

3/30/46

PROPAGANDA OR INFORMATION

Perhaps as far back as fifteen years ago, one heard very little about government propaganda. It was an unexplored field. Perhaps it was in part due to the fact that requests for money to pay the salaries of persons engaged in publicity and informational work or for the cost of such efforts had to be specially set out in the estimates which were submitted to Congress and there was therefore a better opportunity to scrutinize such items. Compared to governments in Europe, we were amateurs in the art of propaganda. You may have observed that when De-Gaulle was forced out of office in France, part of the fight centered around the question of who should be Minister of Education because this is the Cabinet post in France that directs government propaganda. In setting up new governments in Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria and other countries, you may have observed that the radical or Communist groups invariably demanded control of that branch of government which dealt with propaganda. Whoever controlled this function of the government, naturally controlled the radio, the press and the schools and by means of the right kind of information, could color and control public opinion.

OUR OWN PROGRESS IN THIS FIELD.

Back in the winter of 1941, the author of this column became quite curious over how much we were spending for informational and publicity activities by government agencies and asked the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee to obtain a survey of this work from the Budget Bureau. It took several months to go through all of the activities of government and make a report. That report was forwarded to Congress in June of 1941. At that time, it indicated that we were spending about \$26,000,000 per year for what the Budget Bureau called "informational, promotional, and publicity activities of the Executive branch of the government." In other words, 26 million dollars of public money was being spent per year to sell the people on governmental policies and programs.

TODAY.

We've come a long ways since 1941. About a month ago, the Senate Committee asked the Budget Bureau for a further statement on this matter. It was submitted to the Senate on March 12 in the form of a table and can be found on Page 17 of the hearings on the Second Urgent Deficiency Appropriation Bill. Now mind you, this is an estimate from the Budget Bureau in the executive branch itself. That report shows that 23,009 persons on the Federal payroll devote full time and 22,769 devote part time to publicity, informational and promotional work. The estimated cost for the fiscal year 1946 is \$74,829,467. That's nearly 75 million dollars a year, a large part of which is definitely propaganda work. The persons so employed prepare material for the press and radio, they make group contacts, they prepare paid advertising and exhibits; they prepare motion pictures, lantern slides, lecture material and photographs; they prepare posters and cooperate with schools and civic organizations. And incidentally, this amount of nearly 75 million does not include the pay or allowances of military and naval personnel who were devoting time to similar work. It is interesting to note that during this fiscal year, OPA is estimated to spend \$2,627,808 for this work. Judging from the figures, we seem to be learning the polite art of government propaganda.