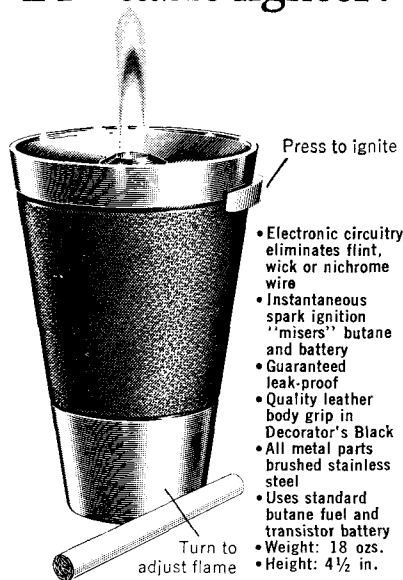


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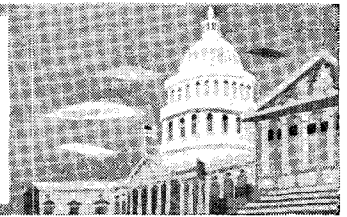
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## State of Affairs



### Throwing a Party



John Walker

PRESIDENT KENNEDY that night did not mean to go to the unveiling of the newly acquired *La Liseuse* by Fragonard at the National Gallery, but having come as an unexpected guest to a dinner party at a friend's house whose destination after dinner was the National Gallery, he insisted that there should be no change in the program. "Jackie," he said, "would like me to go and see the painting." When we returned from the gallery that night to our host's house, the President, who did not pretend to be an art connoisseur, said: "It makes an enormous difference when you go through a gallery if you have somebody who knows how to explain it all."

The man who turned that evening for him from duty to pleasure was John Walker, the director of the gallery. I was not surprised. Johnnie Walker is not only an expert and a connoisseur, but a marvelous conversationalist. There are fewer and fewer of them these days. But at his house (as at Alice Longworth's, Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss's, the Lippmanns' and a very few others) this dying art is still very much alive.

This year Johnnie Walker, who has the most infectious laugh of anybody I know, is in the happy position of presiding over the twenty-fifth anniversary of the National Gallery (see page 45), the age of puberty as most galleries go, but as this one goes a mature age indeed. And one in which his predecessor, David Finley, deserves a solid share.

National galleries as a rule are the result of collecting over generations. But as so often in this country, things mushroom almost overnight. Twenty-five years for a great collection of paintings is almost no time at all. It is certainly unique. The Louvre, the Prado in Madrid, the National Gallery in London, and all the other really great European collections were centuries in the making. But Americans were for many years caught up in the business of building rather than collecting. As recently as the Twenties the American impressionist Mary Cassatt lamented the scarce opportunities in this country for American painters to study old masters (she spent most of her own life in Europe).

When Andrew Mellon decided to erect the National Gallery it was certainly none too soon. There were still a number of important, ready-made, un-

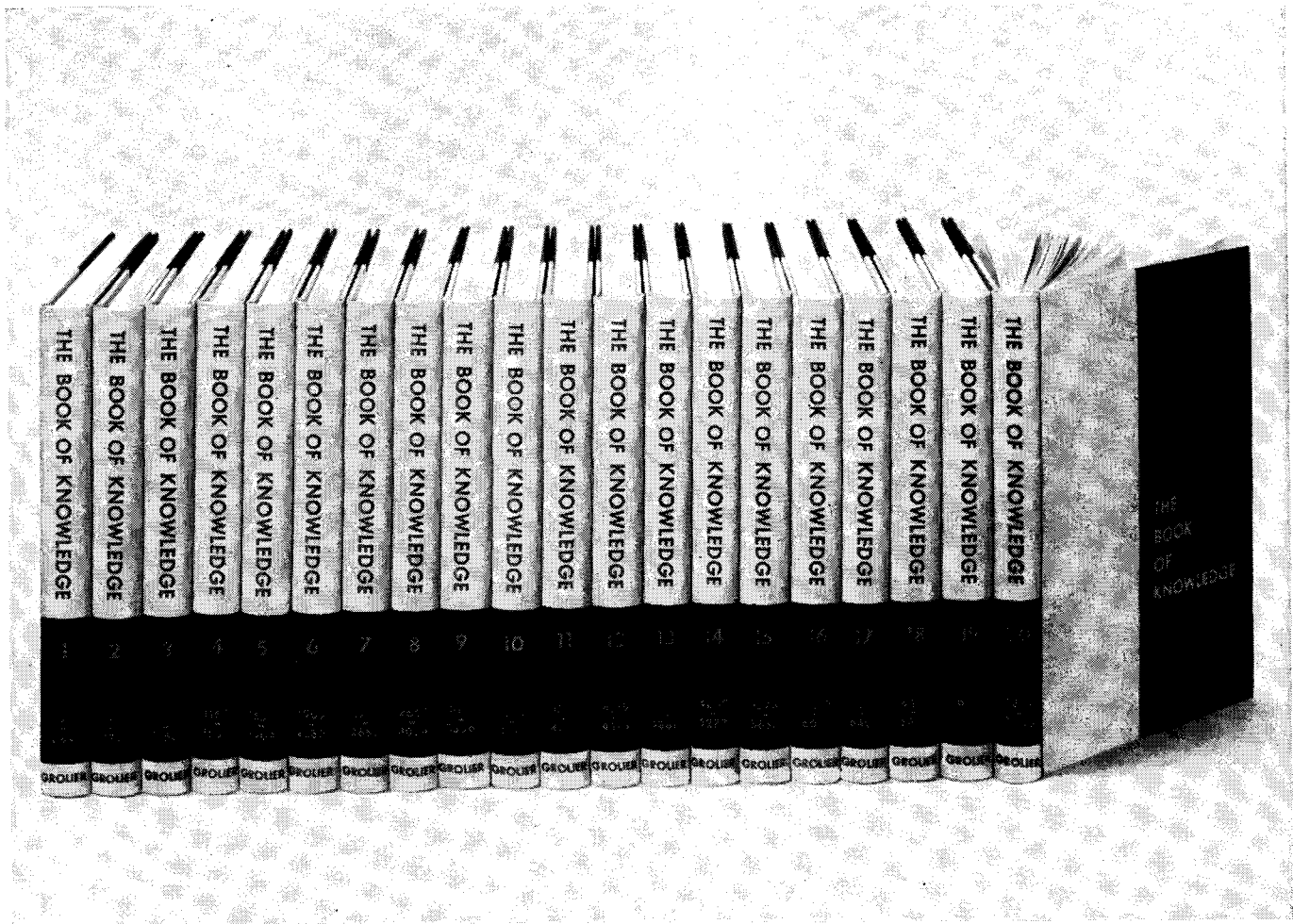
committed private collections available whose owners—as Lord Duveen, Mellon's art counselor, cleverly foresaw—would yearn to see themselves immortalized between the splendid marble pillars of one of the most imposing buildings to be found in the nation's capital.

It was in June 1937 that the ground for the new gallery was broken. Its architect was John Russell Pope. The doctor who told Pope that same year that he had cancer recalled recently that at the time of his diagnosis he told Pope that he probably didn't have more than six months to live, but that if he underwent surgery there was a fifty-fifty chance of his recovering. Pope hesitated, then said that a fifty-fifty chance was not good enough for him, that he could not take the risk; six months was long enough for him to finish his plans for the gallery. He died a few weeks after they were completed and, strangely enough, within days of Andrew Mellon's death.

THE building is not a work of great beauty but there is a timelessness about it that will endure. The interior, though highly functional, is a little too cold, too impersonal. But the paintings are impeccably hung, and there is no feeling of crowding.

When I complained recently to Johnnie Walker that there were not enough sofas in the rooms to let people linger and take in all this beauty in comfort, he admitted he had concentrated too thoroughly on buying paintings and not enough on sofas. His sense of priorities is, of course, unassailable, and I hope it is not due to a slowing down in the acquisition of new works of art that he has now ordered sofas for every gallery room.

To some extent Walker thinks back with nostalgia to the days when he was curator. Directors have no time for scholarship, he says; they have to play nanny to trustees and curators; they must cajole collectors and find donors. Even as a child, he remembers, his great aim was to become a curator. Suffering from infantile paralysis, he spent most of his



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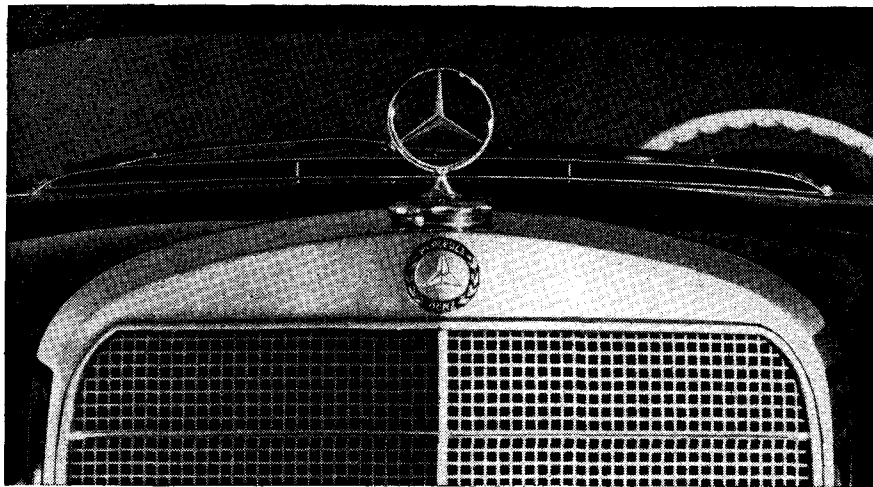
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time in wheelchairs and on crutches going through New York museums.

It was not really surprising, then, that he ended up at Harvard studying art history (which he thinks is still the best thing for anybody at a tender age with a curatorship on his mind). Nothing quite inspired him with as much confidence in the future as when Fisk Kimball, director of the Philadelphia Museum, offered him a paid job as his assistant after he graduated. When, years later, Walker told Kimball how much the offer had meant to him, Kimball replied: "You know, it really was a mistake. I thought at the time you were one of the Walkers from Minneapolis." Fortunately for him, Walker gave preference to a fellowship from Harvard that eventually sent him to Bernard Berenson and to Florence. He remembers that his relationship with Berenson began with a fearful argument when he insisted that the great creative achievement in twentieth-century American architecture was the skyscraper. "Skyscrapers," Berenson shot back, "look like models of buildings. If you really want to talk about a great architectural achievement let's talk about San Gimignano near Siena." Their relationship became a deep friendship and remained a continuing argument.

It is not only a fitting but a memorable event that for its anniversary John Walker persuaded Paul Mellon, and Mrs. Mellon Bruce, to give the public its first glimpse of their collections of French impressionists in an exhibition that opened March 17. It isn't always that a son likes to continue with a commitment inspired by his father, but with Paul it has in fact deepened, though his taste is different. His devotion is to the nineteenth century, to which his father, with one or two exceptions, paid no attention. Only in his remarkably ranging collection of English paintings are there overlaps with his father's tastes, though Paul's Constables and Turners are perhaps better than his father's.

Mrs. Mellon Bruce has also made valuable contributions to the gallery. It was she who made it possible for John Walker with the late Chester Dale to bid in the highly charged atmosphere of an auction to capture *La Liseuse*.

In earlier days the wealthy collectors preferred to buy through dealers rather than at auctions; could never be certain of getting the painting they wanted.

Great patrons, of course, are not easy to come by these days. But not long ago John Walker got a telephone call from a lawyer in Chicago that gave him an idea of how much impact the gallery can have. The lawyer told him that a client of his, a lady, had visited the gallery and enjoyed it so much that she wanted to give a cash donation. It turned out to be half a million dollars.

—HENRY BRANDON.





Hunting for shells, Kettle Point, Ontario

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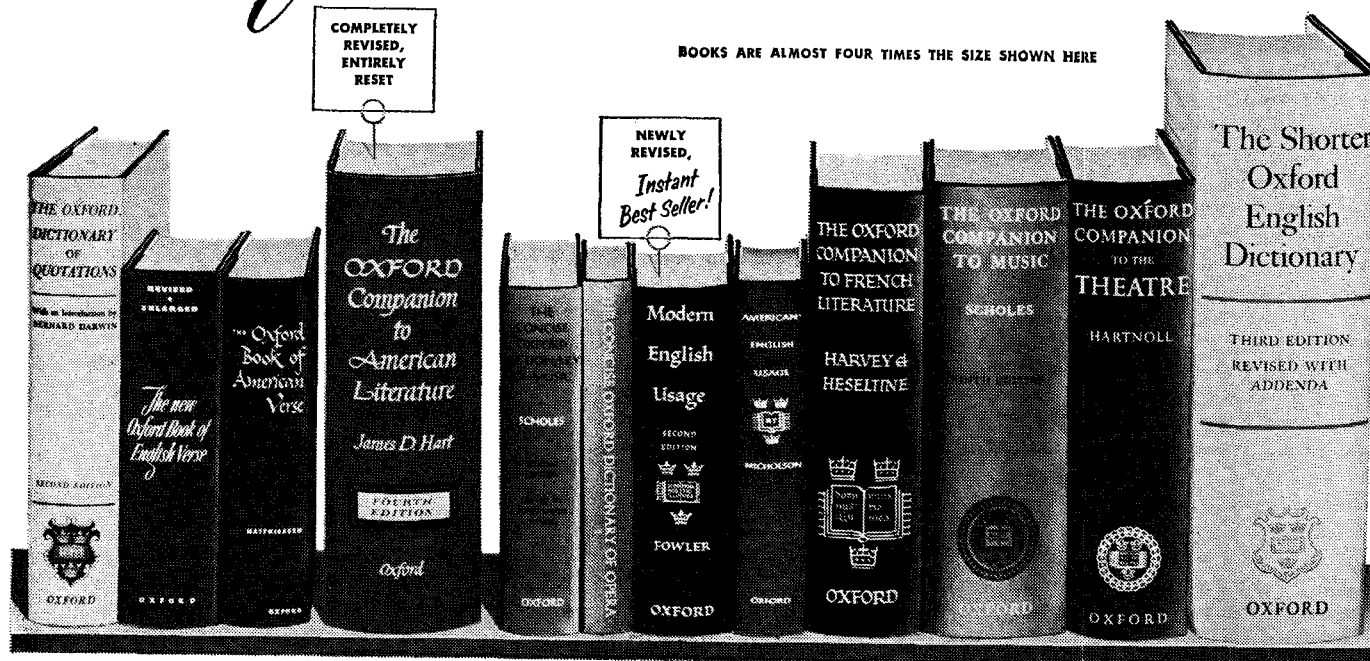
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By ARTHUR H. DEAN

SINCE 1946 the U.S. Government has expended more man-hours and more effort on questions of disarmament and arms control than on any other one subject of international negotiation in a comparable period of time. How much progress have we made? To take the briefest tally of a complicated subject, there has been no approach to agreement with the Soviet Union on the core issues of general and complete disarmament, or even on limited measures for arms control, such as safeguards against surprise attack. On the other hand, we were able in 1963 to reach agreement on three limited matters which, though not technically disarmament measures, could help to set the scene for further agreements that might ultimately lead to disarmament: the so-called hot line, the partial test ban, and the resolution against placing nuclear weapons in outer space. And 1964 was the year of the mutual example, involving such steps as cutting back the production of fissionable material. Of limited inherent and indeed even practical value, nevertheless they held some promise for the future, for the immediate possibilities lie with limited measures. No matter how necessary or how sincerely desired and worked for, general and complete disarmament is a far-off will-o'-the-wisp.

This candid statement of a frustrating

The author of this article is former chairman of the U.S. delegations to the nuclear test ban negotiations and the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Conference in Geneva. The article is adapted from his book *Test Ban and Disarmament: The Path of Negotiation* (copyright © 1966 by the Council on Foreign Relations), published this week by Harper & Row.

truth might need no elaboration were it not for the difficulty many well-intentioned people seem to have in accepting it. For understandable and irreproachable reasons people and nations yearn to avoid war, especially war among the big powers. Being human, they all too often eagerly embrace a slogan or a single concept as a kind of magical prescription and are bitterly disillusioned when, for want of having been thought through, the prescription doesn't work.

How much simpler it would be if there were more general awareness and understanding of four basic realities about disarmament: 1) The essential foundation for negotiation on arms control and disarmament is respectable military strength on both sides; 2) disarmament is as much a function of national security as is armament; 3) limited measures may open the way to general disarmament, while being of value in themselves; 4) there is no reason to assume that disarmament in and of itself will bring with it the disappearance of conflict any more than did the defeat of the Axis powers.

TAKE the matter of military strength. Like the arms race itself, the impulsion to negotiate for the control or abolition of arms by consent is rooted in a mutual respect among adversaries for each other's military strength. There would be no talks at Geneva at all were it not for the fact that both the United States (with Canada and its European allies) and the Soviet Union (and its allies) consider it a worthwhile goal of foreign policy to seek to reduce the military threat posed by the other.

Two conclusions follow. First, unilateral measures of disarmament or multilateral measures that inequitably bear on only one side and thus undermine the

condition of mutual respect to the detriment of that side will most likely lead not to acceptable disarmament but to the political defeat of the weakened side and probably also to greater dangers to peace. The breakup of disarmament talks, for which there would no longer be a *raison d'être*, would follow. Thus the most ardent and the most emotional supporters of disarmament, the impatient ones who argue for unreciprocated unilateral or unbalanced measures, on the grounds that they will help to create the necessary confidence and inspire the other side to reply in kind, are in reality the worst enemies of any realistic disarmament. Unreciprocated measures would ultimately destroy the basis on which the negotiation of stable agreements rests.

The second conclusion stems from the first. If the basis of disarmament talks has been correctly stated, then it follows that disarmament can only proceed on the principle of balance, whereby the stock of existing arms and those from future production are reciprocally reduced without altering in any drastic way the existing relationship between the states concerned. If, on the other hand, a disarmament proposal would, in its practical effect, result in a considerable weakening of one side as against the other, then such a proposal may be considered an element of political warfare rather than a serious disarmament effort.

No matter what the propagandists say, disarmament is not the first-priority goal of any government in the world today. This priority everywhere goes to the protection of the national security. In the case of the United States, a major aspect of that security is the maintenance of an international environment in which we and our friends can live in