

Busy Newspaper Man

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HERE'S A SKETCH OF ROBERT WICKLIFFE WOOLLEY, DIRECTOR OF THE MINT, BY EDWARD B. CLARK, HIS OLD JOURNALISTIC SIDE PARTNER, NOW DEAN OF WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENTS.



By EDWARD B. CLARK.
 ONE of Washington's humorists declared once upon a time that the reason so many newspaper men are appointed to positions in the United States treasury is that the scribes' heart desire is for once in their lives to get next to a lot of money. One gets next to much money in the building containing Uncle Sam's strong box, but he doesn't get hold of any great amount of it, although the salaries paid are in a general way more than fairly comfortable.

Robert Wickliffe Woolley is one of the latest of America's well-known newspaper men to be appointed to a position in the treasury department. As someone else has put it, Woolley makes more money than any other man in the United States, but the personal difficulty is that he is not allowed to keep the proceeds of his manufacture. He is the director of the mint, and everybody knows that the province of the mint is to turn out money for the multitudinous uses of the people of these United States.

There are not many newspaper men in the country who are better known than this present official, of Uncle Sam's government. Woolley looks about thirty years old, but he can add quite a number of years on to that and give no lie to the date of his birth. He has been a reporter, a sporting editor, a managing editor, an editor, and a writer of magazine articles, and today he can pick up any one of his old jobs and do it justice, and if the whirligig of politics in time shall thrust him forth from the portals of the treasury department, he probably and very naturally will turn to tread in the old accustomed ways.

The writer of this has known Woolley for a good many years, and worked with him side by side for a considerable length of time on a great Chicago daily. Woolley was then a sporting editor. He is an outdoor man, who loves the things which all full-blooded Americans love, and, moreover, he knows how to write about them, whether it be as a close finish on a Kentucky track or a 14 innings "so far" 0 to 0 at the National league grounds in New York city. Woolley loves sport for sport's sake, but it must not be supposed for a minute that sport ever occupied the major part of his time.

From boyhood until this day the present director of the mint has been a student of sociological conditions, of economics and of the ways and means of legislation to get for the people what seems to the progressive-minded the things which they ought to have. Convictions that certain lines of procedure were the right ones to follow, and a determination to follow them, have given Robert W. Woolley many strenuous and exciting hours during his long newspaper career.

It is not necessary to explain to the people of the United States what a political ring is, nor is it necessary to explain what an invisible government is. Certain brave spirits in newspaperdom have been fighting rings and invisible government for years, and it has made no difference to the courageous ones whether the ring was composed of men of their own party, or whether the invisible government likewise was tinged with a partisan color of a hue ordinarily deemed admirable by the crusaders. The director of the mint is a Democrat, but he has fought Democrats when they were trying to exploit the people for selfish ends.

Not long after he entered newspaper work the director of the mint had a "time of it," which tested his courage and the sincerity of his convictions. I am not going to mention the name of the place where a certain thing happened, but unquestionably the scene of it will be recognized by many and the details will be remembered by men who have not yet arrived on the borders of middle age.

Down in the South, and not very far in the South, either, Robert W. Woolley was once managing editor of a newspaper of prominence in a city of considerable size. The chief editor of his paper and the mayor of the town were engaged in a row, for the mayor, it was believed, was connected with a municipal political combination which, as the editor viewed it, was far from being an institution intended to benefit the people of the community. Finally the lie was passed, and the lie is, or was, anyway, a sure fighting word in certain communities.

One morning Mr. Woolley went down to the newspaper office and found the mayor of the town and his son, each with a gun in hand, holding the



The Building is Uncle Sam's New Money Factory, and Below Are Employees Counting His Millions.

entire business office force of the newspaper prisoners behind their counters. The intruders were threatening to shoot anybody who attempted to leave. Woolley had no gun. He entered the office and proceeded to address some remarks made up of words ordinarily considered of the fighting kind to the armed intruders.

Woolley reached for a telephone, took it off the receiver and was laughed at by the gunmen, who told him that they had cut the wire. Woolley stood there with the receiver in his hand for a minute while red-hot verbiage was exchanged. Then Woolley walked straight by the two armed men and went out of the door, and neither one cared or dared to interfere with him.

Later it developed that while the receiver was off, although the wire had been cut, the chief editor of the paper at his home had taken off his own receiver to call up the office, and found he could not get it. But as only one wire was severed he heard a large part of the conversation in the office by means of the uncut wire connected with the office telephone. What he heard afterwards was used in evidence, for court proceedings were brought.

Now, it is just here that an ordinary newspaper man would have become disgusted with the profession which he was trying to follow and would have thought that the whole world was out of joint. The mayor of the town and his son were editors of a rival newspaper. This rival stood, of course, for the municipal ring, and it was things which appeared in its columns which had caused the other editor, Mr. Woolley's chief, to put the lie in print. While things seemingly were still at white heat between the two camps the mayor and his rival editor, whom he was ready to shoot, or be shot by, made up their differences, combined the two papers, and thus Woolley, who had dared everything for his chief, was forced out, and in the parlance of the street, was "left to hold the bag." In other words, Bob Woolley stood for right and principle and then lost his job.

There was a celebrated law case in Kentucky that attracted world-wide attention. After the municipal ring episode and Mr. Woolley had lost his place as managing editor, he became a reporter and he handled this case. There came down from Chicago at this time two newspaper men who since have become widely known—Eugene Bertrand, now of the New York Herald, and William E. Lewis, the editor of the New York Telegraph. They had been sent down from Chicago to work on the matter Woolley had in hand, and they became acquainted with him. They found out a lot of things about him which appealed to their newspaper sense. They also discovered that he was fond of American sports. They went back to Chicago and a short time thereafter Woolley, who knew nothing about their interest in him, received an offer from the Chicago Tribune to become a reporter in the sporting department of that paper. He went to Chicago, and it was not long before he became the sporting editor of the newspaper whose staff he joined.

From Chicago the present director of the mint went to New York, and for a long time was employed on the New York World. A little later, as somebody else has put it, "he yielded to the temptation of a beautiful fruit plantation in Texas." The fruit was not altogether golden, as far as the proceeds from the sale of the crops were concerned, and Mr. Woolley went back into the newspaper profession.

For six months, which he has described as "six eventful months," he was the editor of a newspaper in a southern town, whose locality I shall not give here, because of certain circumstances connected with the case. There it was another crusade against a municipal ring and another case of being compelled to edit with a revolver in the hand and also to walk with a gun exceedingly handy. The ring eventually was broken into bits, but meanwhile Mr. Woolley had lost his newspaper.

For a short time thereafter Mr. Woolley was the editor of the San Antonio Light in Texas. Then he went back to New York and entered upon a really notable career as a magazine writer. He was sent on many assignments throughout the country for some of the best magazines in the United States, and then he became one of the Washington correspondents of the New York World, a position which he held for about two years. Then again Mr. Woolley turned to magazine work, and in the year 1911 he became the chief investigator of the congressional committee appointed to look into the affairs of the United States Steel corporation. This committee was known as the Stanley committee.

Because of its wide-reaching effects, it is probable that a magazine article entitled, "The Plunderers of Washington," was the most notable contribution to the "news and information of the day," which Mr. Woolley ever wrote. This article was preceded by an intimation that anyone mentioned and who chose so to do might know that he had recourse in the courts. In other words, the information upon which the article was based was tested in advance. This article was called by the press of the time "fearless." It dealt with some of Washington's big bankers and real estate men and with a good many officials.

Woolley was writing just as he wrote when he was attacking municipal rings in smaller towns of the country. It is not too much to say, perhaps, that the article largely was responsible for a complete change in the manner of men appointed to positions of high trust in the municipal government of the city of Washington, for Washington in a way has municipal government, being under the rule, of course, of congress, but having a board of District commissioners as responsible heads.

In the year 1912 Mr. Woolley was the editor and compiler of the "Democratic Text Book," and was chief of the campaign of publicity bureau of the Democratic national committee. He also compiled the text book of 1914. His political affiliations at this time, however, newspaper men believe, did not have anything to do with his appointment to office. His efforts along liberal and progressive lines had attracted the attention of Woodrow Wilson. Mr. Woolley was appointed first as auditor for the interior department, an office which, despite its name, is under the control of the treasury department. Then he was given his present position as director of the mint. He is filling it.

I am writing this article with feelings of personal admiration and liking, perhaps even of affection, for I have known Woolley for years. He is a tried man. He is one of the newspaper fraternity, and after nearly a quarter of a century of close acquaintance I know that I can say that he is an honor to it. Robert Wickliffe Woolley lives just outside of Washington in Fairfax, Va. It is this little town which has possession of the wills of George and Martha Washington, and some parts of the bill of rights of George Mason. It is a good place for a Democrat of strongly progressive tendencies to live.

Mr. Woolley married Marguerite Tresholm of Winchester, Virginia. They have four children, all girls. The family life is of the kind accounted ideal. In the books Mr. Woolley is put down as Robert Wickliffe Woolley, but newspaper men from coast to coast and from the Canada line to the Gulf know him much better as "Bob."

SAFETY FIRST IN ALL THINGS.

"Why do you always carry your umbrella, even when it is not raining?"
 "So someone else won't carry it when it is raining."—Pennysylvania Punch Bowl.

A MARINE JOY RIDE.

Motor Boater (to passenger)—Did you see me cut down that fisherman in the skiff?
 Passenger—Sure! Say, this is almost as much fun as automobiling.

IN THE LIMELIGHT

CHOSEN PRESIDENT OF SWITZERLAND



The annual presidential election took place recently at Berne, the Swiss capital, quietly and systematically as usual. No speeches and no advance campaigning preceded this important event, and yet, democratic Switzerland is unanimously confident that the honor of the presidency has been conferred upon a man worthy of this distinction.

The president-elect, Camille Decoppet, a lawyer by profession and statesman and orator of repute, is at present vice president of the republic and head of the military department. He was born at Susevaz, near Yverdon, canton of Vaud, on June 4, 1862, and started his political career in 1889 when he was elected member of the national council. In 1900 he became a member of the council of states and in 1906 he advanced to the presidency of that body for the year 1907. With his election into the federal council

in 1912 he attained the highest political degree which a Swiss statesman can look for, culminating, as it does, in the vice presidency and presidency of the confederation.

The office of president of the Swiss confederation provides by no means a lucrative income, compared with the high-salaried government positions in this country. Up to three years ago the yearly income of the chief magistrate of the republic amounted to \$3,000 only, and it was then raised to \$4,000, which sum is now considered a very good salary.

CLAUDE KITCHIN'S ROOMMATE

Once, during a national convention, Claude Kitchin, Democratic floor leader of the house, found the hotels overcrowded and was compelled to share a room with a very nervous individual.

"He was the most nervous man I ever knew," says Kitchin. "For example, after we had gone to bed, he called across the room, waking me out of first few minutes' sleep, and inquired:

"Have you got a match in your clothes?"

"I told him I hadn't, and he called my attention to the fact that the hotel was old fashioned and had gas instead of electric light in the room.

"One of us might get sick in the night," he suggested, "and what would we do without a light?"

"Maybe there's a match in the box on the dresser," I said.

"That's just the trouble," replied my roommate. "I looked before I turned the light out, and there was just one match there. Supposing that one match wouldn't light?"

"Why don't you get up and try it, and get it off your mind," I suggested.

"Ah," he exclaimed, "that's a good idea!" And so he struck our only match, satisfied himself that it was a good match and went back to bed where he slept like a log the rest of the night."



EFFICIENT MISS KERFOOT



Twelve billion stamps! This is the size of last year's stamp business handled by the bureau of engraving and printing in Washington. Yet the size of the order is not the most important thing about it. The amazing feature is this: The entire work of drawing the stamps, balancing the separate orders and shipping them was carried on under the supervision of a woman, and, thanks to this woman's efficiency, without a single discrepancy.

Miss Margaret Kerfoot, chief of the division which fills and ships orders to the 64,000 post offices throughout this country, is the efficient woman in the case.

She has been working in the bureau of engraving and printing for 22 years, and though the figures of last year's stamp output and her record-breaking infallibility are startling enough to deserve especial mention, she may, nevertheless, be found any day in her huge basement office of the bureau's new building on the Speedway, filling stamp orders with a remarkable aversion to error.

Her record for perfection is a matter of pride, not only to herself, but also to Director Ralph of the bureau.

DILL TO PAY OLD DEBT

The day Congressman C. C. Dill, from Washington state, rises up in congress and makes his maiden speech it's going to cost him 25 cents, plus compound interest thereon for 14 years. The congressman, this session's youngest, has owed that quarter ever since he was sixteen. His creditor is Mrs. Fanny Bell, Mount Gilead, O., and she has his note to prove it.

Dill lived on a rented farm near Fredericktown, O. Mrs. Bell was the wife of the owner. On one corner of the farm was the Salem M. E. church, and one day a box social was announced for Saturday night at the church. Mrs. Bell asked young Dill if he was going. Nope, didn't have the necessary quarter, he explained cheerfully.

"I'll lend it to you," she said.

"Don't know when I can pay it back," he demurred.

"Pay it back when you make your first speech in congress," she suggested. The farm had accepted the money and drew up the note.

Five or six years later he fell into the camp of Tom Johnson and became one of his secretaries during his gubernatorial campaign. After the campaign Johnson asked him what he was going to do.

"I'm going to congress," said Dill.

"All right," said Johnson. "You go out West and pick out some good, growing town and stay there till they send you."

Dill went to Spokane, Wash., and now he is in congress.

