

Collier's
EDITORIAL



DONALD F. MOSS

Collier's believes...

This Is Worth Fighting For

COLLIER'S thinks intelligent, public-spirited citizens should support the recommendations of the Hoover Commission for the reorganization of the federal government.

Enough of the petty private interests are opposing it. It would be tragic to lose the great gains in governmental efficiency and economy that are now within our grasp.

Taxes are due to go up. The federal tax collector will try to take some 45 billion dollars. This sum is about as large as the national income of some 15 or 16 years ago. Surely anything that can be done should be done to avoid wasteful expenditures of the taxpayers' money.

Thanks to Herbert Hoover and the reorganization commission he has headed, we have the best opportunity we have ever had to simplify and make more efficient our federal government. Thanks also to President Truman, who has supported Mr. Hoover and his commission when it needed help.

This is a remarkable partnership: the President of the United States and the only living ex-President, combined with a Joint Congressional Commission to improve the effectiveness of the governmental organization.

Mr. Hoover and the commission—of which Dean Acheson, now Secretary of State, was vice-chairman—assembled task forces of about 300 citizens to make practical studies for improve-

ment of the executive branches of the government. The structure of the government has been studied and considered more thoroughly and more constructively than at any other time in our history.

The opportunities for greater efficiency and larger economy are remarkable. The truth is that now nobody in the government, certainly not the Congress, knows or can know the actual costs of many of the great public enterprises.

Because of the way in which the government has been built up bit by bit with a law one year and an amendment the next, nobody has a comprehensive picture of what he is doing. A reservoir that may eventually cost \$140,000,000 starts off as a \$9,000,000 enterprise. Authority is so divided between bureaus and departments that no official gets the opportunity to see clearly and as a whole the project to which he may be assigned.

The Post Office Department, for example, is the product of such divided legislation. The ablest executive in the world—and the present Postmaster General is counted an able executive—has trouble guessing his way through his problems. Yet the Postmaster General, because of the laws under which he operates, must guess.

The opposition to change comes from the bureaus and those who have vested interests. The Army Engineers, for instance, is a public works agency largely employed in river and harbor improvement. The Hoover Commission suggested

that the civilian responsibility of the Army Engineers be transferred to a public works agency.

Congress has subsequently been flooded with telegrams from businessmen protesting any revision. Such protests could have been inspired by contractors who have river and harbor contracts. The Army Engineers are a fine body of technically trained men. Like most human beings they resist change.

Obviously, however, the public interest ought not to be subordinated to the reluctance of men in bureaus to have their organizations made more effective and less costly.

Congress and President Truman need the help of an alert and an aroused public opinion if these petty pressures are to be resisted. We can't expect Congress to offend an active pressure group if the general public is apathetic.

The country owes a debt of gratitude to Herbert Hoover, who has been performing what he calls his last public service. Mr. Hoover has been working ten, twelve, sometimes eighteen hours a day to get this work done. It is a great achievement for a man who will be seventy-five years old on August 10th.

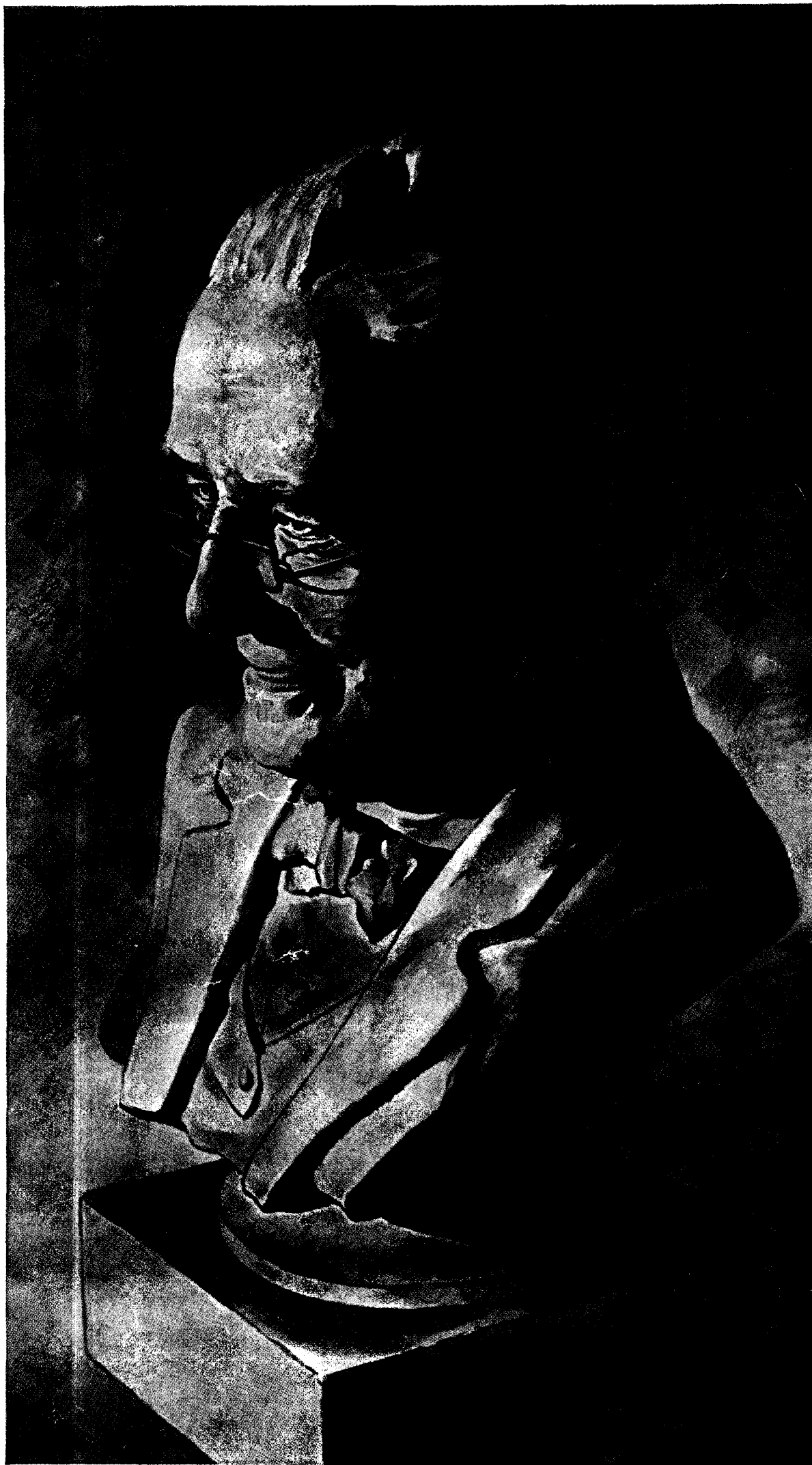
The bipartisan support made possible by the interest shown by the President in this project has been of great benefit to the public interest. If we ourselves, the voters, do as well, our government may be made more useful at less cost. That is a goal worth reaching. . . . W. L. C.

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