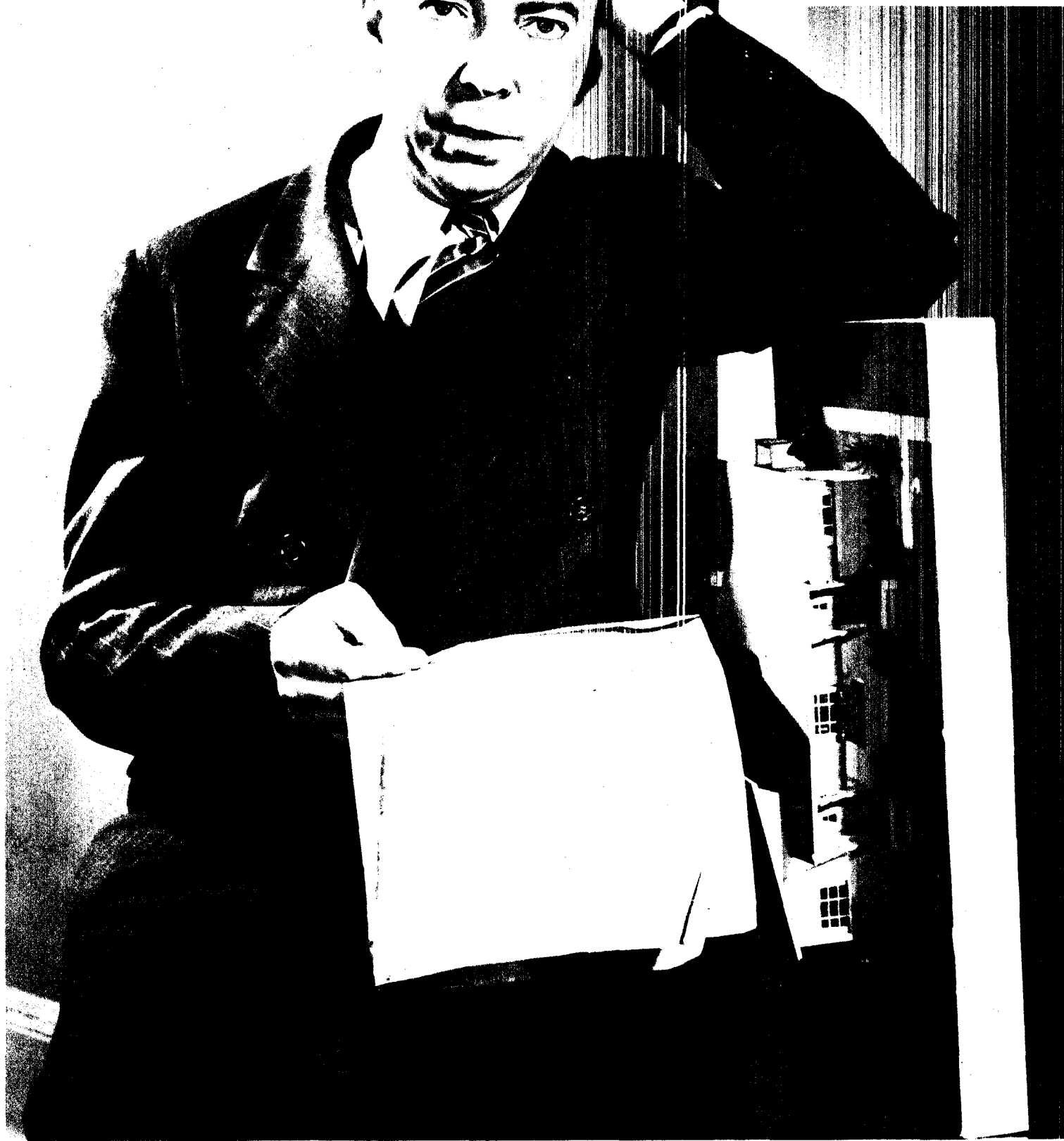


To put roofs over the heads of some 2,700,000 veterans in two years time is the unprecedented job of Wilson Wyatt. Congress hasn't been giving him much help but, fortunately, Mr. Wyatt doesn't give up easily



tives in early March cut the heart out of the Patman Bill, which contained the provisions of his plan, and Wyatt was right back in the soup again, swimming desperately to keep afloat.

By this time Wyatt was holding forth in an old red stone mansion at 1600 "I" Street, surrounded by a group of cohorts that was dedicated to the principle that sleep is a form of malingering. The possibility is remote that any of these gentlemen will ever turn out to be a Thomas A. Edison, but they were confirming his thesis that four hours sleep a night is enough for any normal man. They worked till one o'clock every night and on several occasions plodded along till five in the morning, went home, had a cup of coffee and a shave and were back at their desks promptly at nine. All they were trying to do was provide 2,700,000 houses for veterans in two years time. This is comparable to building the Pyramids on an off week end.

"The man is obviously nuts," said the building people promptly. "He wants to build 1,200,000 houses by Christmas. That's five times as many houses as were built last year and a quarter million more than we did in the biggest year in history, which was 1925 when we built 937,000 homes. If we use every bit of available material this year, we can't do better than 450,000 houses."

A Few Realistic Objections

They pointed out that to reach the Wyatt 1946 quota would require a production of three hundred houses a day, and three times more carpenters and plasterers than the country possesses. It would require a five-fold increase in building materials over the 1945 supply, a jump from \$400,000,000 worth in 1945 to two billions worth this year. Even in his report to the President, Wyatt had stated that the need for all materials and supplies—lumber, brick, wallboard, lath, cast-iron soil pipes, electrical, plumbing, heating and roofing materials—far exceeded the production capacity. "What about that?" asked the building people.

"True, very true," conceded Wyatt, who is never one to dent his head against a solid fact, "but the fact remains that we need the houses. Every day during the war we did a hundred things that couldn't be done. Is anybody to tell me we've lost that talent already?"

Nobody could deny that the problem existed. In fact, the Veterans' Emergency Program was a drop in the bucket. With the very best luck in the world and by breaking our necks, we might be able to produce the nearly three million homes Wyatt called for, but that would merely be meeting the needs of new families created by the war. It doesn't account for the 1,200,000 families now living doubled up with other families; nor the 4,000,000 veterans still in the service and soon to be demobilized; nor the 10,500,000 homes which are substandard and must be replaced. Then, approximately 400,000 new families are created each year. In short, we shall have to build homes at whirlwind speed for ten years just to catch up, and go on from there endlessly if general prosperity continues and the demand for better housing keeps up.

The complications of Wyatt's job are endless. His first problem was to find housing for desperate cases. Congress had already appropriated \$191,000,000 to move Army and Navy barracks and make them into 100,000 living units. Under Wyatt, another \$250,000,000 has been made available for an additional 100,000 temporary houses and 50,000 trailers.

But the real fight has been in getting various factions of the building trades to work together. There is a desperate feud on between the old-style builders, the prefabricators and labor. Wyatt's greatest feat was in

WHITE HOPE OF HOUSING

BY UNA FRANKLIN and KYLE CRICHTON

WHATEVER Wilson Wyatt thought he was getting into when he trustingly wended his way from Louisville to Washington, by the middle of January this year he felt like a bottle top in the middle of a typhoon. Mr. Truman had made him Federal Housing Administrator and then installed him in offices in the Washington Building, with a few borrowed desks and a few men on loan from other departments. At this juncture the world fell on him from seven directions, and scenes followed that were not even approached during the criti-

cal days of the war. "More like the early days of NRA," they say in Washington, nodding reflectively.

Wyatt had hinted that he knew a little about the housing problem, and that seemed to furnish the cue for the avalanche. He was immediately besieged by every interested party known to the building industry. In no time whatever he was up to his ears in the merits of gypsum, lath, plumbing, prefabrication, rents, mortgages and beaverboard. He became the magnet for idea-dispensers, pressure groups, realty organizations and veter-

ans who had spent the night before in Lafayette Park and wanted to know what was required of a hero before he could safely count on a roof over his head.

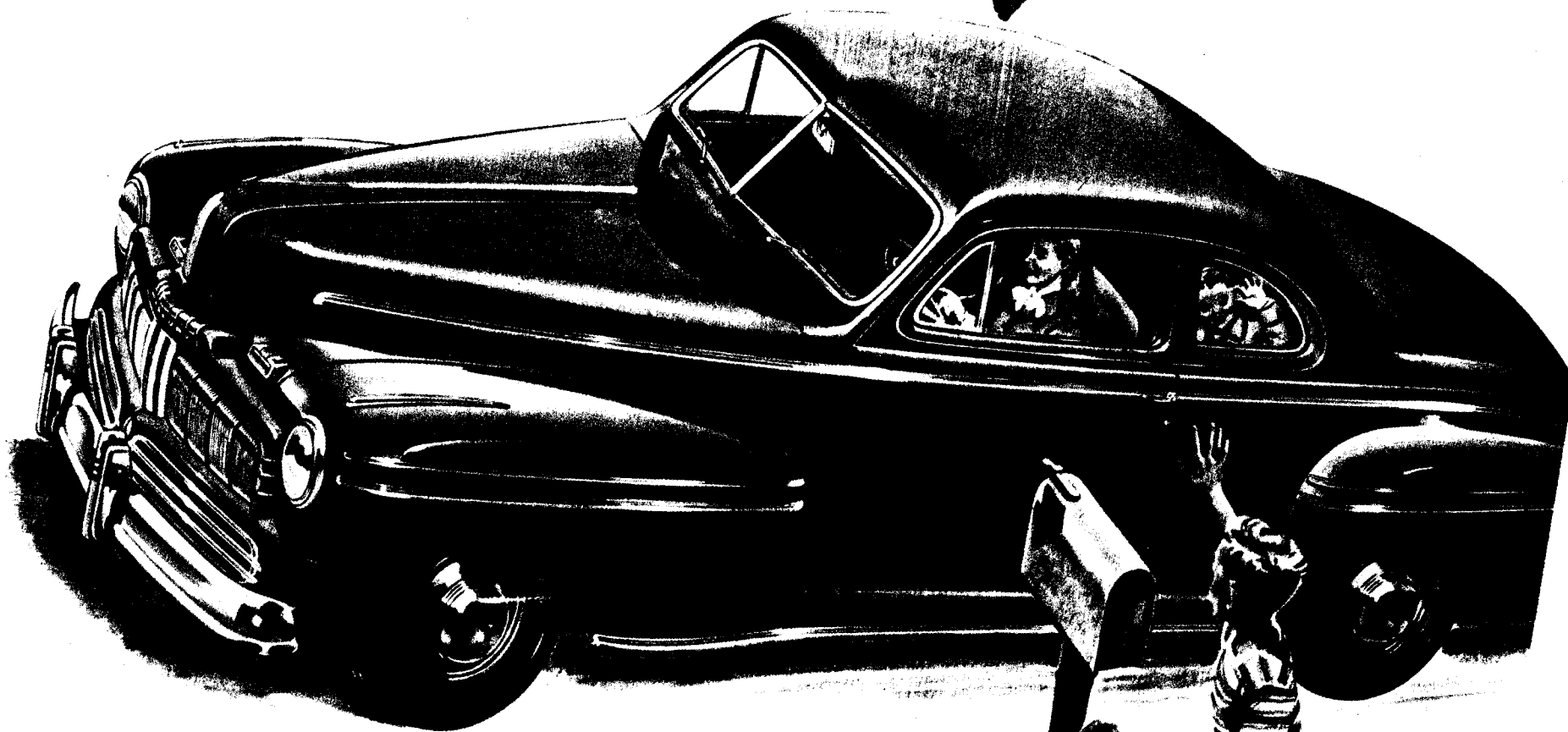
The scenes in his office were reminiscent of V-J night in San Francisco. How he ever did it in the confusion will probably never be established, but at the end of thirty-five days he had charted the Veterans' Emergency Housing Program and had become a minor legend in Washington. The first shouts of exultation over his program had scarcely died down when the House of Representa-

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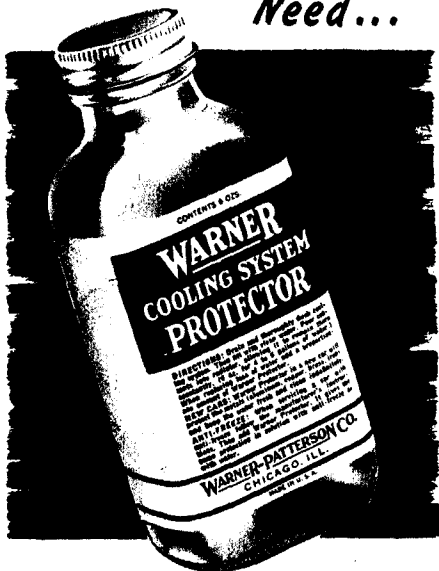
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getting the co-operation of both A.F. of L. and C.I.O. in revamping their apprenticeship regulations so that thousands of new workers could be trained. To aid in that, he wangled a highly important concession out of the Veterans' Administration whereby building apprentices will get G.I. educational benefits in their courses. By the middle of 1947, an additional 1,500,000 workers must be recruited and trained.

"We can do it," says Wyatt. "Not only will veterans be getting houses but they'll be getting jobs building houses."

During the first year, Wyatt estimates that 200,000 prefabricated houses and 650,000 conventional style homes and apartment units can be built. In 1947, he proposes 1,500,000 new homes of a permanent type, out of which 600,000 would be "prefabs." This means that in addition to carpenters and plasterers, there must be trained machinists and welders for the prefabricated units, who will use war production methods to fabricate magnesium and aluminum walls and housing parts. He predicts that factory workers will soon be busy at an assembly line producing plastic bathtubs and cabinet spaces. Home building time will be cut from weeks and months to hours and days. One proposed model, for instance, can be assembled by eight men in a week.

Down Louisville way they have a definite feeling that Wilson Wyatt can pull it off. He is now forty years old, and at thirty-five was elected mayor of Louisville. Midway in his term, the International City Managers Association said he was doing the outstanding municipal job in the United States. He went into that job with a mixed-up situation and managed to work it out. He was a Democratic mayor with a Republican board of aldermen. Wyatt invited the board to dinner in a body. Not a word of politics was spoken, but the group supported Wyatt during most of his term.

"The most brilliant young man who ever entered local politics in Kentucky," said the leader of the Republican opposition.

Wyatt is a tall thin young man who is something of a political genius. Most of this comes from his manner and his way of speaking. Like most citizens of Louisville, Wyatt has no distinctive Southern accent and his platform manner combines directness and simplicity in such a way that many experts consider him one of the finest American orators.

Wyatt was born and has spent most of his life in Louisville. His father started life as driver of a mule car, and his mother was a schoolteacher. He was valedictorian of his class in high school and had his sights fixed on taking law at Harvard, but his father saw no sense in it. If Wilson did study a profession, he wanted him to be a dentist.

The Start of a Law Practice

Eventually Wyatt prevailed on his father to let him enter the University of Louisville, where he spent only one year and then got a job with a shipping concern. That led to a still better thing with the Louisville & Nashville railroad, where he worked up to \$180 a month and was considered quite a promising fellow in the neighborhood. At nineteen, he began studying nights at the Jefferson School of Law. The first year after graduation he had equaled his L. & N. salary and two years later was making \$5,000 a year, enough to enable him to marry Ann Duncan, whose family, for three generations, had operated a prosperous wallpaper store in Louisville.

Wyatt went up fast after that and was soon a member of the biggest law firm in town. He helped organize the Young Men's Democratic League, which backed Al Smith against Herbert Hoover, and when Smith visited Louisville, Wyatt paraded down Fourth Street with him—Smith in the middle, Wyatt on one side and Alben Barkley on the other. All three of them wore brown derbies. Senator Barkley is still a close friend and political ally.

When Wyatt decided to run for mayor he gave up a law practice that was paying \$40,000 a year. The mayor's salary was \$15,000 a year, fixed by state constitution. He stuck grimly to the job during the war, with the

exception of a two months mission to North Africa for Henry Wallace, then head of the Board of Economic Warfare.

His political future was marked out for him at Chicago in July, 1944, at the fourth-term Democratic Convention. Wyatt is credited with having persuaded Senator Alben Barkley to go through with his original plan to nominate President Roosevelt. Barkley had been bitterly disappointed at being traded out of the Vice-Presidential running and had killed a speech which had already been mimeographed and distributed. This bit of diplomacy on the part of the young mayor made him highly acceptable in the eyes of Robert E. Hannegan, the Democratic National Chairman.

In November, 1945, Hannegan called Wyatt to Washington for a conference with President Truman at the White House. Truman wanted Wyatt to succeed L. Welch Pogue as chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board. Wyatt was lukewarm.

"I've had enough of public office," he said. "I have to make some money."

"I didn't want to be President, either," Mr. Truman reportedly said, "but I'm trying to be the best one I can. How can I be a good President if I can't get good men to help me?"

Wyatt promised to think it over but he had already made up his mind to turn it down. He had entered into a deal with two associates to start a new law firm in Louisville. The offices were picked out, and Wyatt was sorting out his correspondence one day at City Hall, preparatory to leaving his job as mayor. The phone rang and he started in on a conversation with a friend in New York. In the middle of it a secretary came in excitedly to say that there was an important call from Washington on the other wire.

"Let 'em wait or tell 'em I'll call back," said Wyatt and went on with his New York talk. When he finally got to the Washington call a voice came over the wire saying:

"This is Harry Truman."

"Oh, Mr. President," said Wyatt hastily, "I was just going to write you that I couldn't take the CAB job."

"Fine," said Mr. Truman. "I've got another

one for you. I'd appreciate it if you came up here to see me."

Wyatt went up, but with him he took the plans for his new offices and was working on them just before he walked over to the White House. He walked out of there with a new title—Federal Housing Expediter. A letter from the President, which told him briefly of the crisis he was directed to end, was his calling card, his card of identification, his only record of authority. It was only when his program had been outlined and ready for release that an Executive Order furnished him with any real authority.

Two Months of Baching It

Until Mrs. Wyatt arrived with their three children in early March, Wyatt lived with his assistant, Robert Sevey. There was hardly any necessity for them to have beds because they were rarely in them. Probably never in Washington history have men worked so long without sleep or relief. No matter how late they worked, Sevey was up next morning at 6:30 getting breakfast; Wyatt crawled out at 6:45 in time to eat and wash the dishes. Only once during a two months period did Wyatt stay home and that was done only at Sevey's demand.

"You can spend one Sunday at home," I told him," says Sevey. "I know you'll go on working but do it at home. I'm going to cook you a chicken."

Sevey even got Wyatt out of the house several times that day but they could only go a few blocks because it was necessary to hurry back to baste the chicken. According to Wyatt's friends his only hobby is work. He doesn't care for outdoor sports and rarely gets to the theater or a concert hall. His pace would be deadly for anybody else, but when seen during the height of the subsidy fight in Congress, he seemed quite composed and rested. His idea of an excellent lunch is a chicken sandwich and a chocolate malted milk served at his desk. He started the habit in Louisville years ago and seems to thrive on it.

The first two months in Washington were the honeymoon period. He has the reputation



"She followed me home, Ma. Can I keep her—huh?"

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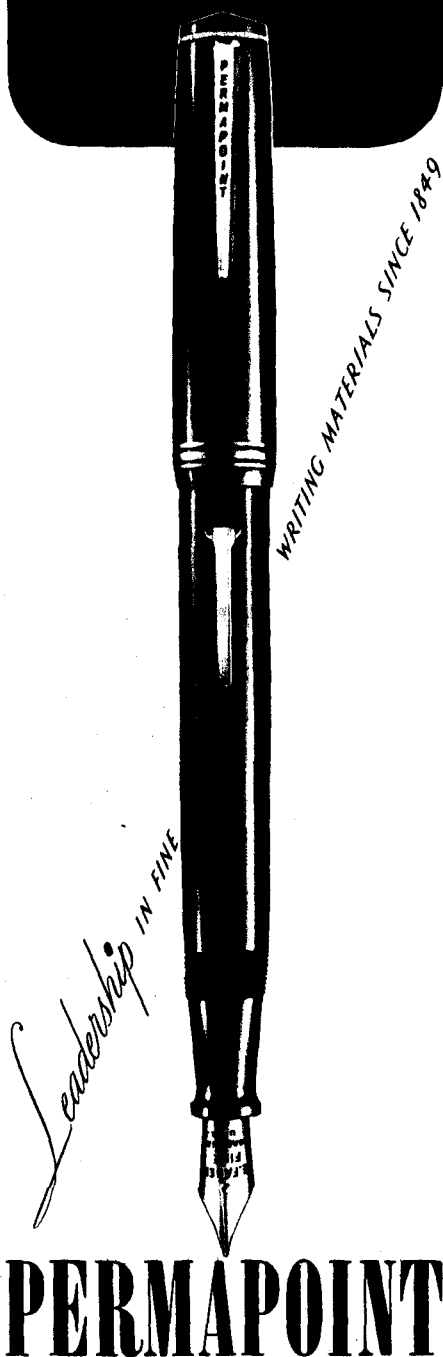


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there, as in Louisville, of outtalking the opposition. Very early in his career he adopted the direct approach, combined with patient and thorough explanation. He is a fast talker, usually speaks extemporaneously and has a confidential, conversational style which has helped him out of many ticklish situations. He is affable, never flustered, has no affectations and calls everybody by his first name right after the introduction.

Wyatt's first task was to win over his own government associates to his program. That meant he had to convince John D. Small, Civilian Production Administrator, and John W. Snyder, who as "Assistant President," can issue directives to a Cabinet officer, to the Army and Navy—and to Small. Small is an outspoken advocate of freedom from government controls, whereas the meat of Wyatt's program consisted of ceilings on the sale price of existing homes, plus the subsidy feature. Snyder, like Small, never fails to make it clear that he wants controls removed as fast as possible.

Wyatt had foreseen how the land lay, and the day before he was to sit in conference with Small and Snyder, he slipped over to the White House to talk over things with the President. Even if the President gave him power, the strong position of Snyder and Small meant a relentless battle if they were not convinced of the feasibility of the plan. During the conference with Snyder and Small, Wyatt's office suspended operations to wait for the decision. Many of the workers climbed up on desks and got their first sleep in weeks. By midafternoon Wyatt was back and they could tell immediately everything was all right. He broke into a grin.

"It's all right, boys," he said. "John won't stand in the way."

The President was for the Wyatt program from the start and is still strongly behind it. The next hurdle for Wyatt was the House Committee on Banking and Currency, which was holding hearings on the Patman Bill. When Wyatt's turn came to testify, he said frankly that it was too early to discuss the specific points of the program because it had not yet been presented to the President—and then talked for two hours, revealing what he could and stopping only when the House bell rang summoning the members to the floor.

Jesse Wolcott, Republican minority leader in the committee, apparently guaranteed the success of the Wyatt program by saying he was in favor of it and would back it on the floor. The capacity crowd, largest since the Bretton Woods hearings, applauded when Wyatt finished and members of both parties complimented him on his testimony.

Convincing a Hostile Audience

Another triumph for Wyatt came before the National Association of Home Builders, meeting in Chicago. They had invited him to speak at their banquet but before he could get there a resolution had been passed disapproving the Patman Bill and the Wyatt proposals and calling his plan "Socialistic." When he rose to speak at the banquet he faced a hostile audience. After an hour and a half of speech and question period, the banqueters rose in a body and gave him an ovation. Next day, the resolution was withdrawn.

"If you gentlemen are against this program, then you don't understand it," Wyatt said. "It's my fault for not making it clear."

He made it so plain that he won them over. This was a good omen and much weight was put on the promise of support given by Representative Wolcott. The press was almost unanimously in favor of the Wyatt program and it looked as if for once a measure was going to get support from both political parties.

However, there were clouds no larger than a hand on the horizon. The Producers Council, an association of manufacturers of building materials, raised a mighty howl over the subsidy feature. The New York Building Congress protested the "arbitrary" rules which would limit most of the building this year to homes costing \$6,000 or less. The National Association of Real Estate Boards was grievously pained by and loudly opposed to a ceiling on sale prices of existing dwellings.

The first blow came when the House struck out the provision for placing ceilings on sale

prices of present homes. The next came when the \$600,000,000 subsidy clause was decisively beaten by the usual conservative coalition of Republicans and Southern Democrats, aided by the absence of 182 sorely needed Democrats on the day of voting.

It was a deadly blow and Wyatt immediately announced that there would be no chance for his full program under such conditions. President Truman called the ceiling prices and the subsidy the "heart of the program." Democrat leaders under the urging of the President and Party Chairman Hannegan had made a strenuous effort to get their members into line. It failed and the only hope was that the Senate would reverse the House attitude, throwing the dispute into conference between the houses and bringing out a compromise that would save the essence of the Wyatt proposals.

The Case for Subsidies

"There's nothing mysterious about subsidies; they are merely a way of keeping down general price rises and preventing inflation," Wyatt explained. "Say we have ten factories turning out a certain material. They don't give us enough and we look around for ten more to make up the slack. We can either expand the existing factories or encourage idle plants to venture into this field. Perhaps they can't do it at present ceiling prices and still make money."

Instead of raising all prices to give these few a fair break, we give them a subsidy to make up the difference. What we're trying to do is give the veteran a break. He won't get it if we build houses so expensively that he can't afford to buy them."

The Patman Bill was finally passed through the House with the following provisions intact:

1. An increase by \$1,000,000,000 in the government authority to insure home mortgage loans. Thus a home could be bought with a small down payment and the government would protect the mortgagor for the remainder.
2. Continuation until June 30, 1947, of priorities and authority for channeling scarce materials into homes.
3. Preference for veterans in the purchase or rental of new houses.
4. Broad authority for Wyatt to issue directives to other government agencies.
5. Authority for Wyatt to stop or curb the export of lumber as long as scarcities exist in this country.

Shortly after this abbreviated bill was passed, Wyatt issued what were called "drastic and far-reaching" orders curbing all nonessential construction. They were particularly severe on buildings meant for amusement purposes—movies, bars, restaurants and the like. Included were thousands of business structures now in the blueprint stage. These will be refused materials unless they can show that the buildings are absolutely essential. Everything, in short, is going into homes for veterans, and Wyatt means to stick to that.

And that was how affairs stood when the Senate took over consideration of the Patman Bill. The Veterans' Emergency Housing Program is not only the biggest job Wyatt ever undertook but it is the biggest home-building program in the history of the world. If it succeeds, it will not only furnish homes for the veterans but it may revolutionize the building industry.

The only way we can build in quantity is by the assembly-line method. That means prefabrication.

The first fear of prefabrication among the workers seems to have evaporated under the realization that for many years to come we will be fighting desperately to catch up on housing.

Long before Wyatt became its administrator, the National Housing Agency stated that at least 1,250,000 homes must be built every year for 10 years just to stay as well housed as we are now.

We have passed through ten years of depression during which there was an excess of people who needed homes compared to the number of homes built. Following that, we had four years when nothing was built but war housing.

Most of the first prefabricated houses will contain three and four rooms. As families become larger and more prosperous they will be in the market for better homes and, most likely, homes built in the old conventional fashion.

This will add to the total of homes that the market can stand in future years. There should be no slump in the building trades for decades.

The earliest prefabricated houses were box-like, thinly partitioned and as alike as peas in a pod. The prefab that is coming, Wyatt predicts, can be a Spanish bungalow, a Swedish-type modern, a ranch house or a two-story job of Colonial design. But the prefabricated units that are now in the experimental stage will emphasize the functional in housing design.

Andrew Jackson Higgins of New Orleans has announced that he hopes to build plastic prefabricated houses to sell at such a low price that even a poor man can live like a king.

Working with Fritz Burns of Los Angeles, Henry Kaiser has entered the prefab field with a two-bedroom, one-story, U-shaped, stone-and-plywood structure equipped with every known electronic and mechanical gadget.

This prefab has "packaged unit" bathrooms and kitchens, die-stamped out of metal for mass production.

The most experimental project, however, is located in Wichita, Kansas. There the Beechcraft Company is extremely chary with details about the Dymaxion, a circular home built of metals and plastics.

The Dymaxion has a domed roof in which is set a circulating air system for cooling in summer. A strip of Plexiglas around the house serves as window space.

Something New in Fuel Bills

The heating unit is said to require only about \$2 worth of fuel a month. The house includes two bedrooms and two baths. Aluminum is substituted for woodwork and wood construction, and the floor is made of rubber composition. The bathtubs are covered with plastic "skin."

What will happen to the full Wyatt program is in the hands of Congress. The delay in getting started has already cut something off the original estimate, and the loss of the subsidy provision will cut it down even more, but the chances of Wyatt giving up in disgust are extremely remote.

His wife is said to be even more public-spirited than Wyatt himself, which is saying a great deal, and she not only agreed to his giving up his comfortable \$50,000-a-year existence in Louisville but encouraged it.

"Wilson hasn't exactly burned his bridges behind him," said a Louisville friend, "but he's sold his home in Louisville, which is the next best thing. That boy doesn't give up easy. You're going to be seeing Wilson up there for a long time."

THE END

KNOW YE BY THESE PRESENTS

For Easter, Mamma gets a suit,
A blouse, a bag, and shoes, to boot,
And Snooks gets patent-leather slippers,
A pleated skirt and coat with zippers.
Young Bill acquires new flannel pants,
And Sister, in a state of trance,
Achieves an evening frock with frills,
But all Pop gets is just plain bills,
So, shelling out his hard-earned money,
He knows who is the Easter bunny.

—MARGARET FISHBACK



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Continued from page 19

White House instead of at the dinner as originally planned.

The ceremony in the White House itself more particularly calls attention to the role of Congress in our democratic lives. In recent years the responsibility, and with it some of the power for the conduct of the nation's affairs, has shifted increasingly from the legislative to the executive branch of our government.

The legislative department is the only one which, most broadly and directly, is the people's personal instrument of government. In the executive department, only the President and the Vice-President are elected by the people. None is elected in the federal judiciary. Yet on these three pillars, legislative, executive and judiciary, the house of our republic stands. A weakness in any pillar is dangerous. Clearly, however, the disintegration of the legislative pillar would mean disaster.

According to Macaulay, "Democracy is all sail and no rudder." We have disproved that.

History, ancient and modern, warns of the dangers to popular government of allowing legislatures to fall into disrepute and disuse. Eventually they die. Lord Bryce said, "Democracy is founded on the rule of the majority." The majority, however, sometimes can be wrong. The story of the rise of police states in Europe has been that of the progressive paralysis and atrophy of parliaments. They are as essential to democratic vitality as freedom of thought and speech.

Wars are particularly critical periods in the lives of parliaments. These are deliberative bodies and they must ponder and argue. They are consequently slow to decide. But the endless emergencies of battle demand quick decisions. And even in the best democracies, such as ours, the tendency in wartime is to yield the deliberative functions of the Congress to the executive arm of government out of the sheer necessity of getting things done.

Strong Presidents, too, exert a repressive influence on the legislative side of government even in peacetime. They are often impatient with the delays occasioned by the legislators' compulsion to debate the Chief Executive's views on any matter, whether an appropriation for the construction of a federal power project, or a loan to a foreign power is involved. And because a strong President is usually also a popular one, the mood is to side with the Chief Executive and against "the obstructionists" in Congress.

For fourteen years the nation has moved from one domestic crisis into another and finally into the greatest crisis of all—war. It had a strong and popular President. All of the forces which tend to restrict the functions and lower the prestige of Congress operated, therefore, at maximum pressure.

When those forces were mitigated with the untimely death of the dominating personality in the White House and the premature arrival of peace, the government was plunged into

internal and international political and economic crises no less urgent than those of war. Again the White House and its occupant, the executive rather than the legislative department of government, held the eyes of the voters.

"What will the President do now?" people asked, and not: "How will Congress solve this problem?"

It was to attempt to correct this imbalance that Collier's last year asked a group of distinguished Americans to select the senator and the representative who had done most to restore the prestige and functions of Congress.

The committee had the unstinted co-operation of authoritative Washington newspapermen, leading editors throughout the country and of professors, educators and others intimately concerned with the state of the Union and the world. For many months Mr. Young and his associates examined, weighed and sifted the public statements, legislative acts and the achievements and failures of the members of both houses of Congress. Polls were taken privately among trained Washington correspondents who daily report the activities of the Senate and the House.

The Criteria of Appraisal

The candidates' devotion to national interests as opposed to personal ambitions, their intellectual capacities and integrity, political courage, understanding of issues, effectiveness as legislators, diligence, actual achievements and public influence were assiduously scrutinized.

The gauges and standards employed by the fourteen members of the Awards Committee in measuring the candidates' stature were exacting. They looked for those specific qualities, tangible capacities and broad attitudes which lift men from the level of politician to that of statesman.

Voting records, for instance, were carefully assessed. Due allowance was made for those political exigencies which sometimes impel a congressman to vote "Yea" on a bill which he has been quietly working to disembowel, or to vote "Nay" in order to have a bill re-committed for improvement and passage. Those senators and representatives who, neither in the eyes of their colleagues nor the judgment of the jury, had national stature were quickly eliminated.

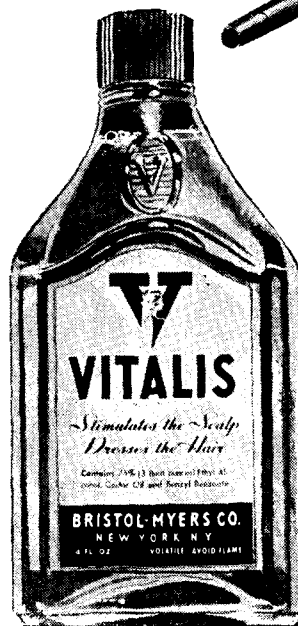
To merit consideration, the candidate for an award had to know what was going on in his country and abroad, to comprehend the evolutionary and revolutionary political and economic forces at work and to show definite signs of wanting to function as a delegate of the American people rather than as a political hack. The men ultimately chosen had in the opinion of the committee the brains and imagination to look forward instead of backward, to analyze the specific

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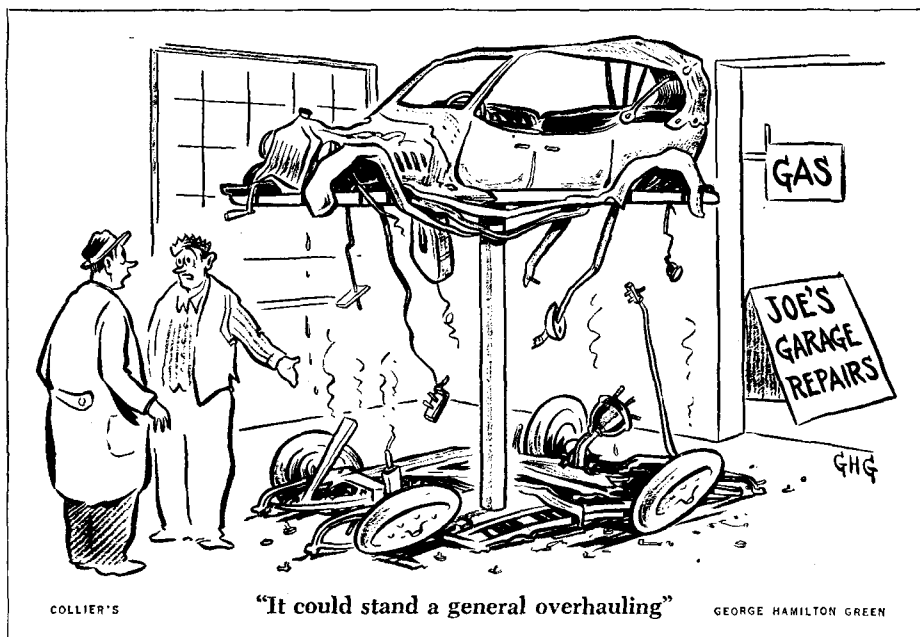
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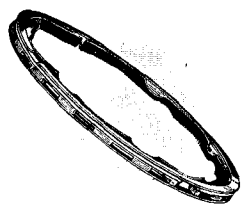
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problems of the moment and to be able to synthesize their findings into a sensible democratic pattern. The Awards Committee looked for Alexander Hamiltons and Tom Jeffersons.

"To the people (of Hamilton's and Jefferson's era)," said the late President Roosevelt at a Jackson Day dinner in 1940, "it mattered on the whole very little what party label American statesmen bore or what mistakes they made in the smaller things so long as they did the big job that their times demanded."

The candidates for the Collier's Awards were so measured. In the Senate, in the fateful year of 1945, the "big job" was undoubtedly in the field of foreign relations. Here the Senate constitutionally shares with the President and his Secretary of State the responsibility for peaceful and profitable political and commercial relations with other countries. In the conduct of foreign affairs, perhaps more than in any other area, the Senate had yielded most ground to the executive department, and its "advice and consent," especially in wartime, had been sought increasingly less.

Here, then, was a two-fold task: to prevent, as happened in 1918, America's withdrawal from the world community and to restore to the Upper House its Constitutional prerogatives in actual practice. As peace approached and with it an end to those patriotic compulsions to conformism which during the war had provided bipartisan support to the policies of the executive branch, the possibility arose of a repetition of 1918. Vandenberg saw the dangers as he saw, also, the necessity for the Senate's reassertion of its powers.

It was largely due to his influence, exerted both as a member of the Senate's Committee on Foreign Relations and in his speeches, that a purely partisan approach to foreign affairs was avoided. A split on party lines in the Senate would have meant a blow to the Administration's internationalist program. Republicans, anxious to discredit the Administration and so take a step toward power themselves, might easily have been tempted into withdrawing support from Roosevelt's and subsequently President Truman's program for American participation in a United Nations Organization for the maintenance of world peace.

But in the decisive amount, in those pre-atomic days when the desirability of world unity was even less clear than now, Vandenberg rose at the San Francisco Conference to say: "In my opinion our intelligent American self-interest indispensably requires our loyal co-operation in the great adventure to stop World War III before it starts."

And in the Senate, after the Conference, he said: "America has everything to gain

and nothing to lose by giving it (the Charter of the United Nations) support; it has everything to lose and nothing to gain by declining."

He pleaded with Republicans and Democrats to come out of the "valley of the shadow of two wars" and to support the ratification of the United Nations Charter as an alternative to "physical and moral chaos in many weary places of the earth." Republican colleagues, some of whom had been seemingly unregenerate isolationists, rallied to him, wrung his hand and voted his way. America joined the United Nations Organization.

With equal sincerity he fought for Lend-Lease, for the continuance of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and for other means to ensure a democratic victory and peace. Later he was foremost among those to deplore the scuttling of many of the idealistic objectives of the Atlantic Charter and in reminding Russia that there can be "no dark corners in an atom age—suppression of news inevitably invites the suspicion that behind the iron curtain of secrecy there is suppression of human rights."

Wartime Problems of the House

The "big job" in the House was, unquestionably, to prevent that body from becoming the mere rubber stamp of the executive branch, to maintain its functions as the principal guardian of public funds, and to legislate judiciously on innumerable issues affecting the general welfare. Here, more noticeably than in the Senate, there was need to raise the standards of American statesmanship. At the same time the difficulties militating against its efficient operation as a legislative body, apparent for years before the war, had grown enormously.

The members of the House had to cope with tax bills, innumerable wartime emergency appropriations, the financing of government grown to gargantuan dimensions in the war years and the economic terrors inherent in the shift from wartime to peacetime production. Inflation hovered over the land like an evil genie, and while the Senate shared the responsibility for preventing the wrecking of our national economy, the House shouldered the greater burden, for it, in the last analysis, held the purse strings. Whatever measures required the heavy expenditure of taxpayers' money to achieve economic stability through subsidies, federal support of housing, public works, or for relief to jobless and homeless returning veterans were its particular although not exclusive province.

Even when he was a freshman member of the House, Monroney showed a profound understanding of the duties and functions of a representative of the people. His horizons lay

WELCOME HOME!

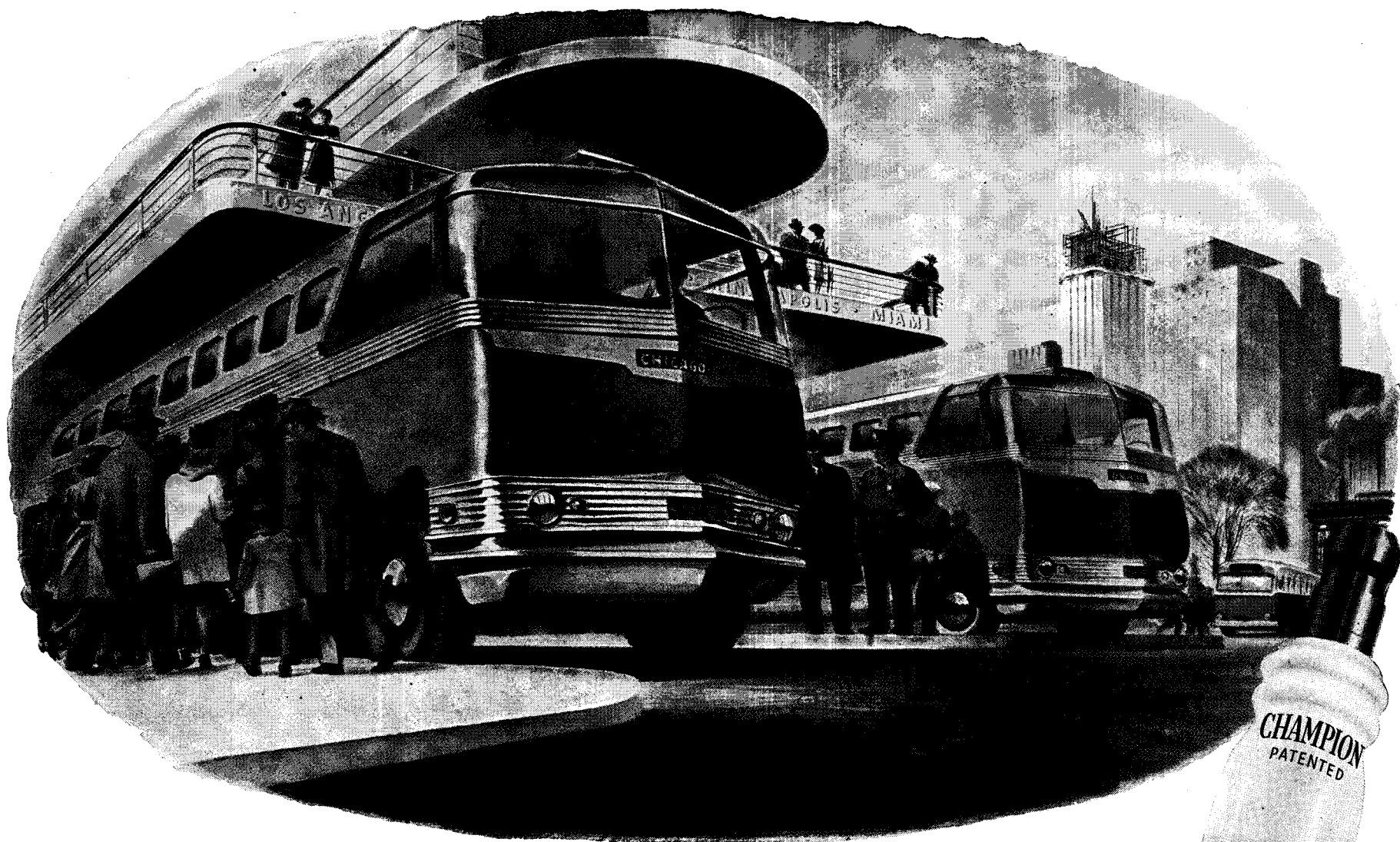
by GREGORY D'ALESSIO



"Thirty-eight combat missions without a scratch, then his wife sent him out to buy some nylons"

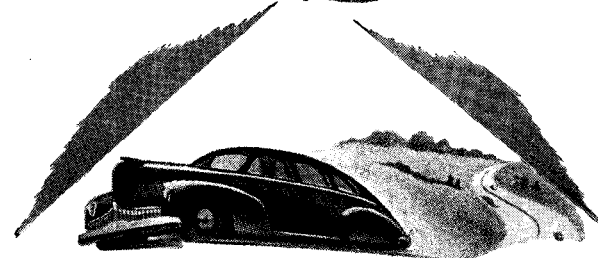
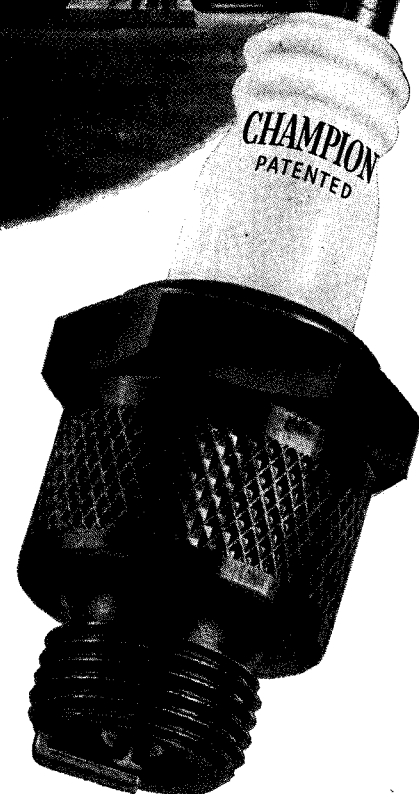
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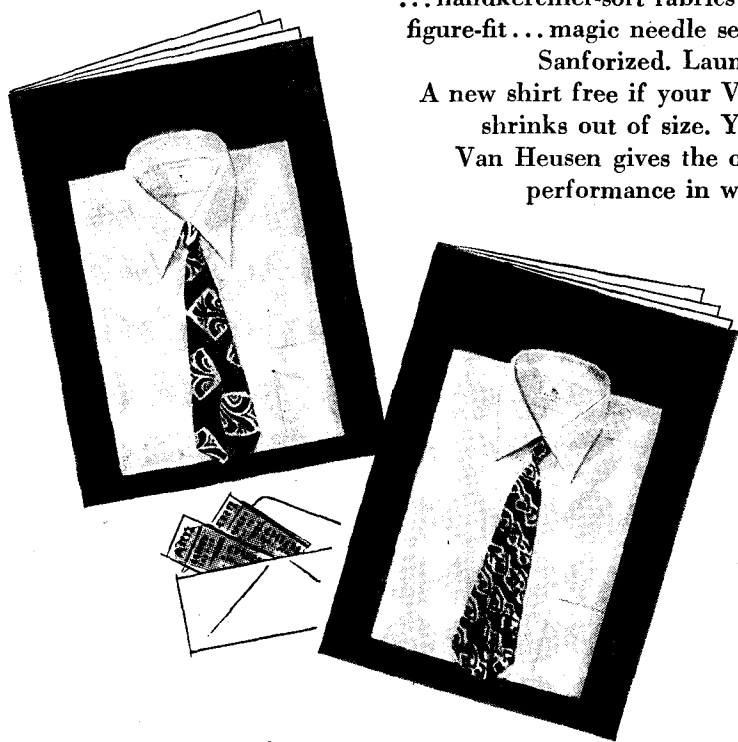
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beyond the dimensions of the House itself. It was not enough, he saw, to be a good congressman in the old political sense of the term, which meant merely to obtain the requisite number of federal appointments for his constituents, and the culverts and bridges they desired for their communities.

In 1939 he saw the inevitability of America's entry into the war. He defied a then popular trend and voted for the fortification of Guam. He spent the summer of 1943 barnstorming on behalf of a House resolution in the interest of the erection of permanent peace machinery. It was obvious from the start that Monroney was something new in representatives.

Favored the Baruch Plan

In 1941 he disclosed his interest in and understanding of domestic economic affairs. With Representative Albert Gore, of Tennessee, he tried to enact Bernard M. Baruch's price-control plan which would have put a ceiling over all prices and wages. Inflation was a toddler in diapers then but already Monroney saw what it might become. He has since played a strong hand in fashioning ways and means of preventing inflation from wrecking our economic system.

Monroney fostered legislation designed to prevent abuses in restraint of trade by trade unions and was the author of the anti-racketeering bill to bring the activities of delinquent unions under the jurisdiction of the antitrust division of the Department of Justice.

But it was in recognition of the organizational and operational deficiencies of Congress that Monroney really distinguished himself. He not only saw what was wrong, but was instrumental in devising correctives which are being studied by the Joint Committee on the Reorganization of Congress.

Monroney had not been long in Congress when he became aware of the low state of the Lower House. While the Constitution divided the legislative and executive branches of government, it had not intended these to go their separate ways and often in opposite directions. The executive branch had thickened with 3,000,000 employees and the political power they represented. Yet, only two of them, the President and the Vice-President, were elected representatives of the people. By contrast, the Congress had withered.

Moreover, Monroney discovered that a gulf deeper than party prejudices or partisan ambitions separated the executive from the legislative branch. The executive side had grown, bureau on bureau and department on department, administered the laws of Congress but acted independently of Congress. They disbursed funds without Congressional supervi-

sion. Obviously, said Monroney, these should be made accountable to the general accounting office.

Monroney found a "shocking lack" of adequate Congressional fact-finding services. He saw congressmen working without skilled help and dependent on the mimeographed handouts from government bureaus, the newspapers and, worse still, the mimeographed handouts of professional lobbyists for the basic information upon which to make legislative decisions.

It is Monroney's hope that he and his colleagues in both Houses will eventually obtain legislation which will provide senators and representatives with well-paid administrative assistants who can assume the nonlegislative duties now cluttering legislators' desks. He hopes, too, that the salaries of the members of Congress will be raised to a level which will attract intelligent, ambitious young men who ordinarily shun government for business and the professions. He hopes, in short, to make of government an honorable career for honorable men.

A Thought from Edmund Burke

Monroney hopes to raise the sights of lawgivers to his standards eloquently described by Edmund Burke in his reflections on the nature of statesmanship:

"The true lawgiver ought to have a heart full of sensibility. He ought to love and respect his kind, and to fear himself. It may be allowed to his temperament to catch his ultimate object with an intuitive glance; but his movements toward it ought to be deliberate. Political arrangement, as it is a work for social ends, is to be only wrought by social means. There, mind must conspire with mind... (to the end that)... we compensate, we reconcile, we balance."

In the achievement of a Congress "streamlined" to meet the exigencies of our new and complex society such as Monroney suggests lies America's hope for a new era in government. It was in recognition of the magnitude of Monroney's dream that he was given one of the Collier's Awards.

There are other men, many others, in both the Senate and the House who have worked and will continue to work for good government, by which is meant a government more clearly responsive to the general and specific will of the people. The choice of the winners this year is, of course, no belittlement of those who have not been chosen.

Year after year will bring new problems and with them new men and new leaders of men. Members of the Congress who were relatively obscure in 1945 may be the men of the front pages—and of the Collier's Awards—this year, or the next.

THE END

Any Week

Continued from page 4

little more prompt in forwarding said premiums which he hasn't paid since October, 1944. We knew you'd like to hear this refutation of the disturbing charge that our government was going efficient.

AND Mr. Rudolph G. Bingle, of Somewhere in West Alabama, was having a "bonemelter" (popular local drink similar to a Mississippi "crashlanding") with a gentleman named Bart Topstone. Mr. Topstone had come down from a hill farm to work in a munitions plant and didn't aim to go back. "Yep," said Mr. Topstone, "complete city broke I am. Ain't goin' back to no hills and use a mule's tail for a compass no more." However Mr. Topstone proposed to go back for a week-end visit and take his brother a present. "Goin' down to the store and buy him a mess of turnip greens. He says they taste better out of a paper bag."

FROM Cleveland, Montana, we learn from Mr. Ben Hasby that a ranch foreman and his wife decided in 1940 to separate. She turned the three small children over to her parents and went her way. Not so long ago the foreman, hearing that the kids weren't happy,

asked the court to put them in an institution at his expense. The court, looking into it, found that the mother had married again without the formality of a divorce. The foreman was so notified by the county attorney. So the foreman wrote to the county attorney: "What the hell you taking up my time for? Give the little old gal a divorce and send me the bill. If she committed bigamy like you say, ain't you attorneys and cops paid good money to look after such things? You can send me the bill for that, too. Me, I'm too busy changing into my spring underwear."

AND a letter from a lady who is suing for divorce. Seems her husband came home a little drunk, sat on a window sill, demanded his dinner. Every minute or so he asked: "Dinner ready yet?" Presently he leaned back too far, fell out and landed unhurt on the ground ten feet below. She went right on cooking as if nothing had happened. He came back, sat on the same window sill, asked whether it was ready yet. She said no. Then he said: "Hell, what you been doing while I was away?" Then she got mad. . . .

W. D.

Collier's for April 20, 1946

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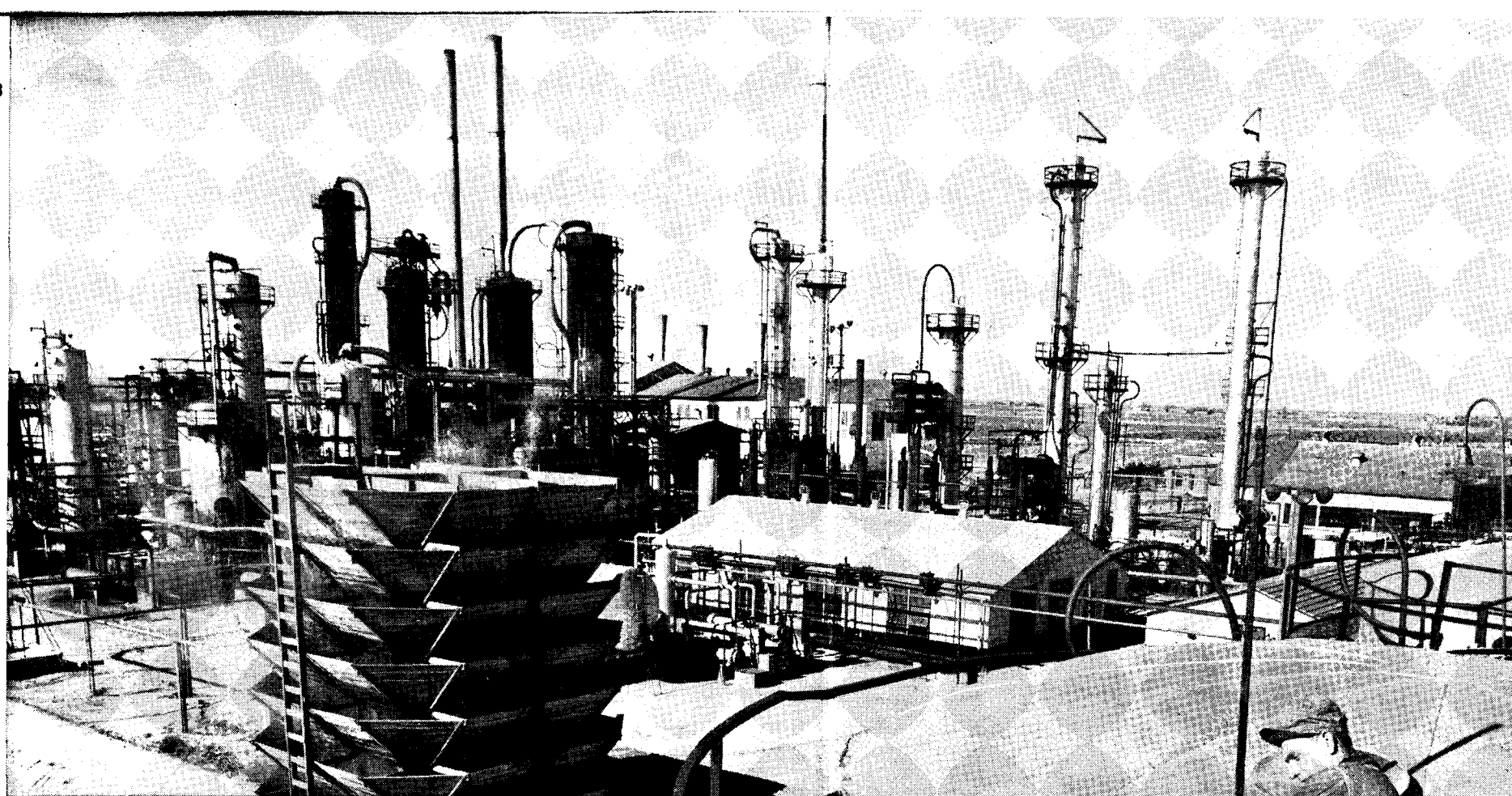
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NICKELS BUILT THE FACTORIES

BY BERTRAM B. FOWLER



WURTS BROTHERS

The U.S. Co-operative Movement, which was started with worn nickels in 1921, has mushroomed into scores of industries from coast to coast. Now it talks in millions with the biggest of Big Business

THE year 1943 saw a vast number of astronomical figures kicked around and some high-powered deals made. But, from a long-range standpoint, it is unlikely that any bigger deal was made than the one negotiated on a day in July when a group of consumers, mostly farmers, handed over their check for about five million dollars and proceeded to take possession of the big Globe Refinery at McPherson, Kansas.

That was just one of a series of deals in which these farmers took over twelve refineries and went on the hunt for more. The ink was scarcely dry on the check before the farmers were writing more checks to pay for pipe lines, oil wells and oil-producing property.

Back of these deals is the story of ordinary farmers, who, with very little help from big corporations, went into business the co-operative way and successfully competed with some of the biggest and smartest men in industry. While some sections of Big Business were trying to throw obstacles in their path, these farmers resolutely pyramided hard-earned nickels into the sort of money that buys big refineries and oil fields. What's more, during the process, they built filling stations across the breadth of the United States, a network of stores, wholesales, feed and flour mills, fertilizer factories, coal and lumber yards, sawmills, hatcheries, seed plants, insurance companies, even an odd coal mine or two.

The notable fact is that they started it all under their own power and with their own

money, at a time when money wasn't plentiful in the pockets of any of them. Moreover, the business brains that have so successfully piloted them for the most part have come up from the ranks of the farmers.

The technique they used was born one hundred years ago, when a group of poverty-stricken weavers in Rochdale, England, had the vision and temerity to come up with a set of rules for an entirely new method of doing business.

The Rochdale weavers had only a few dollars, saved penny by penny, with which they started a new kind of store; a store that was a distributing center for the quantity purchases that their pooled funds enabled them to buy at a saving. They laid down a set of rules that no one in the Co-operative Movement has been able to improve in one hundred years of trying. They were simple rules, but they laid the groundwork for one of the most revolutionary developments in economic history.

Briefly, here are those rules: Any member could buy as many five-dollar shares as he wanted. The shares collected interest, and that's all. They did not collect a percentage of the savings made by the store. The sole purpose of the shares was to provide working capital. No matter how many shares a member owned, he had only one vote in the management of the store. Goods would be retailed to consumers at prevailing market prices on a spot-cash basis. Any savings at the end of the year would be given back to the consumer members in proportion, not to the amount of stock they owned, but to the amount they had spent at the store. In other words, profits as such were wiped out. Among the rules laid down was the one that no consumer could be denied admittance to the society because of race, creed or color. Thus, the Rochdale weavers outlined their brand of economic democracy.

The next seventy-five years saw the Consumer Co-operative idea unostentatiously spread over across the world. Before the coming of Hitler, Europe was blanketed with Co-

ops. Co-ops enjoy a strong position in the retail trade of England. Their factories and mills are everywhere and the Co-op banking business is second only to the Bank of England.

The Scandinavian countries took the Co-operative idea over and remade their national economies. Denmark and Finland were transformed by it. Sweden used it to break, one by one, the monopolies that governed prices in that country. Sweden never had an anti-trust law. Now they don't need one.

The end of the first World War found the Consumer Co-operative Movement in a puny state in America. About the only Co-ops in existence here were the tiny ones operated by foreign-language groups that had brought the idea over with them from Europe.

Co-op Comes to the Rescue

But the idea began to attract the attention of the Middle Western farmers during the depression. In 1921 a group of farmers—in Cottonwood, Minnesota—opened the first Co-op filling station in the United States. They had decided to see if they could save money by pooling their buying ability. They did. The idea caught on and the Co-op gasoline pumps began their march across the country. Today you can drive from Pennsylvania to the Pacific Coast on Co-op gasoline and oil.

The step from retailing to wholesaling was natural and inevitable. The oil companies, feeling the effect of the Co-ops on their business, unwittingly speeded up their expansion. They thought they could kill the Co-ops by cutting off their wholesale supply. But they failed to figure on the toughness and ingenuity of the Middle Western farmers; all they succeeded in doing was driving the farmers to form their own wholesales.

In 1926 a handful of retail gas Co-ops assembled in Minneapolis and formed the first of these—the Midland Co-operative Wholesale. To do this they abided by the same technique used in forming their retails.

The pyramiding of hard-earned nickels by Middle Western farmers bought this Kansas oil refinery

Except in this instance each individual retail Co-op became one member in the Co-op wholesale; a member having one or more votes in ratio to the number of consumer members it represented. But the retail Co-ops had no reserve funds to provide working capital for their wholesale. So they went into business by electing a manager who carried his office under his hat. For initial operating capital, the retail Co-ops merely paid for carlots of oil in advance, and the agent-manager went out and found them.

In 1944 that same wholesale, with a huge plant in Minneapolis, bought an enormous warehouse for postwar expansion. It not only owns its own million-dollar refinery, but also has an interest in the Globe Refinery at McPherson.

But its business is not confined to oil; along with other wholesales, it is moving far into the feed and fertilizer fields, machinery deals, lumberyards and stores. It has built its no-money beginning into millions of dollars of assets.

But the group in Kansas City provides one of the most unusual stories of Co-op development. In 1929 a small Co-op wholesale was operating in that city. It was worth a few thousand dollars and doing business in a two-car garage. It bought its lubricating oil from a private company just up the street. The private company, proud of its new \$250,000 plant, refused to sell the Co-op wholesale any more lubricating oil on the grounds that its business was too small to bother with.

Six years later the Co-op bought that plant at a bankruptcy sale and moved in. Its officers were just a little puffed up by their victory and the expansion it symbolized. But in a few years, even that building began

(Continued on page 58)

Collier's for April 20, 1946