



TOJO, now fit again after his attempted suicide, posed willingly for Silk, saying, "I want to be a good loser," but refused to be taken in the bath. His fellow war-criminals will not speak to him

Chicago. The paper has its own plane flying between New York and Chicago. Advertising, of course, is prepared ahead of time, and some pages (articles and features that can be prepared more or less at leisure) are laid out, and the plates made for the presses, with time to spare. Final copy on the latest topical news can be taken up to 6.0 p.m. on a Saturday.

Silk covered the landing in Japan, which was made on a Thursday. His undeveloped photographs were flown back to America in a special press plane, and appeared in *Life* all over the country the following Wednesday. The issue is printed at two points in Chicago, and the editions for the West Coast and distant States are on their way by rail while the remainder are still being printed.

I asked Silk how many employees were on the whole of *Life's* staff. His answer was an unprintable which meant "very few."

"Everybody on the staff is in that list in the front of the paper right down to office girls. Office girls on *Life* are people with the equivalent of M.A.'s. They're called researchers."

Some Figures on Housing

The telephone went, and after the interruption, Silk felt inclined to open a new subject.

"Do you want my views on what I've seen here—what I'll be saying in my story?"

"Go ahead, please."

"Housing—I think it's very important to put a lot of emphasis on the fact that New Zealand is better off for houses than any other country in the world."

I raised my eyebrows and appeared incredulous. Silk bristled up.

"Boy, I'll give you a few figures: The U.S. is three and a-half million houses short at the moment; they expect to build 450,000 in the next 12 months. New Zealand is 26,000 houses short and expects to build 12,000 in the next 12 months. Here, a 40 per cent. overhaul in the next year, over there, 15 per cent."

"If the United States is so much worse housed than we are, we don't get that picture," I said.

"But you do. *Life* gives it. It's *Life* I'm quoting my figures from. Look. People here think they're badly off. I've been in six countries in the last six years doing stories on conditions of life. I know what I'm talking about. It was a pleasant surprise for me to come here and see how the mass of people is miles better off than the mass of people in other countries."

Teeth—and Strikes

"Another thing. I'm curious to know why, with all the excellent

dental set-up for children, New Zealand still has such bad teeth. I can't get to the bottom of it. I only get conflicting views, and no one seems to have found the reason. Other countries that haven't anything like the elaborate system for taking care of children's teeth, have much better teeth."

Don't you think we have our elaborate set-up because we have such bad teeth?"

"Maybe."

Silk talked on a while about the world looking towards New Zealand with great interest, waiting to "see if it all



AN AMERICAN SOLDIER, photographed by Silk in the snows of the Western Front in February last year.

works out in practice." Then he remembered another thing he wanted to say.

"Strikes—they've been entirely petty here by comparison with other countries. Look at that Australian strike before Christmas. It only lasted three weeks, but it paralysed industry for three months. I was there and I remember having to find my way round the hotel with candles. And in the States, the strikes have been gigantic. No. Industrial relations are positively peaceful here compared with what they are in other places."

Silk lit another American cigarette.

We got up to go. As I looked round the room with all its mess testifying to the hectic life a man like this leads, I said:

"How long have you been living this life?"

"Six years." He blew out a cloud of smoke.

"How many more years can you stand of it?"

"About another six."

I picked up a curious object of brass and bamboo, like a cigarette holder for a vertical cigarette.

"That's an opium pipe. And that thing over there's my kimono. They were given to me by a Japanese who was the head man in the firm that made the Zeros. I interviewed him and he tried to get the nice side of me with his opium pipe and a kimono."

We made our way to the lift and down to his car. After six years, George Silk is not wholly a New Zealander now. He no longer pronounces "correspondent" or "figures" as we do. He has the slightly guarded manner of someone who doesn't want to look as if sudden success has gone to his head, but doesn't want that success questioned all the same. But there are moments when you see him as a natural, spontaneous New Zealander. I left him in one of these. I got out of the Government car that has been placed at his disposal while he has been here. He leaned out and shook my hand, and said "Thanks," and gave a good big grin.

—A.A.

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