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JAN 7 1944

Important Factor

Two members of a subcommittee of the Truman committee (Senator Kilgore, Dem., W. Va., and Senator Ferguson, Rep., Mich.), are busy in Miami Beach looking over the general justice of the claims of hotel and apartment owners that the army, in turning their leased properties back to them, has not treated them fairly.

We make no attempt to pass on these claims. We gladly leave the investigation in the hands of the Truman committee, for in its three years of investigating the domestic conduct of the war, it has established a most enviable reputation for aggressiveness coupled with balance, sobriety and a lack of partisan tomfoolery.

We would like to call mild attention, however, to one general item the members of this committee may be well advised to take under the most serious consideration. This is the matter of the service done the Army Air Forces' program by the quick conversion of Miami Beach's hotel and apartment house facilities into quarters for training. Just three days ago the annual report of Gen. H. H. Arnold, commanding general of the Army Air Forces, was released for publication by the war department, and on page 13 appears the following paragraph:

Administrative officers were needed at once. An officer candidate school must function immediately. On Feb. 18, 1942, a conference was called at Army Air Force headquarters in Washington, D. C. Qualified officers said it would take at least three months to set up the school. They were informed that three months were not available; Hitler would not wait. The conference was held on a Wednesday; the first classes were held in leased hotels in Miami Beach on the following Monday.

Here is one of the intangibles that properly enter into the situation. We are inclined to believe Senators Ferguson and Kilgore and the other members of the Truman committee will give it some weight in their current investigations. No one disputes the fact that the hotel and apartment men were helped, too—the arrangement was one of mutual advantage—but they did jump into the breach at a time when "Hitler would not wait," and in consideration of the important function they discharged they have a right to ask the government that they not be treated as a squeezed orange is dealt with after the extractor of its nectar has gotten through with it.