with his Manager. Coming down Sunday afternoon he was probably met at Albany by his secretary, who will tell him about Saturday's telephone calls and correspondence and then perhaps clean up the mail. Then he will spend the evening giving his family a slow humorous narrative of all the Van Hornesville gossip. On Monday, knowing what awaits him when the week's work actually begins, he will not come down much before his first appointment. His mail, all of which he sees, and the clippings from the press, which he carefully reads, are awaiting him on his desk. Perhaps he is working on the reorganization of a bank. His Assistant goes in to report that X and Y are willing to go along with the program, but that Z is unable to do so. Mr. A and Mr. B have been suggested to head up the institution and their qualifications are such and such. Mr. C and Mr. D are very anxious to have an appointment to discuss the matter. Mr. M is sailing for Europe tonight and is most anxious to see him before he goes.

His secretary is waiting with a list of a dozen or more people who "must see Mr. Young that day". The Ambassador from —— has an urgent message which he is most anxious to deliver to Mr. Young in person. Messrs E, F, and G of the —— Utilities Company must see him at once, because they are faced with a difficult situation. Yes, they are big

customers to be sure, but old friends too, and they are seeking his advice and guidance. The telephone rings; perhaps it is a representative of the other side of the same problem. The ——— Company, he says, is resisting what he believes to be the only fair course of action. Can't they be made to see that in the long run it is in their interest to comply? With a sympathetic comprehension of the view-point of each, Mr. Young explains to each the position of the other. The chances are that neither party had very well understood the problems of the other side and this throws new light on the situation. Knowing the factors involved they go to work afresh and perhaps they work out a solution. Not improbably, however, they have encountered a new problem by Wednesday in which they want Mr. Young's help.

Meanwhile the list of appointments continues. The ^{President} dean of one of the leading universities is in town for the day and seeks Mr. Young's advice. His problems may be financial; they may be educational; they may be both. The president of the Radio Corporation telephones that he has a matter that he would like to discuss with Mr. Young at luncheon. Mr. Young is not free for luncheon because there is the weekly meeting of the Executive Committee of the Federal Reserve Bank, which commences with luncheon. He does not know how long it will last, but he will be glad to see Mr. Sarnoff as soon as he gets back.

The morning passes. Mr. Q, a Labor man, is on the phone — will Mr. Young speak to him? The answer is yes. Mr. Q has learned

that the — Company is threatening to lay off some of its men. He knows that they have no connection with the General Electric Company but thought that maybe Mr. Young could give him helpful advice. Perhaps Mr. Young knows some of the difficulties which that company is facing, which he explains. He is not optimistic, but nevertheless he will help..... It is one o'clock, he is due at the Bank in fifteen minutes, and his Assistant comes in to go over the program of the meeting of the Advisory Council of the National Broadcasting Company which is scheduled to take place on the following day. Mr. Young approves of items A, B, C, and D and asks him whether he had thought about E. He had not, and goes off to think about it....

Mr. Young rings for his secretary. There has been no opportunity of dealing with his mail. There is time now for only one or two letters. The mail includes letters from half a dozen captains of industry, three or four financiers, one or two lawyers, a dozen people with ready-made schemes to save the country, three or four invitations to speak, a dozen appeals for contributions. These appeals come in in such quantities during the year that if a man had time to deal with them his funds, unless they were tremendous, would be quickly exhausted; and if he had the funds he would have the time for nothing else. Mr. Young looks through them ^{carefully, pausing to} and chuckles over a letter from the manager of his farm announcing that Van Horne Aggie Wilhelmina has just broken all records and given 116 pounds of milk the day he left, making a total of 5,120 pounds for thirty days. "That's a real business" he says to his secretary, "no curtailment of production there!" He had picked that cow himself some months

before as the most promising of the lot. He had spent much of his week-end at Van Hornesville going over the farm situation. "The price of milk is a real problem to the farmers up there" he says, "and we've got some problems to work out. Why don't you keep my calendar clear down here so that I can pay more attention to these basic things?" His secretary laughs, but is not to be diverted. "You wanted to write today ^{Mr. R. President of the — Company} to ~~Dr. Gaines at St. Lawrence~~, Mr. Young; and do you want me to send a telegram to ^{Dr. Sykes at St. Lawrence} ~~Mr. —~~?"

It is nearly 3.30 when Mr. Young calls from the Federal Reserve Bank, where he is Deputy Chairman of the Board, to say that he is going to stop a moment at the office of the president of the — Bank. If the San Francisco call comes in he expects to be back in his office after 4 o'clock. Yes, he will see Mr. Sarnoff if he wants to come down at 4. His secretary reports that Mr. Swope is anxious to see him; also that a friend of one of his former associates is out of a job and would appreciate his help. Mr. Swope will be busy after 4.30 until 6. Mr. Young says he will go to his office at 6 and perhaps they can ride up town together.

And so it goes. His staff has attempted during the day to deal with the mail so far as possible, but an irreducible minimum remains for him to deal with himself. Most of it will have to wait, unless he "cleans it up" when he goes home. During the day his Assistant and secretaries have been busy seeing people who have wanted to see him and trying to be helpful to them or tell them whom they ought to see in the organization. There remain several things which they must report

to Mr. Young and get his decision on. It is not difficult to see why, during a succession of such "typical days" his decision is sometimes slightly delayed.

As he is leaving for the day his secretary will remind him of his first appointment; ^{for the morning;} ~~does he want Mr. B to join the luncheon with the Education Board will be finished in time to permit you to attend Messrs S, T, and U? They are trying, with Mr. Young, to make provision for the presentation of opera in the new Rockefeller City development.~~ ^{The luncheon which Mr. T is giving for Mr. S.}

"Oh, Mr. Young - just one thing more. The ——— Press called up to ask if you had any statement to make in connection with Chancellor Bruening's declaration that Germany would be unable to pay any more reparations of any sort. No statements on any subject? All right, Mr. Young, thank you.....Good night." And then the exhausted Assistant and secretaries line things up for the next day - just as typical and just as exacting. ~~If Mr. Young could only be multiplied by two or three - things might be different.~~