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MEMOIR OF A WET CAMPAIGN

BY CHARLES SAMPSON

IN LATE Springtime, Summer, and Autumn the mountains that circle Hintersdorf are lovely with a bright illusion of full-breasted beauty, and many are the eager motorists who swarm there from afar to set the undergrowth afire, strew the glades with towny litter, and uproot the shy, charming pink azalea. When they have sated themselves and driven joyously away, more come, and more and more, to wallow on the bosom of the unwitting enchantress. All this goes on from May to October.

Far different are these same hills, seen through cindered eyes over an empty stomach in the dawn of a mousey April morning; then they appear as hunks of some dreadful ant-riddled cake cast off by a gluttoned ogre. As the mists melt and clot away, the mountains stand forth for what they truly are: bleak monuments to thick-headed settlers who long ago raped the ridges of their stately conifers and hardwoods, and floated them down to the sea. In exchange, dollars came back upstream, bringing the pioneers unwonted ease. They founded and educated First Families, and their offspring merely supervised while hired axmen chopped the second and third

growth, and seared the hillsides with log trails.

Debauchery tells, however, even upon the most passive victim. In the last generation the hills have been slow, save in the gentler seasons, to cover their forlorn nakedness with that alluring half-raiment which compels conquest. So, down in Hintersdorf, the Big Men sublimate their yearnings and supervise creatures other than axmen: machine shops, paint factories, the cattle-powder works, banks, foundries, mills.

They dine on Prosperity, yet somehow they feed leanly; they actually look hungry, Hooverized. Ever and anon, they lick their lips and glance lecherously toward the hills. Just you wait —!

Their little, gnomish souls are so truthfully mirrored by the bare Winter mountains; had Paul and I known as much that April morning on the Hintersdorf railroad platform, we should have been spared the trouble that always attends an errand of fools. But we didn't know; we had to learn.

The mission that took us to Hintersdorf was political; we had been bidden to organize a wet committee there for the primary election campaign. The theory of the job, as outlined to us amiably by a

former newspaper colleague, was something like this:

"When you pull in, go see the city editor of the local paper. Take him out for a few drinks. Spend a couple of dollars, to show you're sports. After you've got friendly, ask who the big village wets are. As soon as you find out, go see the biggest wet of them all. Get him to be your chairman, and pick a local campaign committee. When it's picked, you stick around and help. The committee can have an appropriation of \$1500."

It seemed very simple to Paul and me.

II

Hintersdorf is neither *dorf* nor city; it is an overgrown town creeping each year farther across an agricultural valley where farmers distill superb apple brandy and dynamite-rye, yet boast that they would vote dry if Christ himself came out on a wet ticket. Their moist valley fills nearly all the county, and Hintersdorf is its seat.

The town is off the main rail trunks, and squats at the end of a jerkwater spur. Lately, however, the Chamber of Commerce has persuaded the railroad to run experimental twin expresses between Hintersdorf and the State metropolis. Much local pride attends their arrivals and departures; when the engines toot, citizens take out their watches and say:

"There comes, there goes, the Hintersdorfer."

A chain hotel, mothering a non-sectarian shrine for all worshippers at the Service club altar, accommodates the transient guests of Hintersdorf. Other modern fixtures include a pay-leave trolley line, a taxi company, a park system, a handful of diversified industries and a 200-bed hospital for overhauling their victims, and a newspaper which never prints a word about

factory accidents unless the Big Men specifically approve. There also is a bush-league ball-team.

The ghostly needs of Hintersdorf are adequately supplied by one synagogue and two Catholic, and three Episcopal, churches. Apart from these, there are twenty-odd tabernacles catering to itches that are far from ghostly; they are given over wholly to big-time, evangelico-political klonklaves.

The shepherds who manage these dens also run the town of Hintersdorf, and make no secret of their wire-pullings and their meddlings. They and they alone can tell the obliging mayor what to do, and when; their thumbprints appear on the bib of every judge, on the petition of every local candidate, on the crust of every civic pie. They hound the school-teachers, they bully and boycott advertisers, and they censor into anæmia all public amusements. In 1918 they dried up Hintersdorf; in 1928 they kept it dry and made it safely Republican, and today, to hold the fruits of victory all compact, they are determined to sit on the lid till Kingdom Come and Glory Be. They constitute an absolute, powerful oligarchy.

The scholarly old rabbi, the two strapping priests, and the three aloof Anglicans count for nothing outside their congregations. They have no reason to; they decently stick to their business, and stay away from politics.

It didn't take us long to learn these facts, and also to learn that our prescribed technique of organization was no good. To begin with, the local daily was militantly bone dry, from owner and managing editor down to the lowliest cub. Such fellows I have always found personally undependable, whatever regard they may assume for an ex-brother of the craft, and to suggest a purely social drink to any of them would

have been beckoning certain disaster. Yet Paul and I were not disappointed; from State headquarters we obtained the names of the local wet sympathizers, and started after them with much hope, great confidence.

Remember that it was our first venture into politics, and remember also that we had more childish faith in human honesty than was good for us, despite our newspaper training. That faith survived for three of our six weeks of campaign, and then yielded up its tattered ghost.

The one issue was clearly cut, far enough ahead to allow of recognition by everyone who wished to vote. The major dry candidate was a demagogue, yet honest enough to state his position flatly and without any qualification: he was for retention of Prohibition, both national and State. Our own candidate was dripping wet, and pledged to throw all his energies toward repeal. In the middle, burning to jump somewhere yet unable for the life of him to do it, stood a straddler whose platform vaguely favored "some change in our Prohibition system." Many voters interpreted this plank to mean the return of light wines and beer; others, more familiar with old-fashioned political chicanery, put an entirely opposite construction upon it.

Anyhow, there the three of them stood: dry, straddler, and wet. The dry had his own organization, a live relic of former years, plus the Anti-Saloon League, and the evangelists aforesaid. The straddler had a crafty, highly organized steam-roller. The wet had for an active weapon a skeleton army of such amateurs as ourselves. Over and above his homely, unquestioned honesty and his administrative sagacity, our faction put much stock in the fact of his having been indorsed by an anti-dry society.

Alas, Paul and I soon learned that such

indorsement meant less than nothing to most of the society's individual members in unique Hintersdorf. Since election day we have learned, also, that it means little elsewhere in the State, the big cities excepted.

Plenty of citizens in Hintersdorf and Hinter county had signed the membership lists of this liberal organization; numbers of them had even volunteered to carry those lists around and solicit signatures. Certain influential ones, who owned to no fear of pastors, had let their names be used as local vice-regents, and the State wet stronghold, scanning these names and pondering their surface value, was naïvely optimistic. Some of that optimism was directly implanted in Paul and me by telegraph and mail. We opened our headquarters, made considerable rumble with advertising, and went forth to rally the bold signers.

The first one we approached was a manufacturer, florid and genial. Damn right he'd signed a wet list; he didn't care who knew it. Time people showed they had a little backbone. Why, it was getting to be awful! Lock you up nowadays for buying corks! Lock you up in this State on no evidence at all; dry agents only had to imagine they *smelled* licker!

Cheerily, then, we put our case before him, asked him to be our chairman. He dropped us like hot potatoes, and backed rapidly away.

"I should sa-a-a-y *not*! Me *stultify* myself? Why, I don't even belong to your party! No sirree!"

"But can't you see," said Paul, "that your parties don't mean a thing any more? That the only issue is wet and dry? That if there's ever going to be a start made toward knocking out Prohibition, it's got to be made now, when the whole country's fretting?"

He professed to see well enough, but he

simply wouldn't "stultify" himself. We quibbled and bargained for a long time, and finally drew one concession: he would let us pass out literature at his factory gate.

The second minute-man on the list refused to see us. Puzzled, we appealed to one of his friends, who explained.

"He's just cagey. Call him again, kid him along, and make an appointment." I telephoned, and got a rich greeting framed in billingsgate. One would have thought the fellow a Southern hedge parson instead of a professional man. He foamed, raged, threatened, and insulted.

"Why the hell did you sign up as a wet, then?" I asked.

"You've got no right to question me!" he yelled over the wire. I replied that I took orders only from State headquarters; that they had ordered me to approach him, and that therefore it was my duty to follow him until I got a satisfactory explanation. Then he calmed, his frightened jabbering became intelligible, and the reason came out: he was afraid to jeopardize a relative's halfpenny political career by open espousal of our own.

Prospect Number 3 was one who had aided in getting wet signatures. He was glad, very glad, to see us. Yes, the hour was ripe; the doom of the drys was at hand. Prohibition was a farce—how many of them told us that!—and he was dismally tired of it. Time to ring the curtain down.

Well then, would he give a helping yank on the rope? For the third time, our suggestion was a bombshell.

Couldn't possibly! Y'see, it's this way: do a lot of business with the church people here, and church towns in the county. Couldn't take a chance on hurting business. Absolutely not. Feel my obligation ended, anyhow, when I got those signatures and sent in my own name.

"But couldn't you even call a private

meeting of wets, where we two could get our committee organized? Time's growing short. And you needn't take any active hand, you know."

No, it wouldn't do at all. The neighbors might hear of it. Beside, he was out for a minor local candidate who was dry, and to get his feet wet in the big fight wouldn't be right, would it? Sorry.

From his office we went to consult a lawyer of the town. His name wasn't on our roll, but he had been mentioned repeatedly during the buck-passing of the others as one who "could tell you boys a thing or two." He did, very bluntly and courageously, we thought at the time. He said:

"You're in an embarrassing position, a dangerous position! You're licked before you start; your campaign's going to be a flop in Hintersdorf. Best thing you can do is pack your bags and go home. I don't want to hurt your feelings, don't want to discourage you, but that's the only way I can see it."

It was not until some time afterward that we heard he made a fat living off rum case defenses. Hearing it, we put two and two together and got the sum of five.

III

The Hinter county gentry were our next bets. Upon their doorsteps and mounting-blocks we parked until we got a hearing. They were excellent fellows, and gentlemen, once we reached them. They consoled, and sympathized, and brought forth good cigars. They tendered luncheon and golf invitations, they offered countless suggestions, they pointed out side alleys up which we might, if we were fortunate, snare some possible campaign material. How about themselves?

"Goodness, no! Love to, but there's that

directors' meeting over in New York next week, and we've all got to inspect the plant afterward."

"Damn! I forgot! There's a dog show on the umpteenth. I'm really with you in this thing, though. Maybe next time."

"Awf-ly sorry. I'm riding in a point-to-point next month; takes every spare hour to keep condition."

"Just my luck, losing a crack at these holier-than-thou's. But with a big wedding in the family—you know how it is."

Thus we ran, staggered, and crawled down the list, vainly seeking a wet who possessed decency, integrity, and above all courage enough to make an open stand against continuance of the Noble Experiment. Between searches, we ourselves were sought out by several who had none of those virtues, but who were willing to fight for anything to the tune of \$100 a week. These bravos we shunted outside, and continued hunting.

We came by the process of elimination to one who in happier times had made considerable money from the sale of wet goods. He was in the bathtub, his wife said when we called; would we wait? We sat around, long enough for any white man to have soaked and scrubbed every micron of hide off himself. By and by, his wife reappeared. She seemed profoundly surprised to see us still there.

"I'm so sorry," she told us. "He must have slipped out the back door. He's absent minded that way, you know."

It wasn't long before we were realizing the full significance of that robust term, "one hell of a time!" Laughed at, rebuffed like *caoutchouc* salesmen, lustily cursed and otherwise lathered with assorted varieties of contumely; made to sit in anterooms, made to keep out-of-the-way appointments that were conveniently broken after long, expectant waits—made sublime monkeys

of, in short, by timid humbugs and roaring cowards who should have been allies—we descended finally to the last man on the list. Paul went out and investigated him; came back in an hour, swearing.

"He's a speakeasy bartender," he spat. "Might as well hire Al Capone to fight the Sullivan law as use this one."

We took the cursed muster-roll—crumpled, dog-eared and dirty it was, now—and unfolded it. Paul touched a match. We watched it burn and blacken, curl and whiten again, in the gutter. Then we drove out to confer with a wet who was ill.

When we turned in at his gate and saw the reposeful old stone house hiding its ivied chimneys behind a screen of cedars and holly, we half expected a flunkey to appear and motion us away, we were that used to it. But no. A gardener grubbing about with some bulbs only smiled and waved his hand, a dog came wagging out, and we followed him to a terrace where a woman and a girl sat, reading.

IV

Beyond the curtain of cedars we left for a moment the half-ludicrous, half-tragic organism that is both Hinter county and Hintersdorf; on the hither side we were welcomed by civilized folk who set our futile feet right. We breathed their hospitality, rested, and stretched ourselves. The head of the house received us in his bedroom, where he lay very much a temporary wreck, but he proved a wise counselor, and in the end we went away confident again. Through his advice and the aid of a retired politician, we at last got a chairman.

He was a tough and wiry Celt who in earlier days had seen the world from the rods of fast freights, from the summits of coal tipples, from the fire escapes of workmen's hotels in a hundred cities.

Having paused now and then to dig in the earth, to sweat in mills, or to peddle, he digested what he had seen, and took to reading the radicals. Their ideas he had been moved to expound from a soap-box, until youth waned and his head and stomach showed him the vanity of practicing Socialism. One day he stopped in Hintersdorf, liked the look of the Summer hills, and stayed to build up a necessary business and achieve a good competence. At heart he remained a humorous radical.

In local politics he took a sporting interest; he delighted in stirring up the hyenas of town and county by preposterously filing himself for some impossible office, and waging a relentless campaign for the fun of it. It was said that he had contested every office from that of dog-catcher to the Town Council presidency. His nickname, by the way, was Bawney.

For paid secretary we hired a repatriate Hintersdorfer who knew not only the psychology of the local inhabitants, but that of the back country and neighbor counties as well. He was aggressive, a born talker, and respected despite his recent return from the South as a prodigal.

Now there began for the four of us days that started at cockcrow and ended after midnight, that opened with bill-posting and closed with rallies and harangues in obscure halls and barns and public garages. We made clumsy speeches, we button-holed, and we argued. In turn, we were cheered and jeered and heckled. We dined one day upon roast sucking pig in a rene-gade's farmhouse, and the next upon hot-dogs at a wayside stand; our food was usually washed down with the libations that Andy Volstead has made standard with the rustic. We found them very good indeed, and far superior to anything the city feller pours down his gullet.

Literature was distributed by the hun-

dredweight, through the agency of paid professionals and by our scattered converts at crossroads and hamlets. Special batches were rushed here and there in emergencies by taxiloads of the jobless who continually besieged us for work. Naturalized voters were supplied with dodgers and pamphlets in their native tongues; *ignoranti* who couldn't read were herded together and addressed in simple phrases. We took space in the newspapers, but only with judicious frugality, for the rates were high and the payment demand was instant.

In other hours we canvassed from house to house, even violating the Hintersdorf Sabbath to gain assurances of support. These were not many. Numerous enfranchised youngsters seemed to be for us, but the majority of older freedmen were apathetic when not downright hostile. The few literate Negroes in the town were sanguine to our cause, as were the Italians and Jews. It was a sympathetic Jew, in fact, who rented us a \$600-a-month headquarters location, prize site of the town, for a comparative song.

V

Those headquarters were the scene of curious happenings. The day we opened a crowd collected, and after some muttering it sent in an indignant spokesman to ask who had the impudence and temerity to paint "Wet Headquarters" on a Hintersdorf shop window? Cops came later, to snoop around with that whatever-is, is-wrong look; hideous females entered, and screamed maledictions; a stool-pigeon dropped in to ask if we could give him a drink.

Next day arrived two heavy men with long feet and lips that trickled tobacco juice; cheap private detectives or dry agents, anyone could tell in a wink.

"We're from Cleveland," they announced, and as if we believed them, continued: "Want to open a branch office. Like your location. C'n we measure your space behind that partition?" We let them measure, with Bawney watching. One went through the sham of stepping off dimensions, and his partner made a show of putting down notations in a book. Now and then the stepper-off halted, rodentlike, to look around and finger something bulky in his breast pocket. When he saw Bawney's stare he left off, and they departed shortly, after asking questions about the landlord. On a hunch, Paul followed. They went not toward the landlord's, but toward the railroad station.

"Lice from the dry bureau," warned Bawney. "Trying to plant a pint. Watch out!" We had already made a rule against any rum on the premises, and now we detailed our colored porter to sentry duty against framers. As the bluff town lawyer had told us, we were in a hazardous position.

No Othello could have picketed his spouse's charms more jealously than our blackamoor guarded the wet base. When we were able to spare him from this task, we dispatched him to electioneer among his brethren, or to drop our literature in the social haunts of sooty Hintersdorfers. It was on his account that a quarrelsome churchwoman entered one day, and started after Bawney:

"The self-respecting folks in this town think it's terrible way you allow a nigger gallivantin' around here and all and go away leaving him in charge of the place! Ain't it enough for you to come in here with your unlawful propaganda without insultin' white people tell me now?"

"Madam," replied Bawney, "he's the only honest man we could find in Hintersdorf."

In view of the hostility of Hintersdorf, our judgment in remaining there may well be questioned, and had we found it to be an honestly dry town, governed as its citizens desired, I think we should have cleared out and left them in arid peace. But Hintersdorf isn't honestly dry; it is only crookedly, shamefacedly so. Its citizens drink frequently and bestially; it is under frowns from the pulpits that their wistful spirit dissolves, that they vote dry. In private they continue to grumble and groan and otherwise lament for hours on end.

Consider their drinking habits. The biggest bar in Hintersdorf is a block long, and located in an underground dungeon, to which entrance may be gained only after passing a series of heavy doors and the eyes of a lookout who peers in all directions at once. When we saw this tremendous bar it was lined four deep, so that drinks had to be relayed hand-over-head to the outlying thirsty. Tables were all about, similarly crowded.

Surely, then, there was merriment, *Brüderschaft*? No! There was in the whole vast place not a word of hearty talk, not a laugh, not a glimmer of good fellowship; only the clink of glasses and a depressing hum, and over all the continual schlupp, schlupp of forbidden beverages going down. So, I thought, must Ulysses' men have guzzled after Circe transformed them.

In a corner we passed the time of day with the cave's keeper, and he agreed that the spectacle was scandalous, that the shifty secrecy of it was a degrading nuisance. He longed for open doors, a license, and cheerful, decorous drinking again.

"Then you're surely voting wet, you and your crowd, aren't you?"

"We are like hell!" he said with sudden venom. "We got our orders, and don't think we ain't!"

Even his customers' brand of cellar

swilling is too hotsy, too ultra, to be taken as the true drinking pattern of Hintersdorf. To view the real local standard, a shocking species of hog drinking, we had to visit the mountain shanties far away from hidden town bars and well stocked homes.

Everyone who can afford it either owns or is partner in a shanty: built of logs, corrugated iron, or shingles, and concealed up one of the numerous creek hollows a safe distance from town. There, snug beyond the sight of families, neighbors, clerics, and the police, the Hintersdorfers unshackle their inhibitions, doff their store clothes, and fall upon the demijohns. Their bouts last for days; sometimes it takes weeks to recapture the lost feeling of independence and freedom.

"Where's So-and-So? Haven't seen him downtown lately," a man on the street will ask.

"Oh, off on a shanty tear," is the likely reply. "Be back next week."

The majority of his kind, when they do recover and come back, resume their entities as sound, dry citizens, and are thought none the less of.

So fond of its liquor is Hintersdorf that ten years ago it cleared the hills and valley of all save the most seasoned distillers, hence Hinter county booze today is neither poisoned nor cut, and may be drunk copiously. The native product, in fact, is so competently made and aged that a straight tumbler of it leaves the mouth and throat membranes intact; there is not a headache in a gallon.

As an adjunct to its good whiskey and brandy, Volsteadian Hintersdorf runs to a newer, more peculiar drink, known by the lugubrious name of Damned Shame. It is a sort of wine, like the sauterne of the old table d'hôte places in color and taste, but leaving with the tongue a moldy after-

suggestion of malt and hops. I learned upon inquiry that it is fermented from sugar water that has been dumped upon the dregs of homebrew kegs and crocks.

Nearly all of the Hintersdorf clubs have private bars, accessible only to recognized members, yet somehow evidence has invariably seeped out, and they have been raided one after another in the most modern manner. But in the teeth of these raids and attendant hatchetings of their expensive property, not one club could we persuade to indorse our wet candidate, either publicly or privately.

One of the local organizations had a reputation for being extraordinarily careful in its admissions to the bar; it was said that Gambrinus himself, proposed by Baron de Mumm and seconded by the whole Busch clan, couldn't get in if the bartender ruled no. Yet it was raided. Hintersdorf's Good Men had found an impecunious hypocrite among the members, proffered money, and the rest was easy.

This aggrieved club happened to have a splendid marching corps, pride of the county, and an outfit that brought success to any parade. Our candidates were scheduled for speeches in town, and it was our idea to herald their arrival by engaging the corps to perform. Accordingly, we dickered with the club officials and reached an understanding. On the day before the arrival, when it was too late to hire any other music, the deal was suddenly called off. Why?

"Some mice got into the drums," we were told.

VI

The candidates came to town with a busload of their own music, fortunately, and drew a street ovation in a beating rain. Before the evening's speeches we presented

them at a private dinner to a small group of the less timorous wets, taking care that the number also included a representative of each local *Saufverein* that had fallen prey to the dries. Painstakingly, every plank of the wet platform was picked to splinters for the instruction of these guests, and then we repaired to the public rostrum.

Here copies of the speeches were handed in advance to the yokel reporters who attended. During the meeting, we made it our business to see that these copies were checked, word for word, against any possible digression or rephrasing by the speakers.

In the course of his talk, one candidate pledged himself upon the bones of a Revolutionary ancestor to disregard in private life the Federal and State enforcement acts. In that phase of his declamation he said nothing whatever about the Constitution. His voice was loud and clear, his words plain, and not even a fool could have misunderstood them.

Yet despite all our precautions, next morning's headlines in the dry daily untruthfully quoted him as defying the Constitution, and binding himself upon oath to violate it!

Such errors, to say the least, are bad newspaper practice. But we didn't argue that point, for we were in Hintersdorf and face to face with Hintersdorf's ethics. We merely registered a protest, and applied for a correction, which was duly printed.

So the campaign moved toward its climax. Increasing were the demands for our time, for literature, for telephoned explanations of this or that platform detail to burghers who feared to be seen entering our headquarters, and for assurances that our candidates would not be bought off at the last minute. Out in the country, the wife of our host was slaving bravely alone, spending her own money on the harrow-

ing task of converting the rural females.

Keeping pace with our work, annoyances also multiplied. Down-at-heel loafers harassed us day and night, threatening dire treachery unless we hired them as poll watchers at \$10 a day. Petty precinct bosses cadged for handouts. Almost hourly, a Latin volunteer rushed in with many a dramatic "watta hal'," to report that some "sambeesh" was tearing down our placards. A moonstruck vagabond who professed to be an organizer for a hobo association was the worst pest; he dogged us with an offer of 300 voteless bums' support, for which he asked \$300.

He and the other harlequins danced their crazy rigadoons against a restless background that was made up of panhandlers, cranks, phony war veterans, sidewalk evangelists, and plain, everyday talk-hungry idiots. It required great fortitude not to close up the headquarters and run off somewhere, anywhere.

There were hours when the four of us had wild, fantastic flashes of triumph, and other hours when despair and nerves tripped up all our hopes and sent them tobogganing. Always, State headquarters would assure us:

"Hang on! Anything can happen in politics!"

Anything is a word that covers a lot of territory, bad as well as good, and accordingly we tried to prepare ourselves. But not even Bawney, who had lived and fought alongside the most depraved and outcast of men, could stretch his facile imagination to suspect the snide trick that was in store for us. It was soon played by the Christian Soldiers of Hintersdorf, in the characteristic manner of the nether American ecclesiastic.

Their method was quite simple and familiar on the face of it: the Sunday before election they preached from the lying

text of the dry daily's thumping misquotation.

The master stroke was this: before they flayed us with the evangelical weapons of calumny and vituperation, they carefully locked the tongues of their audiences, and bade the newspaper be silent.

Thus we were deprived of all defense, and then attacked. Although we had overwhelming proof of malice, we could get none of slander. Because not a word was published, we could not claim libel.

However, such things always leak out. A hint here, an anonymous telephone call there, and by election eve we possessed a fair idea of what had been said. But that availed us little, for we were still power-

less to obtain evidence that would stand in court.

We might yet have made the motions of suing to show that we weren't down for the count, but it would have gained us nothing at that late date. Anyhow, we *were* down by sunset of the next day, when the polls closed.

There is hardly anything more to tell. The dry carried Hinter county. The straddler ran second, and our chief candidate third. After we had conceded defeat, one of our State leaders said to the press:

"We have aroused the wet sentiment to a realization that it must vote in accordance with its convictions."

Well, maybe. But not in Hintersdorf.

ORDEAL BY BUS

BY RAYMOND S. TOMPKINS

MODERN business, as everyone knows, cannot be carried on without a great deal of scientific research into its problems. The most modern manifestation of the transportation industry, the bus business, is no exception to this rule.

The casual student of industrial trends, reading and hearing of the fierce competition between bus and railroad lines, and learning how the railroads are "girding themselves for battle", probably pictures the bus men on the other hand as spending all their time laughing up their sleeves. The picture is false. As a matter of fact, many of the problems of the infant coach business are vast and vexatious.

Consider, for example, the difficulty of working out with mathematical precision just how long a traveler can ride without going to the wash-room. The railroaders have nothing of the sort to wrestle with. In the earliest days of their craft they equipped every car with lavatories, labeled at one end "Men", and at the other end "Women", and called it a day. Occasionally the brush and comb might need disinfecting, or even be missing altogether; or there might be no liquid soap in the soap containers; moreover, the door to the cabinet always seemed to be locked when the train came near a station and was opened again only at the porter's or conductor's fancy. But at least you knew that it was there. The bus men, however, find the "rider-comfort" problem dogging every step they take.

They have tried putting lavatories in buses, but such equipment is still considered somewhat freakish. The trouble is that every time the layman hears of it, he begins reflecting, "What will our highways look like if in addition to being drenched with gasoline and oil they are also to be sloshed down all day with waste water from fleets of high-speed, rubber-tired wash-rooms?" Such speculations as these do not help the public relations of the bus industry. Nevertheless, there are plumbers—or, as they now call themselves, sanitary engineers—who still push "modern coach plumbing", declaring that "this convenience is more than merely an added comfort; it is fast becoming a recognized necessity". The big slogan that sells the goods announces that the bus fixtures of a certain big New York plumbing house "require no more space than that required to seat a single passenger".

Still, the problem remains one of the most pressing in the bus profession. It must be one of three things—lavatories in the buses, toilets in the terminals, or more stops. In nine States of the union the public service commissions have taken the matter in hand, and probably it will not be long before a reform sweeps the country like Farm Relief. In these nine States the inter-city bus companies are required either to have their terminals equipped with toilets, or to have plenty of five-minute stops for the same purpose. The law even fixes the distance or lapse of time between such stops. The mathematically determined and