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The Padre Says....

Mob psychology is an indeterminate thing. It operates with, and it militates against, a general trend. A fire alarm rings and people rush madly forward. An ambulance clangs along and they all forget the fire and dash off to stare at the stretcher bearers. A man stops and begins to look up at a high building; before he knows it he is surrounded by a crowd of gazers all looking up and wondering what the the first looker-upper saw to attract his attention. Several laughable cartoons have appeared in current magazines - one shows a man standing in line trying to remember why and for what reason he was there; the other shows a man all out of breath gasping to the man just ahead of him, ''What's this line for anyway?''

At the present time, some of the men of the Navy are victims of something similar to mob psychology. The rush is ''out''- so in line they get. Where are they going? What are they going to do when they get out? That is too far ahead to be a worry just now. Now it's ''get out'' of the Navy! Get back on the beach! Why? Well, yeah, why?

Men of the USNR came into the Navy as a wartime duty. The duty is past. They want to return to their peace time pursuits and occupations. Some are students, whose schooling was interrupted by the war. Others were butchers, bakers, clerks, bankers, engineers, professional athletes, etc. Naturally, these men want to return to civilian life. All their lives, their minds and hearts have been focused on some professional or economic activity. The interim of the war delayed accomplishment but did not take from them the desire for medicine, law or business. Of course these men will return to complete their educations, to take up life and living where it was interrupted, as soon as possible.

But how about you lads who have the Navy as a career? Has the war taken away your liking for the Navy? Or is it that you are mentarily engulfed by the swirl of the thoughts and conversations around you? I am not interested in establishing false principles for you but you know as well as I do that you were satisfied and happy in the peace time Navy. That Navy is coming back! It's coming back mighty fast. and it's yours. The Navy isn't for everyone anymore that the professions are. To be a career Navy man you need definite aptitudes for the life you live. And regardless of how the other fellow feels it's how do YOU feel YOURSELF? Are YOU happy in uniform?

And this isn't pressure thinking - it's common sense. The whole world, the United States included, will be smothered by confusion in the months to come. It is an economic certainty. A long war, such as this has been, has transplanted hundreds of people, placed hundreds in high wage jobs, jobs that changed their mode and style of living and thinking, gave them war time advantages no one can expect in peacetime. A great reshuffle must necessarily take place. Localities that used and harbored thousands at the height of their wartime construction and factory outputs will of necessity recede slowly or quickly as the course of their products retain or lose their value in the reconstruction effort. People are going to suffer. The efects of war on civilians comes after the war when production slackens or ceases completely and men and women feel themselves caught in the centrifugal pull away from the core of work and affluence of war's prosperity to the rim of depression's idleness and payless days. Because one fellow has a job, a pair of overalls and a lunch pail waiting for him doesn't mean you have. Because another lad has a school to finish does not mean that you have, too. You are an individual and your life is individual. Your place is your own and your situation unique.

Have you a farm to go home to? A garage? A business? Or was your job and business the Navy before? If it was, think twice before you step out and go looking for something that is going to be mighty hard to find, because you don't know exactly what you are looking for. A lot of lads are screaming to high heaven right now to get out of the Navy but a lot of them will be mighty sorry, come winter, that they ever got out.

This goes as a warning to a lot of young lads who will brush it aside with a supercilious wise crack, now. May they not live to regret it. In any man's book the Navy is an honorable profession. This war has made it greater. There's a place for every career Navy man in the Navy of today. Check yourself but use your own qualifications. Let your shipmates, your buddies, do the same. If you like the Navy, if Navy life appeals to you, that's your business. Happiness in life comes from doing what YOU want to do in the place YOU are best qualified to do it. Set your own course by the lights of your own happiness.

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