

THE HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS

THE desirability of having a good man—the best obtainable—at the head of each department of a newspaper is daily becoming more apparent. Competition among newspaper publishers is of the fiercest kind. The public is the jury, and "Constant Reader" is continually reminded by his favorite paper that it scored such and such a "beat" over all contemporaries. Eternal vigilance must be the watchword of the projector of the newspaper of to-day. The rank and file are not expected to be in the lead. They form, however, the large majority of the people engaged in the newspaper business. Among the latter class are a great many who are poorly paid; some by reason of not being able to command a better salary, and many who are worth more but the papers on which they work are too poor to pay them more. From the great city papers to the little daily or the substantial weekly in the rural town, there are persons employed who do not receive wages equal to those paid to the day-laborer who digs in the street. How best to utilize and improve such is a question of moment to many publishers. To the very large successful city dailies which have large forces under trained department heads the question is not so important. The large papers carry on business on a large scale and individuality is lost sight of. If anyone does not like the system of the paper he can quit. The chances are ten to one that he won't be missed. With the printers on these large dailies, the conditions are the same. They work under the typographical union's rules and earn, if on the piece, what they can make; and if by the week, they have to set the "schedule." To the publishers of dailies and weeklies in the smaller places it comes down to one of money and existence of the paper.

Good heads of departments solve the problem. Many old newspaper men can recall in their experience where an inferior man in authority has demoralized a whole force. This is applicable to the counting room, the local room, or the composing room. On the other hand, a good man at the head of a department gets good results even if the force under him is a little inferior. He is (to use an old illustration) like the general of an army. He has executive ability, and marshals his men to the best advantage and "covers" the most ground. A good head of a department will show his ability and be "sized up" and respected accordingly.

For the smaller dailies and weeklies it is essential that there should be good heads to the four main departments: business office, editorial, local and the composing room. If a newspaper has good, able men for these departments it is money wisely expended,

and if the subordinate force is not all high-priced and up to the standard of high-class journalism the paper will not meet with any serious drawbacks on that account. Each head of a department will detect any "bull" or error of a subordinate employee, and being able himself, he will instruct the person to do better. Improvement will follow all around.

To better illustrate, I will add that I know personally of a daily newspaper plant that was a losing business for several years. It employed indifferent men. It had changed owners a few times. The last business manager secured good men of recognized ability as heads of the editorial, local and composing rooms. He paid them better salaries than any other paper in that city paid for similar labor. To-day that same daily paper is making money. It owns the building it occupies, and is a lively "object lesson" of "the best is the cheapest."
—*Inland Printer.*

EDITORIAL WRITERS

THERE are few occupations that leave a man with less time for study and research than that of the editorial writer. He is continually under great pressure in the anxious desire to create novel principles and present new ideas and arguments. His time is spent more in deep thought than in research. Hence the great amount of new ideas, and broken down newspaper men. Our editorial writers would make their tasks much lighter if they would devote more time to reading the editorial columns of their contemporaries. It is a great mistake that many of our editorial writers make, in endeavoring to furnish from their own brains, without aid, the material and ideas necessary in the production of editorial matter, when by a limited amount of reading each day, devoted to the study of ideas and principles advanced by their contemporaries, their labor would not only be lightened, but their ideas would be broadened and their material more interesting and instructive.

One hour each day, devoted to the careful study of the exchanges, will keep an editor thoroughly posted on the evolution of the world, and will suggest enough subjects to utilize his time and space, without taxing his brain to furnish all the subjects and arguments required for his work.

We do not advise editors to depend upon their contemporaries for subjects, and neither do we advise them to "fake" ideas, but we do claim, that by devoting a certain amount of time to the study of the contemporary editorial matter, that their work will be done with less strain upon the brain.

Those who consider themselves sufficiently well posted upon things in general, and that continual study is an unnecessary labor, are the ones that ex-