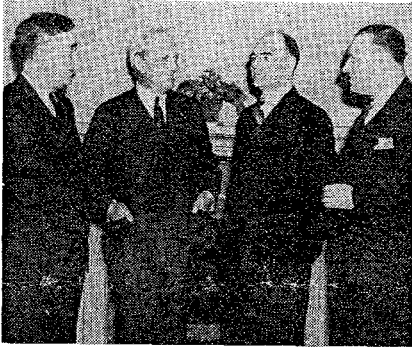


# Charles S. Belsterling, Vice-president of the United States Steel Corp. writes a Band March



● THE HOBBY of a Philadelphia high school student of years ago furnished the feature number of the 24th annual concert of the Joliet Township high school band on Friday, March 19. The Philadelphian, who through the intervening years has risen to a position among the top-flight executives of American industry, is Charles S. Belsterling, vice-president of the United States Steel corporation. His composition, "The March of the Steel Men", was given its world premier as a symphonic band number at the concert. Mr. Belsterling and A. R. McAllister, Joliet band leader, were guests of honor at a special dinner at the Joliet Country club, which preceded the concert. Civic and business leaders joined with prominent musicians and handmasters in honoring composer and conductor at the dinner, and later in the evening attended the concert in a body.

Like many other prominent business men, Mr. Belsterling has made music his hobby since boyhood. While a student at the Central high school of Philadelphia, America's oldest prep school, he spent much of his time at the piano, and tried his hand at composing. Among the compositions turned out by the schoolboy composer were a series of marches and an Easter cantata which was used by a local church.

In those days, before the advent of radio, political marching clubs enlivened every campaign with torch-

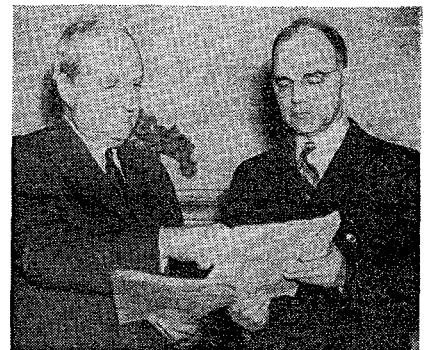
Mayor George T. Jones of Joliet, Mr. Belsterling, A. R. McAllister, and Joseph Fitzgerald, mayor of the city of Lockport, Illinois, at reception honoring Mr. Belsterling.

Did you know that Charles M. Schwab, head of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, is an accomplished pianist; that Felix duPont plays baritone with the Wilmington Police band; that William H. Crocker, multimillionaire banker, was one of the original founders of the San Francisco Opera company; that George Bernard Shaw, at eighty, is studying piano; that Bennett Chapple, vice-president of the American Rolling Mills company, as a young man, played clarinet in his home town band; that Charles Gates Dawes is a composer of national reputation and plays the violin, flute, and piano? Music has played an important part in the lives of most men great in industry. Men in the steel industry have in particular contributed generously of their time and interest to music. The late Andrew Carnegie, when there was an important conference of steel leaders at his residence, always insisted that the call to order be preceded by music, frequently piano played by Mr. Schwab. > > > >

light processions. One such group of young men came to Mr. Belsterling and asked for a special march. For them he wrote a stirring number known as "The Ambassador" which was later published as a piano number and won considerable praise at the time.

Last year when the high school band visited New York, it serenaded officials of the corporation at their offices. Among the interested spectators was Mr. Belsterling, school musician of another day. Along with others he watched the Joliet band make its triumphal appearance at Radio City, where it gained high praise from Erno Rappee, and became the first amateur band to win a professional engagement there. Tremendously impressed, he recalled the incident last summer while visiting Joliet.

During the course of a general conversation with several Joliet business men, Mr. Belsterling mentioned the favorable publicity which the band had secured for its city while in New York. He commented on the value of musical training to high school stu-



Mr. Belsterling and Mr. McAllister discuss the score.

dents, and told them of his own youthful experiences as a composer. Interested by the fact that music had played a part in the education of this prominent executive, who has been admitted to the Pennsylvania Bar, and to practice before the United States Supreme court, one of the men asked him for a copy of "The Ambassador".

Returning to New York, Mr. Belsterling unearthed one of the few remaining copies of the march, and forwarded a photostatic copy to Joliet,

(Turn to page 30)

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## Steel Man writes a Band March

(From page 15)

where it was handed to Mr. McAllister. Of it Mr. McAllister writes, "After examining this number and seeing its merits, I engaged Harry L. Alford, whom I consider the finest arranger for symphonic band in this country, to make the finest band arrangement of this possible. I am more than pleased with the outstanding results of the combined work of Mr. Belsterling and Mr. Alford. This is an inspiring march introducing stirring military strains and novel and outstanding examples of both composer's and arranger's art. This was the feature number of our 24th anniversary concert program, and we were happy to have Mr. Belsterling as our guest."

Previous to the Joliet concert, such famous bandmasters as Simon and Goldman requested permission to add the new march to their repertoires. But in keeping with his promise to Mr. McAllister, Mr. Belsterling withheld such permission. Thus "The Ambassador", rearranged and rechristened "The March of the Steel Men", received its world premier in Joliet.

Among prominent musicians attending the concert when the new march received its premier was Henry Fillmore of Cincinnati, who told local reporters:

"I was flabbergasted, if you'll pardon the expression, for none other seems to suit. The program called for the highest ability of professional bands, yet it was played with ease of manner and brilliant interpretation by these youths of the Joliet high school. I don't know when I have heard a concert band do justice to a program as did Joliet's boys last night. I can't realize yet that those selections were played by students. In my opinion, their rendition was the last word. The program was diversified, calling for a variety of talent, yet it was woven into a harmonious pattern which challenges any similar group of musicians I have ever heard. In both classical and popular numbers, Mr. McAllister's interpretation was perfect and the boys' response equally good."

It is my hope that eventually every school musician in the Wellesley and Lexington systems who comes under my direction as Instrumental Director may subscribe to your fine magazine. Much of the material in it is clipped for my reference files.—Charles F. Perry, Wellesley Hills, Mass.