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In: Independent Woman.

Tragedy of the Homeless.

Mann, Erika

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From: *Independent Woman*, Dec. 1938.



Times Wide World

The writer has been dealing with exiles since 1933, but "nothing was so mortally sad as the lot of those driven from their homes in Sudetenland"

by Erika Mann

The problem of political refugees has become one of the most burning and urgent that a world, over-burdened with grave problems, is being called upon to face. The dreadful persecution of Jews precipitated in Germany by the assassination in Paris of German Legation Secretary vom Rath has galvanized into action the rescue sentiments in the democracies.

Will Tanganyika Territory in South Africa and the uplands of British Guiana in South America which Great Britain is offering to lease "on generous terms" prove fertile new homelands for the suffering thousands? Will funds be forthcoming from the United States and elsewhere to make possible the emigration and settlement of those (Catholics and others opposed to the Nazi ideology, as well as Jews) whom Germany is stripping of their last resources before permitting them to go?

On the new proposals an agonized world is pinning its hopes. But whatever may be done, it can hardly be enough. For the problem of emigration had been a heart-breaking one long before the destruction of Czechoslovakia, and the recent happenings in Nazi Germany.

During the conference in Evian, France, in July (and that means before the "Czech crisis"), it was estimated by Myron Taylor, American delegate, that more than 660,000 needed to emigrate from Germany. Since then the numbers have been mounting appallingly, until the problem must trouble the heart of every human being still susceptible to the misery of the innocent.

One who has experienced something of this terrible situation, can not stop imagining the fate of the hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children who are driven from their homes without money and without the chance to earn the barest subsistence. Permission to earn a living is not being granted to them in any European country! One must picture the tragedy of people who truly loved their "Vaterland," and are now being sent away because of some Jewish drop of blood in their veins of which they

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had never before been aware. Or because they dared to resent or oppose a regime that, to the most elementary instincts of humanity, is a regime of madness. One must think of the miserable life little children are leading, being hunted from place to place, without regular schooling, without the safety and warmth of a home, exposed to the cruelties of exile and often of starvation. The lives and spirits of many must inevitably be seared beyond all healing.

Ever since leaving Germany in the early spring of 1933, the writer of these lines has been dealing with the fate of exiles all over the world. She has heard and seen things of unbelievable dreadfulness. Nothing, however, was so revolting, so mortally sad, and no situation seemed so hopeless, as the lot of those Czech and German democrats, Catholics, Jews, liberals who were driven from their homes in Sudetenland. They had no place on earth to stay, even for a few days.

I have seen them sleeping, crying, dying on the highways—babies and grandparents as well as the sturdier adults—in the sharp nights of early autumn. I have spoken to the injured (wounded by Herr Hitler's invading mob) who were not even allowed to seek doctor or medicine in the Czech cities, which, already overcrowded, were unable

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to accept them. The Czech tragedy alone has added hundreds of thousands of refugees to the hordes already homeless.

And now, only a few weeks after a diplomatic victory that should have softened Herr Hitler's heart, a new wave of barbarism is sweeping Germany, a wave that is driving out of Germany practically all those Jews who, until now, because they were definitely non-political and deeply loyal toward a country to which, in spite of everything, they still wanted to belong, did stay under the darkened sky of the Third Reich.

Again in this contingency (as when President Roosevelt initiated the calling of the Evian conference) it was the United States that first took some realistic steps. The American Ambassador to Germany, Hugh R. Wilson, has been called home for consultation. Meantime, the American Ambassador to Great Britain, Joseph P. Kennedy, went into immediate action. His negotiations with the British ministers no doubt had much to do with the offer just made, as this is being written, of colonial areas for large scale settlements of exiles.

There are tens of thousands of women among the refugees, some who were independently wealthy, some who were engaged in business or a profession, now being forced to start this new sort of life, with its daily harried struggle for bread. Women forced out of positions in Germany, Austria, Italy, Czechoslovakia are now trying to find themselves some sort of work—somewhere on earth. Most of them do not really mind where.

A friend of mine to whom a little position in Australia had been offered was asked, "But isn't Australia terribly far away?" She seemed not to understand. "Far away? From where?" The whole tragedy of the homeless lay in her simple answer.

It is impossible to present the fate of a mass of people. But one can visualize individual cases, and the laws governing them. How do these laws read for the professional woman who would

go into exile? Let us take, as a typical example, a woman in present-day Vienna who decides, cost what may, to leave her homeland and to live and labor elsewhere—in any country where liberty and justice still exist.

What difficulties does she face? Let us enumerate them:

1. She must have a permit to leave the Reich. To get this, she must first have paid her taxes, which in Hitler-Germany means that she must have permission to give all she owns to the state—a privilege which is hard to get.

2. She must promise never to return.

3. She must have permission from some other country to visit it for a limited period of time. When this other country, however, finds out that she has promised never to go back to her own country, such permission will hardly be given (for she could not then be

again in this world?

Monkemeyer

"I have seen grandmothers and babies sleeping, crying, dying on the highways"

legally deported back to her own country and would be unwelcome anywhere else, hence might have to stay once she had come).

4. Even after she has overcome the terrific difficulties involved in getting a temporary visa, she will not be permitted to work in her new European country of asylum. For to work there would mean to commit the worst crime that an emigrant can be guilty of. She has no money, as she has left behind her all she had. On the other hand, she must not become a public charge; and above all, she must not remain in her country of refuge. Rather, all her efforts must be bent toward finding another asylum where she will be able to stay for a short time—keeping in mind always the exile's three foremost duties: *Not to work, not to become a public charge, and not to remain.*

In Switzerland, France, Holland and Czechoslovakia, the European countries with whose refugee laws I am most familiar, it is today impossible for exiles to obtain a permanent visa or even a labor permit. In the Scandinavian countries, chances seemed a little better, at least until recently. But even there they are getting increasingly slim. In the United States—today more than ever the country on which the hopes of all exiles are centered—any immigrant is in principle permitted to work. It is obvious that in view of the enormous rush of emigrants to this (the only free country (*Continued on page 388*))

bravery, tact and brains enabled her to conquer the difficulties arising from the publicity of the famous murder, which played its part in driving the Bourbons from the throne and restoring the Bonapartes to power. Later, Henriette married Henry Field and so found peace and happiness.

The book is deservedly an outstanding success. The romance and drama of Henriette's life in Paris is thrilling, but so, in a quieter way, is her American period, for after an experience as the wife of a New England country minister, she and her noted husband established a salon in New York frequented by the notables of the day. The hopes and fears attendant on the laying of the Atlantic cable by her brother-in-law, Cyrus Field, is a drama in itself, and so is her account of the unknown Abraham Lincoln's first speech in New York.

The book has an especial appeal to women because it is the record of a woman's magnificent courage, her achievement of a career against almost insuperable odds, a happy, useful and important life wrested from disaster.

SUCH SWEET COMPULSION by Geraldine Farrar (Greystone Press).

This frank and gay autobiography of the Metropolitan Opera's much-admired star, is a remarkable human document, unique, because it is a dual narrative, that of the prima donna and of her gifted mother, who, thwarted in her own gift of song, determined that her child should have a career. Geraldine's success was also her mother's.

The book is rich in its account of a romantic and glamorous career in foreign opera houses and in America, early days in Hollywood and many amusing and thrilling experiences.

Miss Farrar chose to leave opera at the peak of her fame, but, to many women the most interesting aspect of her splendid career is her creation of new interests in life after her retirement, her entrance into new fields of endeavor such as writing, political and social activities, the radio as opera commentator. She is an inspiration to the older woman who thinks forty is her finish and that no new and zestful interests can be established thereafter.

THIS WAS A POET, a Critical Biography of Emily Dickinson by George Frisbie Whicher (Scribners).

Emily Dickinson certainly ranks as the finest American lyric poet of her time, many think she is still unequalled in her especial field of art.

The biographer satisfactorily solves the mystery of the romantic, transcendental, attachment which led to her long seclusion within her father's home in Amherst, Massachusetts. So much of her poetry stems from this frustration that it becomes of importance in evaluating her work. Professor Whicher has not only made Emily's life an absorbing story but has contributed an outstanding critical analysis of her work. Added to all this, is a fine retrospect of the social history of New England at its "flowering" period.

MR. POPPER'S PENGUINS by Richard and Florence Atwater (Little, Brown).

Mr. Popper, house-painter, wrote to the Arctic explorer Admiral Drake, about penguins. The Admiral replied from the Antarctic with "Captain Cook," a real penguin. Then began the irresistibly droll adventures of the Popper family with twelve of these birds. An entrancing Christmas gift for the young, the middle-aged and the old (if there are any).

Mystery stories, if they are good, provide excellent relaxation and enjoyment for business and professional women too tired to read more exacting books. Women have always written good mysteries, Carolyn Wells, Anna Katharine Green, above all, Mary Roberts Rinehart. Recently, in magazines and books, we have become well acquainted with the work of Agatha Christie, Leslie Ford, Mignon Eberhardt. All these women write of civilized and interesting people in a sophisticated environment. They tell their stories in excellent prose and have gained a wide and enthusiastic public. But there are three Englishwomen who are also doing such fine work in this field, that one feels the feminine mystery writers, English and American, are outdistancing their male competitors. Georgette Heyer, English, is noted for her gay murder cases, her light, witty dialogue, her unusual approach to crime. So also is Dorothy Sayers, Oxford, sophisticated, and erudite. Both have been reviewed in this column. The third will prove interesting, especially in her latest book:

THE FASHION IN SHROUDS by Margery Allingham (Doubleday, Doran).

Four most interesting career women play leading parts in this exceptional mystery, a noted actress, an equally successful dress designer, a wise old business woman, head of a fashion house, and a young girl, an engineer in an airplane workshop. Very modern, all of them!

The story is excellent, sustained in interest and dramatic and the characters are well drawn. In fact, the book is really an absorbing novel which is also a mystery. The people move in a smart and sophisticated London circle, but one of them is a murderer. With all the thrill of the story, I think the really notable and distinguished achievement in the book is the author's fine delineation of the four career women.

THIS IS DEMOCRACY, Collective Bargaining in Scandinavia, by Marquis W. Childs (Yale University Press).

The author of *Sweden the Middle Way*, continues in this new book his presentation of the working adjustment between capital and labor which has preserved democracy in the Scandinavian countries, where Labor governments are in power. Yet all is not absolutely rosy, for there are strikes even in these progressive lands. However, their system, with its collective effort, shows a steady progress

towards a more humane social structure, and an effort to adjust the need to sell with the power to buy. In the United States, where not only are capital and labor at swords' points, but labor is divided within its own ranks, the example of Sweden may well be pondered, and some at least of its successful and progressive ideas tried here.

Tragedy of the Homeless

(Continued from page 375)

left in the world), the immigration regulations must be stringent, and that they must be rigidly enforced by officials.

Those lucky immigrants who have been able to satisfy officials are most agreeably surprised on their arrival by the profound and sympathetic understanding of the phenomena of exile they find here. For in America we exiles are not viewed with the suspicion which in Europe made it impossible for us to breathe freely, nor are we treated like so many pariahs, barely permitted to exist on the fringe of human society—a fate which in European countries crushed even the merriest among us and made them into hunted creatures.

And not only is the atmosphere which meets us here a freer and a better one than we had been used to over there, not only does private initiative provide encouragement and help of all kinds; in addition, organizations have been founded which befriend us. There are organizations to serve Christian as well as Jewish exiles. I may only mention the American Committee for Christian German Refugees, whose head, Frank Ritchie, has done wonderful work, and the National Council of Jewish Women, who are, for the moment, devoting most of their time and resources to refugee-relief work. There are many others, but we shall limit ourselves to the work of two organizations particularly concerned with business and professional women.

It was Lena Madesin Phillips who told me about the widespread activities of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs. As president of this world-wide organization, Miss Phillips is in an ideal position to give that information. The International Federation—not of course primarily a charitable organization—has recently been active in alleviating the sufferings of the emigrated women. Miss Phillips said that several of the twenty-five branches which the Federation had started in different countries all over the world had to be dissolved because the Federation is prohibited in fascist countries. But it is the victims of these very countries on whose behalf the organization

"We Sing!"

Watch for final announcements about the long-looked-for Federation song book, "We Sing." The publisher now promises it will be off the press by Christmas.

has been tireless, endeavoring to smooth out their difficulties in obtaining entry-permits and jobs, and to strengthen their morale during those trying first weeks of unemployment and want.

Miss Phillips, whose energetic face betrayed her emotion when she told about the many unfortunate women who come to her, said: "Often, you know, we are absolutely unable to help. Often it proves impossible to provide work, or even a labor permit, anywhere in the world—in Finland, or in Australia (for our friends would be willing to go anywhere—even to the moon, if we could only make it possible for them). We try to provide at least some personal consolation, or a friendly word, which often helps more than one would imagine."

I answered that I *could* imagine very easily, for often a ray of good cheer at the psychological moment will enable one who is at the end of her hope to go on living and fighting.

At the International Federation's office there is a constant stream of visits, letters, phone calls; women seeking frantically advice, help, protection, for themselves or for friends in Prague, Munich, Berlin . . . "It is hard," said Miss Phillips, "and at that, it would be easy to help these women, if only the circumstances were a little more favorable. Women are so adaptable; they learn so quickly, they adjust themselves far more cleverly than men to a new environment. They are even more adept at learning foreign languages!"

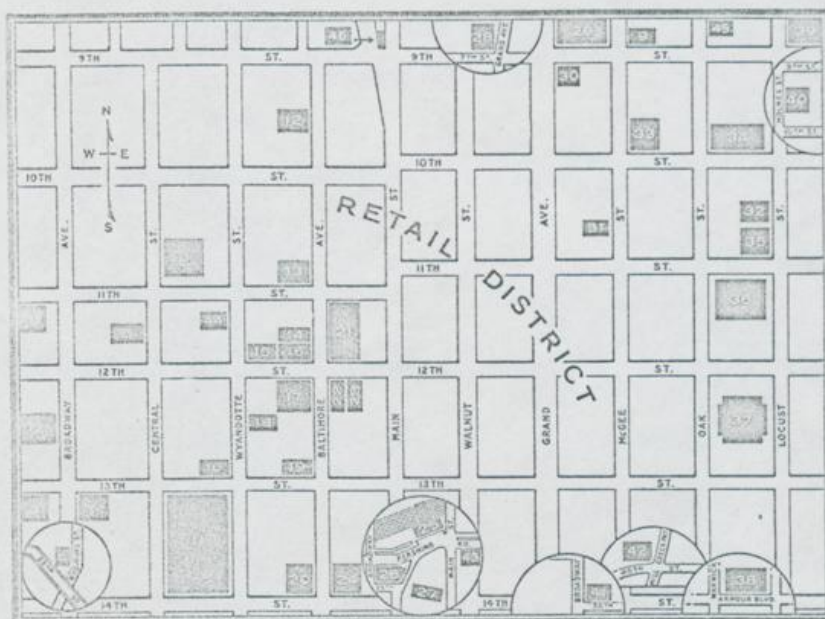
I inquired whether there are any particular professions or positions which offer special chances for exiled women. "What general advice do you give your wards—is there any particular advice which applies to all of them?"

"No, there isn't—or rather, wait a moment, there is. But not, as you might think, with respect to any *profession* which offers especially rich prospects; rather in those places which offer especially *poor* chances, though this may sound like a paradox. I always urge my refugee friends not to concentrate on the large cities in the East (though most of the women want to stay in New York, cost what may, and think they're being banished to the jungle when they are transferred to Chicago!). Good advice for all of them is: spread out—go far away, separately, to the remotest places in the Middle West. And, above all, don't be afraid of any kind of work! Then, *and only then*, will you have a chance to make good."

Because I know that many immigrants in America have first found positions as domestics, I asked whether the Federation arranges for household jobs. Miss Phillips shook her head.

"No, we don't," she said. "Don't misunderstand me; we are not an employment agency. But we are in touch with many employment agencies and often can give women useful introductions to those who come to us for help. Often, it is true, a young woman lawyer has to hire out as a cook first; but we keep on trying and in the majority of cases we eventually succeed in finding a suitable position for her."

Know Your Kansas City!



It is none too early to make reservations for the coming convention to be held in Kansas City, Missouri, July 9-14, 1939. Here is a map of the downtown section, showing the location of the various hotels. (For prices see page 366 of the November issue.) Note the convenient location of the headquarters hotel, the Muehlebach, in relation to the Municipal Auditorium, where the convention sessions will be held. As previously announced, there will be no block booking; address all requests for room reservations to Mrs. Ruth Robinson Roach, housing chairman, National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, 1028 Baltimore street, Kansas City, Missouri. A keyed list of hotels and public buildings is given below.

Hotels	Map No.
Aladdin, 1213 Wyandotte	18
Ambassador, Broadway and Knickerbocker	7
Place	7
Baltimore, 12th and Baltimore	21
Bellerive, 214 East Armour	38
Bray, 1114 Baltimore	14

I inquired whether the Federation also maintains relations with colleges and universities, and learned that this field is covered by another organization, the International Federation of University Women.

In her beautiful, light office in Barnard College, I was received by Dean Virginia Gildersleeve, president of the International Federation of University Women. I knew how much the students at Barnard are devoted to their respected Dean, and I was familiar with the important part which this remarkable woman plays in the spiritual life of the adolescent girl in this country. I was therefore the more touched when I saw this extremely busy woman devote a large part of her time and energy to the fate of us exiles.

Said she: "Of course we try to do all we

Commonwealth, 12th and Broadway	2
Dixon, 12th and Baltimore	22
Hyde Park, 36th and Broadway	41
Kansas Citian, 11th and Baltimore	13
Muehlebach, 12th and Baltimore	17
Phillips, 12th and Baltimore	16
Pickwick, 10th and McGee	33
President, 14th and Baltimore	24
Rasbach, 1116 Wyandotte	44
Robert E. Lee, 13th and Wyandotte	10
Stats, 12th and Wyandotte	15

Halls

Municipal Auditorium	11
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Public Buildings

City Hall, 414 East 12th	36
Convention Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, 1028 Baltimore	13
Court House, 415 East 12th	37
Federal Courts Building, 815 Grand	29
Liberty Memorial, Union Station Plaza	27
Post Office, 315 West Pershing Road	26
Public Library, 506 East 9th	39
Union Station, 30 Union Station Plaza	25

can for unhappy colleagues, especially since in the academic professions the women in Germany have been robbed of all their chances. Today the number of female students in the Reich has declined to such an extent that perhaps in coming years very few exiled college women will arrive from there. At the moment, though, it is those very college women who want to leave Germany, for there they are condemned to 'professional death'—as the Nazis put it so aptly."

I inquired whether the International Federation of University Women concerns itself with the problems of the exiles, and learned that a special committee has been formed—the Emergency Committee for the Aid of University Women. "Naturally this committee does not limit its work to emigrant women," Dean Gildersleeve explained. "It handles emer-

gency cases of all kinds. To be sure, most such cases occur in the world of the emigrants these days . . .

"What," I asked further, "do you find the greatest difficulty when you are looking for jobs for these people? I mean, what causes you the greatest worry?"

Dean Gildersleeve hesitated a moment. Then she answered: "I find it hardest to decide whom to help first, the young or the older more deserving cases. Only a very few opportunities are offered us. Should we prefer the young (so that the entire rising generation in exile may not wither away), or would it be better to take care of the older ones first—those who have many accomplishments to their credit and whose general chances of success are so much smaller?"

"And what decision have you arrived at?"

Dean Gildersleeve shrugged her shoulders and smiled. "We alternate," she said, "we do what we can for the young—and for the older ones, too! Is there anything else you'd like to know?"

"Yes," I said; "how do the emigrants work out in actual practice; have you one on your faculty, and how has she become acclimated?"

An exile named Margarete Biber teaches classical archeology at Barnard, Dean Gildersleeve said, and she is a very good teacher indeed. "She also speaks excellent English, and all in all feels herself very much at home here."

At home! What a world of longing, of sadness, of irretrievable loss is contained in these two words. Shall we ever be "at home" again

in this world? Aren't we, rather, *strangers* in all countries, hunted around a world so bristling with guns that there is hardly any room left for mere human beings—and certainly none for the strangers, the foreigners, the outcasts who are at home nowhere?

All our hopes are set on America, not only for each of us personally, but for all of us as an entity. For if any country has a chance to become the ruler of the future, without resorting to crime or bloodshed, it is only this great, rich, and free democracy that is America. We emigrants, who are fortunate enough to be allowed to live here, we pledge ourselves to do our utmost to be useful and to cooperate in the creation of that future—so that some day we shall be able to say rightfully that we are "at home" in the United States!

Approaching the "Zero Hour" in Legislative Work

"What is the most important thing for legislation committee members to do just now?" echoed Mrs. Mary T. Denman, the Federation's national legislation chairman, as she sat in a new Windsor chair amid the green walls of the newly redecorated Federation headquarters. A Central Park backdrop, framed in the sunny window behind her, gleamed a darker green in New York's unprecedentedly warm November weather.

Her grey eyes sparkled with fun. "They should paraphrase 'The Battle Cry of Freedom.' Yes, really! 'So we'll rally round the flag, girls,'—oh, you know the rest! "Congress," she went on, more soberly (though there is so much of eager dynamics about Mrs. Denman that "sober" is hardly a word to apply to her), "will open January 3—1939 is the big year for state legislative sessions, too, so now is the time to do our most telling work toward furthering the Federation's legislative program."

"Just exactly how can a legislation chairman in a club cooperate in campaigns at Washington, let us say?" she was asked.

"Not being clairvoyant, I really can't tell you just how this morning," Mrs. Denman's own experience as a member of the Pennsylvania State Legislature has made her practical—and has also enhanced her sense of humor. (Incidentally, her husband, David N. Denman, has just been elected to the same post—the first time in Pennsylvania, and perhaps in any state, that a man has been elected to a legislative seat formerly held by his wife! Both lawyers, Mr. and Mrs. Denman have practiced together for some years.)

"You see, when Congress streams up, situations affecting measures on our program arise



Mrs. Mary T. Denman

unexpectedly. We can't give states or clubs much advance notice. Yet we've got to act fast to be effective."

"But don't clubs ask for a good deal of notice?" "That is exactly our dilemma," she said. "But my answer is *preparedness*! We've sent out letters to legislation chairmen telling them to get their predecessors' files, and read the pamphlets and other material we sent last winter. We have the same program of topics this year. Last year's releases therefore offer invaluable background."

"And, if chairmen can't find the information they need from the files, we've sent them another list of up-to-date publications. Maybe they can pry the club treasurer loose from fifty cents or so and buy more," her eyes twinkled. "Help the national office sales, wouldn't it? Isn't this what's called a 'plug' in radio advertising?"

"I suppose so—but after the club buys new publications, then what?"

"Well," she said, "I met a club chairman once who told me proudly that she'd bought a lot of Federation publications and when I asked what she'd done with them, she said she'd put them under the bed!"

"Such disposal of literature won't get us anywhere. Now is the time to do our homework. The club chairman should ask various members of her committee each to read a pamphlet—say our new 'The Federation and the Merit System' which supersedes our earlier ones. Somebody else should read 'Better Government Personnel,' a grand study of civil service included in our program kit this year. Others should read the 'Hearings on the Equal Rights Amendment,' and work out the

legal differences between men and women in their state from a 'Comparison of the Civil and Political Rights of Men and Women in the United States,' and so on and on.

"I think it would be a fine bit of club cooperation if the legislation committee would call in the education committee, and if they would discuss together the material which is available on the Federal Aid to Education Bill. It is almost certain that a bill somewhat similar to the Harrison-Fletcher-Thomas Bill of the last session will be introduced in the next Congress."

"To one committee member should be assigned responsibility for having at her fingertips the Washington news, written by different leading newspaper women in the capital, that appears each month in *INDEPENDENT WOMAN*. (Every committee member should read the column, of course.)

"Another should undertake to keep clippings files of all news pertinent to the national and state legislative programs, with special effort to get reports from papers with opposed viewpoints."

"Then they should hold a series of committee meetings to discuss what the members have read. They could relate it to their own state or town. Plans for brief, regular reports to club meetings during Congressional and legislative sessions should be made. Different committee members can participate."

"In this way all the club members can know in advance at least the background of each bill we are supporting. And they will be ready to act when we breathlessly wire them about some situation that requires their help."

"A good legislative job requires the club chairman to keep up on last minute happenings thoroughly."

"There is one piece of work we have already done. We have asked our club chairmen to interview Congressional candidates all over