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DATELINE: LEOPOLDVILLE

Sitting Tourist Is Duck for Vendors

By **ROBERT LEE**

LEOPOLDVILLE, The Congo—Sit down in a sidewalk cafe here and youngsters immediately come up and try to sell you a shoeshine, Belgian cigarettes, Congolese (strike them three times) matches, the Warren Commission report (French translation), local newspapers, Vicks cough drops, "PT 109," the French version of Confidential magazine and air mail stationery.



Lee

Sometimes you have a chance to buy something to drink.

Dark Continent: Leopoldville water is safe to drink again, a newspaper reported the other day.

Residents might be inclined to believe it if: (a) another newspaper hadn't said the same thing last month and then, a few days later, admitted it had been wrong; (b) they could see to the bottom of their baths.

Let It Ring: You feel pretty good when you get a wrong telephone number here.

It means that you avoided a busy signal and that someone bothered to answer your ring.

The same wrong number three times in row is still better because it means your phone is consistently in error instead

of randomly so, which is the more common fault.

You're really in luck if you succeed in confirming all your wrong numbers without having to shout over a busy signal or argue a third party off the line.

Hearts & Flowers: Hearts have been jumping in The Congo.

"Girl Eaten by a Crocodile," screamed a headline in a local newspaper. A 9-year-old had disappeared while swimming in a river not far from Leopoldville.

A search party was sent out, the newspaper reported, but all it could find was her heart, "hung on a tree branch."

Buyer Beware: It's tough to buy certain things in Leopoldville. It's still tougher to find out what you can't buy.

Most stores are open every morning including Saturday, but not all. Some close at noon, some at 12:30. Some reopen at 2 p.m., some at 2:30, some at 3 or 3:30 and some not at all.

Banks are closed every afternoon. Grocery stores on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, except in outlying towns where hours are strictly by taste of the owner.

Government offices are closed most of the time.

ROBERT LEE is a Minneapolis Tribune staff writer on leave under a William P. Gray foreign correspondent's fellowship.