

## Convention Held

# Their Purpose: Better Writing

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By J. A. LIVINGSTON

NEW YORK—Guess! What do lawyers, university professors, auto workers, merchants, doctors, druggists and editors have in common?

Yes, and you can add auto-

mobile dealers, fashion writers, bankers, supermarket executives and waiters.

Answer: They all have their professional or trade associations—their unions.

And, if a first annual meeting

is a forerunner, business writers will have an association, too. Purpose: To lift the caliber of business writing and, in the process, the caliber of business practices.

The leading spirit—the bringer into being—of this organization is Ralph Kermit Thomas (Kit) Larson, associate editor for public service of The Virginian-Pilot and Ledger-Star, Norfolk, Va.

He's not a business or financial writer!

He got the idea while attending a summer course of the Graduate School of Business Administration at the University of Virginia. Subsequently, he major-domoed two get-togethers of business writers — one at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, the other at Norfolk.

Those meetings midwived the Society of American Business Writers, which met this week at the Drake Hotel here. The man who engineered the meeting is Eugene Miller, vice president for public affairs and communications at McGraw-Hill, Inc. He writes a business column for Newsday, a Long Island daily. He wears two hats — as a public relations man and as a business writer. He explained: "I have a mimeograph machine, a secretary and other clerical help and I like to get things going."

He took over recruitment of members, the collection of dues, and the programming of the first convention.

Whether the Society of American Business Writers thrives will depend, almost entirely, on the willingness of business writers to share their pains, problems and approaches to news.

The first meeting served as an educational forum. Examples:

- Herman W. Bevis, senior partner in the accounting firm of Price, Waterhouse & Co., noted that consistency in reporting and full and fair disclosure are the bulwarks of our financial system. He warned against a current analytical fad — cash flow. There's another side: Cash go. It's okay to tote up the inflow of cash into a company, but change, dilated on his favorite — before counting dividends — it is necessary to judge cash needs: What goes out.

- Leonard H. Goldenson, president of American Broadcasting-Paramount Theatres, asserted



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that television is in its infancy. Some day, an address of the President of the United States, or the premier of the Soviet Union, may be broadcast live — around the world. Then, said Goldenson, "We'll have what amounts to a world electorate."

- Eugene J. McNeely, president of American Telephone & Telegraph Co., spoke on "Two Kinds of Growth" in the telephone business. The first is basic — installing the black telephones with regular service. On top of that come the extras — long-distance calls, extensions, the Princess set, push-button dialing and so on. At AT&T this is "vertical" growth. Eventually revenues from vertical growth, including Telstar, will exceed those from horizontal growth.

- Sidney Homer, partner in Salmon Brothers & Hutzler, was admonitory: The more business writers know about money, the better informed will the public be about it.

- Charles C. Tillinghast Jr., president of Trans World Airlines, talked about "What's Ahead in the Airline Business."

- Edwin A. Emerington, president of the American Stock Exchange, dilated on his favorite topic: The securities markets.

Business and financial writers and commentators came from all over — California, Texas, Minnesota, New England, Pennsylvania, Missouri.