

A Training Director in Korea

The following is a personal letter, dated August 26, written to Frank Welsh, Training Department, International Business Machines Corporation, Endicott, New York, who forwarded it to the JOURNAL. If you, as a training director, think your life is full of pressing problems, read what happened to Milton Towner who went to Korea . . . Milton C. Towner is a graduate of Coe College, Iowa. He did graduate work in psychology at the University of Chicago and received his doctorate from the University of Iowa. He was Assistant to the President and Director of Admissions of Huron College, South Dakota, and later became President. During World War II he was with the Navy as a project leader in the Office of Scientific Research and Development. Following the war he was Director of Training for the Carrier Corporation, Syracuse, New York. During this time he was instrumental in organizing the New York State Industrial Training Council and is a past President. In 1949 he went into government service with the ECA and was assigned to Korea as Chief, Industrial Training Bureau, with headquarters in Seoul.

IT SEEMS GOOD to be back in the USA again after an exciting experience getting out of Korea, but we are much concerned about our Korean friends who were making such fine progress in getting the young democracy established.

Within the short span of a few weeks a tiny spot on the world map has found herself at the hinges of history. What her future holds is a secret of destiny, but her hopes are high, and she leans heavily on all the friends of democracy to aid in her survival. It was not at all surprising to find that four months ago many of our friends were puzzled to know where and what Korea was. Before we went out there we were asked by many where they could find us on the map, and some were not quite sure with what continent Korea was associated.

One of the best preparations for an understanding of the problems of Korea is to re-read the history of the American

Colonies and the struggles that paved the way for our Constitution and our own new Federal Government. Many of the same problems existed in Korea and were being met in general with calmness and intelligence. In fact, the success of her efforts can be attested in no better way than by the invasion itself because the invader had come to realize that his methods of infiltration, guerilla warfare, propaganda and intrigue were not making headway. The only way to stop the successful march of the country into economic security and happy independence was to march on her with force and take away the benefits that had already accrued.

Here in Korea we see the East and the West coming together in one of the most interesting meetings of the minds. Western dress has already taken a large portion of the population. Western scientific and engineering ideas have caught the imagination of hundreds. Science has become the great hope of

many thousands who look to the methods of science to help Korea develop her economic, social and political independence.

It became one of our problems to aid certain leading technical middle schools in the development of physics and chemistry courses with laboratory study. This called for the survey of existing school facilities and recommendations about building additions for laboratory work or the taking over and rehabilitation of space for laboratories. A portion of my staff conducted these surveys and then worked with the faculties, through interpreters most of the time, to determine the actual needs for laboratory equipment. This equipment was then ordered from the USA and much of it was about to leave the States for Korea when the invasion started.

At the college level our program called for a similar job except that we added courses and equipment sufficient to make majors in the sciences possible to students in Seoul National University (20,000 students), Hanyang Engineering College (2,000 students) and Chosen Christian University (2,000 students). The figures on enrollment are approximate for an annual registration. The work with the faculties was intensely interesting because these educated leaders were so eager to develop their teaching efficiency. In the fields of engineering we developed lists of equipment needed for laboratory instruction, particularly in mechanical and electrical engineering. All of this was in cooperation with the Bureau of Scientific Education and the Ministry of Education.

Our program also involved the organization and scheduling of instruction in

the major industrial plans of Korea. Job operator instruction, on-the-job instruction of older hands, supervisory instruction of foremen and even classes in financial management of industry among top flight managers and owners in the city of Seoul. We also conducted training activity cooperatively with the Technological Training Board of the Ministry of Education on an industry-wide basis for the Power Industry, for the Railroads and for the Paper Industry.

In all of this training we applied the principle that each industry should as soon as possible bear the entire cost of the training and relieve the Ministry of Education gradually of all responsibility for Federal grants. This was working out most satisfactorily and industries were constructing their budgets with the training costs included.

A new Institute was coming into being in Korea known as The Korea Technical Institute. For the first year of its operations, it was to have three sections--Agricultural Research and Extension centering at Suwon, Fisheries Research and Teaching centering at Pusan and the Industrial Institute at Seoul. This last section of the Institute was to continue and was scheduled to become a national institution. My responsibility was for the preparation of the program of training, securing of local equipment, buildings, teachers, etc., and then the general supervision of this phase of the Institute's work.

ECA/Washington has successfully consummated a contract with Illinois Institute of Technology to operate the Institute for the first year. The faculty of 24 persons was flown to Seoul on Saturday and evacuated in the early

morning hours the following Tuesday; a great disappointment it was to all of us after so many months of successful preparation.

I had worked with the head of the Bureau of Scientific Education and the Technological Training Board in the selection of nine Koreans to become instructors in the industrial phases of the Institute and had been able to get them to the States to study at Dunwoody Institute in Minneapolis beginning last January. They had completed their allotted study time and would have flown back to Seoul to begin work just three days after the invasion started. They are still here in the States and, of course, will be ready to go to work just as soon as the military objectives have been reached.

These were the major phases of the work that came under my planning and direction, and I am sure you can read in between the lines some of the activities involved in getting plans under way in a country where we were present as advisers and counsellors working with a people whose language was strange to us but whose life problems were the same as those on every Main Street in America.

On the fateful Sunday afternoon of the day before our evacuation, Jane and I were transplanting zinnia plants in our very nice garden when we heard heavy artillery in the north up over North Mountain. The reports were much louder than any of the light artillery practice of the South Korean Army which we had heard on other occasions, so we were concerned. Soon we learned that a North Korean group had made

another sortie south of the 38th parallel and that fighting had broken out all along the border. We were assured, however, that the South Korean Army could contain them, and we were not to be concerned.

At midnight we were called by Security and told to pack what we could conveniently carry and be prepared for an evacuation if the order were given. A little before two in the morning we were ordered to drive our car down to the Embassy Building with our baggage and to be there by three. We arrived on time and were ordered to drive on to the Motor Pool where we found that a caravan was being assembled made up of busses and private cars. From there we drove to Ascom City arriving about 4:30 a.m. After assisting with the unloading of several truck loads of cots and mattresses and setting up a temporary canteen in the old army clubhouse there, I was ordered to take Jane and Buddy to a nearby residence of one of the officers of the Korean Military Advisory Group where we were billeted in four rooms with 24 other persons awaiting developments.

By 10:30 we learned that only the women and children would be evacuated by bus to a ship in the harbor at Inchon, and the men were ordered back to Seoul. I said goodbye to Jane and Buddy about 11:00 a.m. and drove on back. I was told on arrival not to go to the office but to stay in my domicile and pack everything ready for shipment if Security found time to get it out. I packed feverishly all afternoon with two

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very faithful Korean boys to help me and then went to bed at midnight.

At 2:00 I received a call to come down to the Embassy and to bring my baggage along. I arrived there at three to find baggage being loaded on trucks and people being stuffed into busses. I was ordered to leave my car across the street from the Embassy and to climb on the bus. I soon realized that this was zero hour and within an hour found myself being briefed at the airport for the airlift (Operation Raven) which was to begin within a very few minutes.

We were divided into groups of 28 and each group numbered. Each person was handed a cup of coffee and told to stay on his spot. Soon we heard the roar of jet planes and knew that air coverage had arrived from Japan. Very soon thereafter the airlift planes began coming in one each 12 minutes and taking off as quickly as loaded. I do not remember which plane I boarded but I think it was the sixth.

My plane was off the ground only about eight minutes when a Yak appeared about 1:30 and in leveling off at around 12:10 and at our precise altitude he took a burst at us. His aim was poor, so we were not hit. Almost at once we were aware that two of our jets were converging on the Yak and we lost them in the clouds. Within five minutes our radio operator reported, "He burned him!" and about fifteen minutes later we received a radio report from the airfield that the pilot had bailed out from the burning plane and had been cap-

tured by South Korean troops. So we came close to the action in the first few minutes of real warfare.

Upon landing in Japan two hours later, we learned that one of our cars from the Embassy Building was strafed by a Yak enroute to the airport, but that no one was hit. Again we were grateful that our group had come through safely.

During all this time, our families, 682 women and children, were steaming south aboard a Norwegian freighter which had just unloaded fertilizer in the harbor at Inchon. The freighter had twelve cabins only, but the crew responded nobly to the challenge and took good care of the precious cargo. After 2½ days and innumerable cheese sandwiches and warm water, the ship docked and all women with children were taken to the 110th Station Hospital at Fukuoka. We men were put up in the quarters of the 24th Division at Camp Hakata across the bay.

We were passed along from camp to camp and barracks to barracks until, about ten days later, I was able to bring Jane and Buddy to Kyoto on Army orders, and we were reunited at the 35th Station Hospital. About two weeks there was just about all we could stand, and I began requesting space aboard homeward bound planes for Jane and Bud. Made it within a few days thereafter and sent them on their way to Michigan to soak up sunshine and swim in Lake Michigan. Two weeks later the Mission had as yet not discovered what they were going to do with me, so I

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asked for transportation home. When it was granted, I took the next plane, stopping off in Michigan for three or four days and coming on to Washington for interview looking toward another assignment.

We left behind some of the finest people in the world and some of the best friends it will ever be our privilege to know. We hope daily that they may be spared from the cruelties of the ruthless reds, but we fear that many of them have been killed.

Everyone whose opinion and judgment I regard highly in the Korean mission is, I am sure, ready and eager to return as soon as we can in order to help those fine people build their country. If in the next two to four years the situation rights itself so that it is possible for me to do so, I should like to return to grapple with one of the most challenging opportunities in the world today.

I have written so much because I thought you and other members of our Training Group might be interested in what happened to one family in the Korean evacuation. Our experience was

typical of many families. The 8th Army did a wonderful job, took excellent care of us and most everyone took the entire experience in good spirits and good humor.

It is a queer but very challenging world we live in, and each of us must give the best he has to help maintain the way of life that we know from personal experience to be the best in the world. Take a few months to witness the struggles abroad, and you will see how every least element of our life that we take for granted is a boon, frequently unavailable to our friends across the seas. This intermingling of peoples through the International Exchange of Persons Program is of utmost significance to the peace and tranquility of the world.

Wherever you have the opportunity to speak to industrial leaders, plead with them for cooperation in this program. It is a "best seller" that will win more than arms in the long run.

Ever cordially,

Milton C. Towner

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New Business Manager for Journal

George McLaughlin, Director of the New York Trade School, New York City, has been named business manager of *The Journal* by President "Doc" Laffer to succeed W. L. Jarrett. Bill Jarrett who has worked faithfully at the job for more than two years recently submitted his resignation because of greatly increased demands on his time at the James Lees and Sons Company, Bridgeport, Pennsylvania, where he has been given personnel as well as training responsibilities. Thanks, Bill, and good luck, George.