

GOVERNMENT HAS IT FOR SALE

By John L. Kent

Now's the time for all good businessmen to come to the aid of their country — and buy one of the government's surplus industrial plants.

Or perhaps you want to buy a small island complete with a lighthouse. The government has it for sale.

The government needs more tax-paying enterprises. Government-owned plants and property make no profits; pay no taxes. Hence the government is getting rid of them.

The disposal has been going on without fanfare for over a year. It is part of the determination of Congress and the present administration to "get the government out of business" where possible. Industrial-type enterprises of the government are being sold to the highest bidder.

The government is also getting out of the real estate business. Hundreds of pieces of property are up for sale by General Services Administration (GSA), the government's "housekeeping" agency.

The Boston office of GSA, for ex-

ample, wants to sell the Patrick Rock Light Station in Fairfield County, Connecticut, and the Stamford Harbor Light Station, Stamford, Connecticut.

At Portland, Maine, GSA is selling a \$300,000 Federal hospital, including ten buildings and fifteen acres of land. In New Bedford, Massachusetts, the \$160,000 post office building is for sale.

If you want to get into the atomic power business (after Congress permits private industry to get in), you might consider buying the Sacandaga Atomic Power Laboratory at Glenville, New York. The New York GSA office is selling this \$100,000 laboratory, including eighteen buildings and fifty acres of land.

At Charleston, South Carolina, the Atlantic GSA office has for sale the Thomas Island Lighthouse Reservation. GSA places a value of only one thousand dollars on it, although it includes fourteen acres of land. The catch: the land is under water!

A number of military camps are for sale. The Kansas City GSA

office wants to sell Fort Des Moines, for something close to its value — \$6,700,000. This is a former Army post, consisting of 600 acres of land with many permanent and temporary buildings. You can get the roads, sewers, and other utilities, too.

You can buy a complete town from the Kansas City office. It is the Bureau of Reclamation camp at Indianola, Nebraska. It includes 86 homes complete with streets and utilities on 200 acres of land. GSA thinks the town is worth about \$300,000.

THE above enumeration lists high spots of the big items. But every GSA regional office has hundreds of items for sale ranging from surplus office equipment to industrial plants.

Since 1948, GSA has assumed custody of 73 industrial facilities, worth over three quarters of a billion dollars. Disposal is the ultimate object. So far, a half dozen have been sold, about a score leased to private industry, and about 30 transferred to defense agencies, chiefly during the Korean defense buildup. The remainder are in "standby" status, or awaiting sale.

Other agencies of the government want to get rid of surplus industrial property. The Rubber Producing Facilities Disposal Commission is now negotiating for sale of 27 synthetic rubber plants operated since World War II by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC). RFC

is going out of business before the end of this year and the plants are to be sold to private industry.

Justice Department's Office of Alien Property (OAP) is selling a number of plants which came into Uncle Sam's possession during World War II because they were owned by enemy aliens.

Biggest is the one-hundred-million-dollar chemical giant — the General Aniline and Film Corporation and its recently-merged sales subsidiary, the General Dyestuffs Corporation. Last year OAP sold the former German-owned Schering Corporation to a banking syndicate for twenty-nine million dollars.

The Army Corps of Engineers is now negotiating with a buyer for the Muscle Shoals chlorine plants located in northwest Alabama. This is a Korean War chemical plant, completed in 1952. The plant can turn out 475 tons of chlorine and caustic soda daily. Both are important industrial chemicals.

The government is also trying to rid itself of many quasi-government ventures, such as public housing. A number of "planned" communities have already been sold.

Under orders from Congress and the administration, almost every government department and agency has offered idle property, equipment, and other goods for sale.

It may pay you to take a look into Uncle Sam's surplus. You won't get the goods or real estate for nothing, but there are bargains still available.

DOINGS *of a* DEMOCRACY

By **HAROLD HELFER**

- ✓ Superior Court Judge Joseph E. Warner of New Bedford, Massachusetts, notes a sharp decline in requests for deferment from jury service from men since women began serving on Massachusetts juries.
- ✓ When Springfield, Missouri, urged its citizens not to wash their cars because of a water shortage, one automobile, gleaming clean, came down the street carrying this sign: "River Washed."
- ✓ When a citizen whose two dogs he was trying to catch gave him a lot of trouble, Roy Kurawa, Chicago dog catcher, put the man in the dog wagon instead of the dogs and drove off with him.
- ✓ Upon announcing that it was using fluorides in the city's water supply, the officials of Elyria, Ohio, were flooded with gripes about the water's taste. The town had to tell the people that, due to an unforeseen delay, the chemical hadn't even been applied to the water yet.
- ✓ A Milwaukee judge fined Eddie Mathews, a star home-run hitting player of the Milwaukee baseball team, \$50 for reckless driving — then asked for his autograph.
- ✓ The civic clubs of Royersford, Pennsylvania, hope to keep youngsters from racing all over the countryside in automobiles following junior-senior high school proms by putting up money to provide: (1) a professional floor show after the prom, from midnight to 1:15 A.M.; (2) an informal dance at the country club from 1:30 A.M. to 3 A.M.; and (3) a breakfast at the American Legion home at 3 A.M.
- ✓ Governor Goodwin J. Knight of California has come around to the belief that political campaign buttons are a waste of lapels. During a political rally for himself, Governor Knight deliberately wore a button of his opponent in the gubernatorial race — "Graves for Governor." No one noticed this "heretic" button at the rally, not even his own staff.