UNFAIR SENSATION MONGERING

The American news agency "Associated Press" reports under a Metz dateline: "Unconfirmed reports that Germany was greatly increasing her garrisons along the Rhine, caused disquietude this evening in this frontier city." The item further asserts: "Germany now has located twelve army corps of three divisions each in the immediate vicinity of the French frontier."

Sensations at any price! What do the heads of the Associated Press care about the honest endeavours of European peoples and their governments, finally to emerge from the war psychosis and enter upon peaceful understanding! What do they care about the clear dictum of the Fuehrer and Chancellor: "After the return of the Saar region Germany will have no territorial demands to make on France!"

What they want is sensations that will put into the shade the statements of fact by journalists true to their calling. Yes, if at all possible they would like to crowd these facts out of the papers. Unscrupulous envy of the competitor, unrestrained avidity at any price to win for themselves the bannerline on the front page, to make capital out of the misfortunes and sufferings of European peoples—that is the sole motive for that sort of reporting!

To this the reply will be made: that was the report of a little special correspondent down in Metz. We even said later in the dispatch: "Well informed Paris circles declared no confirmation of these reports had reached Paris." This excuse, however, completely begs the question.

Once a sensation of this sort has been trumpeted into the narrow-meshed net of the world press, it has at the same moment secured a foothold in the editorial rooms! Editors lusting for sensations grab it up, printing presses start to move, and only a few minutes later the news-boys cry through the streets of the capitals of the world: "German army mobilized at the French border! Twelve German army corps concentrated at the Rhine!"

Should not the enormity of this item have awakened the last residue of a feeling of responsibility in the management of the Associated Press in New York? Should they not have hit upon the idea to dare ask the Berlin bureau of their organization to check up before publication? -- or is it not true that even the bureau in Germany is in a certain sense guilty? It would have learned at once that the entire German army comprises only twelve army corps.

The chief of this bureau, Mr. Louis P. Lochner, is an old experienced journalist. As chairman of the Foreign Press Association in Berlin and as President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Berlin his position toward the country in which he is a guest is such as to obligate him even beyond the measure of responsibility that every foreign correspondent carries. On the basis of his experience in his calling Mr. Lochner knows what damage is always wrought by that sort of
sensational reporting. He knows perfectly well that all his colleagues in Germany are showered with queries demanding a confirmation or even an expansion of this report. He knows furthermore that a denial of such an enormity in 99 out of 100 cases never sees the light of day.

During the Olympic Games Mr Lochner was a member of the German-American Olympic reception committee of the Vereinigung Carl-Schurz. This is an organization dedicated to the special promotion of German-American friendship.

Should not this man upon whom honours upon honours have been showered in Germany, consider it a point of professional honour successfully to oppose encroachments of this sort committed by his management in New York? Should it not be possible for him to insist that arrows of this sort which are so sensational and which poison the international situation, shall not be shot without his having been heard previously?

The American loves the eyewitness story; it loves the "story of the man on the spot." If he made the proper effort Mr Lochner ought not to have too great difficulties with his chief editors in New York!