

WASHINGTON SCENE

By GEORGE DIXON

I WISH to state unequivocally that the United States Treasury is not grasping, greedy and nurse-proud as some people profess to believe.

Its topmost officials think literally nothing of mingling with people making less than a million dollars a year.

I have before me a letter provided by my old pal, Charlie Schaefer, chief drumbeater for Secretary Morgenthau, which is one of the most heart-warming documents I have read in some time.

It seems the lower East Side citizens committee on world organization of New York city invited Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Herbert E. Gaston to attend a forum of world economic and financial problems. The members of this organization are unpretentious folk who have worries, but not of getting into too-high-income-tax brackets.

You might think the Treasury, which is used to clipping citizens for thousands of dollars at a crack, would not take the trouble to discuss financial problems with people who have no finances to speak of. Nevertheless, Assistant Secretary Gaston accepted the invitation graciously.

This—and I contend it speaks volumes—is the East Siders' reply:

"I was deeply touched at your willingness to come to us here on the lower East Side.

"We are a poor people, average income \$1,600, and we do not read English easily. But our sons and husbands are fighting—or dead—and we must work to make good.

"None of the speeches will be more than 15 minutes—each will try to give the kernel of the different pacts in the simplest language. Bretton Woods to them is the guarantee of work—a job—because peoples can exchange what they make on a stable money basis."

YOU MAY recall my telling you the other day how President Truman always used to exclaim: "Truman reporting for duty!" on entering friends' offices. It was a sort of Truman trademark.

The other day, however, he called on Secretary of the Senate Leslie Biffle. In the outer office was Mrs. Anne Monat, for many years secretary to the late Col. Edwin A. Halsey when he occupied Biffle's spot. Mrs. Monat probably holds the distinction of having won the esteem and affection of more Senators than any woman who ever lived.

She has inscribed photographs of nearly every Senator, Republican and Democratic, for the last—on second thought I crave Mrs. Monat's esteem too, so we will skip the time element.

One inscription I recall vividly was by Senator Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan, now out in the San Francisco bullpen warming up for the big conference. Senator Vandenberg inscribed his likeness as follows:

"To Anne Monat—With all the affection the law allows!"

But to get back to President Truman and his

favorite gag line. He was so preoccupied this particular time he passed Mrs. Monat without the usual salutation.

The lady brooded over it while the President was in the inner sanctum. When he emerged she looked as glum as Glum and Abner. Some instinct told Mr. Truman what was wrong.

He stopped in front of Mrs. Monat, clicked his heels together, gave a grandiloquent salute, and snapped:

"Truman, reporting for duty!"

THAT hoary and venerable philosopher, Homer Joseph Dodge, is one of the outstanding eavesdroppers of our time. He will eavesdrop on anything animate—and maybe inanimate.

The other day, however, he really beat his own proud record. He eavesdropped—I mean dropped—on two lady elevator operators.

According to Mr. Dodge, who is the soul of mendacity, one of these fair demoiselles was piloting the hoist; the other obviously taking a noon-hour busman's holiday.

They discussed various technical phases of the elevator-operating profession, fascinating Mr. Dodge so much he kept on riding.

He felt the time was well expended, however, when—he is prepared to swear to this before a notary public—the guest operator asked the other:

"Tell me, which do you prefer: a left-hand elevator or a right-hand elevator?"

MOANED Mr. Dodge:

"I have been driving myself and other people nearly insane ever since. I keep extending one hand, then the other, muttering to myself:

"Right-hand elevator—left-hand elevator—right hand—left hand—??"

JOHN SUTTON is a petty officer third class in the U. S. Navy. He used to be a movie actor, having played in such cowboy epics as "Jane Eyre," "The Hour Before Dawn," etc.

Sutton is assigned to the Treasury here as a film adviser. Despite his advisory status, however, he remains a petty officer third class, which is not considered one of the navy's higher ranks.

He was, and again is, living in a sumptuous apartment loaned by a friend. Some weeks ago, however, the friend asked him to move out for a few days because he had emergency need for the place.

A couple of nights later Sutton telephoned the apartment to leave a message for his pal. A man answered.

"This is Petty Officer Sutton," said the ex-actor. "Who is this?"

"This," was the reply, "is Admiral Nimitz!"

IT WASN'T a gag either. The apartment owner had turned his place over to Admiral Nimitz for his daughter's wedding.

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