

profitable, one was lost, and one is still going on. All of these wars were undertaken by the Germans with precise, businesslike calculation. Not one of these wars was for an ideal. All of them had for their object easy profit — territorial expansion, loot, indemnities. In general, it has been a profitable business to Germany, despite occasional reverses. But all great business enterprises run the risk of loss, and war is no exception. German strategists have undoubtedly worked out actuarial tables of profit and loss. They know what pays and what does not pay. They know how far they can go with profit. They also know when to stop.

That is why it is certain, I think, that the war will come to a quick and sudden end. The Germans will fight so long as they think they have a fifty-fifty chance of winning, but when they become convinced that the odds are too heavy, they will do exactly what they did in November, 1918 — liquidate the undertaking as a bad investment, and quietly begin to lay plans for the next enterprise.

— S. K. PADOVER

CONSERVATIVE OPINION

THE gyrations of opinion in the conservative world are almost as comic as those in the communist

world. When Hoover was President and having trouble with Congress, leaders of "sound" thought had at the legislators with incessant calumny, urging them to go home and let the Chief Executive run things efficiently; now these same leaders of "sound" thought are appalled at the vigorous manner in which Mr. Roosevelt has handled affairs and are delighted that Congress has ceased being a "rubber stamp."

When the "liberal" bloc in the Senate and House voted for investigations of governmental agencies during the Harding, Coolidge and Hoover administrations, "level-headed" thinkers charged that these inquiries were hampering the smooth functioning of the government and were purely political in motive; now, in the midst of the greatest war in our history, they applaud every time a Wheeler or a Byrd calls for a committee to look into the tiniest bureau of the most insignificant department. Again, when Harding, Coolidge and Hoover were in the White House, the conservatives were dismayed that some "carping and obstructionist" newspapers dared to criticise what went on in Washington; now they seek refuge in the Bill of Rights when spokesmen for the Army and Navy deplore the practice of two newspapers of large circulation that

persistently print material that is patently injurious to the morale of the fighting forces — and in at least one instance came close to tipping off the Japanese of a crucial military move in the Pacific.

—C. A.

HOLLYWOOD COLUMNISTS

THERE are, of course, many other candidates for the distinction but personally I consider columning out of Hollywood the greatest racket known to man — and woman. For a maximum of 1500 words a day this labor pays off in prestige, presents, publicity and pretzels. The successful practitioner can make a little off-record extra by playing up certain names in his column. His day-to-day expenses are microscopic. His liquor is provided; lunch and dinner checks are gleefully grabbed by press agents; his smallest wish, from a set of silver to a fur coat for the missus, is forestalled by grateful biggies.

The only difficult part is to get into the glory seat. It may come through a juicy advertising account at the disposal of the would-be columnist. Or through a drag with some publisher. Or through a reputation in some other field. It may even come, though this is rare, through years of hard leg-work covering Hollywood for some

paper or agency. In any event, life thenceforth is soup of the finest duck. Any honest Hollywood scribe will tell you that the happiest part of the columning business is that you don't have to do any work. The studios do it for you. Big staffs of space hunters grow gray creating newsy bits for you, ready for print without changing a comma. They think up smart cracks for you, attributed to stars who could not understand such things let alone crack 'em. Every lot has what is known as a "planter" whose job it is to call up ranking columnists and transmit items dredged up that day. He also mails batches of "possibilities" to his columnar contacts.

If you are really a big shot in the racket, you also have your own leg-men who collect a line or two a day for you. One columnist, indeed, has a slave who writes his column, another who does his radio show, and two more who corral stories. His own visible contribution is playing golf six days a week and reading the prepared script over the air on the seventh.

As one who has watched the process all too intimately, I can outline the main qualifications for successful columning in Hollywood: (1) an insatiable curiosity for what is not your business; (2) the ability to drink all the grog handed you;