

'Get Tough'—That's the Cry From All Parts of the World

By HENRY McLEMORE

NEW YORK.—On the assumption that everybody is as interested in other people's mail as I am (wish I had a dollar for every letter I have "opened by mistake" by accidentally holding it over a steaming kettle) today's column will concern itself with some of the mail that has come to me recently.

There is a letter from a worker in Mr. Harold L. Ickes' vineyard, the Department of the Interior, inclosing a gentle hint that word of a paper shortage has not yet reached the ears of Mr. Ickes.

The "hint" is in the form of a memorandum sent out by Ickes to all bureaus under his control. It is written on a heavy, full-sized sheet of typewriter paper and consists of one and a half lines which take up one-fiftieth of the sheet, and could just as well have been written on a small memo blank. As a matter of fact, it could just as well not have been written at all because here is what it said:

"I prefer to have the spelling 'employee' used in correspondence prepared for my signature."

The "ee" was underlined and the whole letter signed by Mr. Ickes. The sender wrote this little note on the bottom of the memo:

"Is there supposed to be a paper shortage? Anyway, paper is vital for national defense and just look at the way 'Howling Harold' uses it to the best advantage. It is comforting to know that our dear secretary is winning the war by memorandums like these."

It certainly is. With Singapore, Rangoon, Manila and Java gone, the loss of the extra "e" on "employee" would be almost too much to bear! Stout work, Mr. Secretary.

A SEATTLE school teacher, who teaches in a school whose enrollment includes some 500 Japanese, writes to say that she is just a little weary of bending over backward in her handling of the Japanese for fear of being classed as unfair or undemocratic.

"Scholarships are hunted for the Japanese instead of for our own," she pointed out. She also brings up a good point in this paragraph:

"Our recent immigration law renders the Japanese undesirable. Then, by what miracle does the fact that one is born here make him a desirable citizen? America should look into this citizenship problem in the light of Fifth Column activity . . .

"Many American-born Japanese, in prose or poetry have expressed this feeling—'My heart lies buried in the Orient. My intelligence is here in America.' What kind of citizenship is that? Certainly not the kind I feel and my ancestors go back to the days of Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia."

In postscript, the school teacher added that "we have just had a patriotic assembly with two Japanese talking on Lincoln and Wilson. My blood boiled."

LETTERS containing Brunswick stew recipes are still coming in. When I asked for a recipe for the dish, I thought there might possibly be two good recipes in the country. Instead I find that there are hundreds. I haven't tried them all yet, but I am making progress.

But, will the housewife whose recipe starts "clean a porcupine thoroughly" please rush me a porcupine and a recipe for cleaning same.

IF my readers furnish a yardstick by which the national temperament can be gauged, then the spies and saboteurs had better watch out, because there are hundreds of Americans who feel that capital punishment is a little too good for them. Letter after letter has expressed indignation at the "kid glove" treatment that is handed out to enemy operators.

And more than one has written to urge that bungling legislators, industrialists, and labor leaders get more than a dressing down when their acts hinder the war effort.

In fact, the major theme of the letter writers among my readers is that this nation needs to get tough from the top to the bottom—and in a hurry! Tough with everyone who blocks or hinders complete mobilization of this country's power for the war effort.

Indeed, a score or more of them have suggested that columnists be the first to feel the ax.

Ugh!