

## Salem Held Virtually Free of Eye-Correction Rebate Racket; Basis for Collections Detailed

By Marguerite Wright  
Staff Writer, The Statesman

Mention the rebate racket to most any ophthalmologist, optometrist or optician in Salem and he will hasten to explain that everything in his highly ethical field is on the up-and-up and that inter-professional relations in Salem are very cordial. And most of the specialists and craftsmen interviewed by The Statesman want no part of the mudslinging making headlines in other western cities.

(A Chicago dispatch includes oculists in Washington and Oregon among 2,750 accused by the government of accepting rebates).

But in Portland, San Francisco and elsewhere, Better Business Bureaus are tracking down opticians and oculists who have been the most regular practitioners of the kickback system which jacks up prices of refractions to pad the pockets of eye doctors and eyeglass dispensers.

### Racket Condemned

The racket, euphemistically termed a "credit" or "commission" system, means a hidden charge to the customer and has been condemned by the American Medical Association and other professional groups.

It doesn't happen in Salem, however, several local oculists, optometrists and opticians protested. At least, the local rebate practice is on a small-scale and could

hardly be proved, they said.

The system operates like this: An oculist (or ophthalmologist) after examining the patient (for anything from free to \$15 or more), prescribes the proper lens and sends the customer to an optical dispensing firm. The dispenser overcharges the patient and the doctor gets the overcharge—his commission for dispatching patients to the wholesaler. It has been estimated that U.S. oculists rake in about \$35,000,000 every year in secret kickbacks—a practice which could make necessary visual correction a high-priced luxury for the average consumer.

Someone "Talked"  
Albert Q. Maisel, in the Janu-

ary Readers Digest, attributes the racket to companies (like American Optical and Bausch and Lomb which control two-thirds of the eye-glass business) which reportedly hatched the scheme to keep peace between competing optometrists and oculists. If everyone patronized oculists or ophthalmologists (MDs) the non-medical professional eye examiners and glass dispensers (optometrists) would go broke. The rebate system has some oculists' cooperation because many of them are not adverse to extra cash, especially when the patient is in the dark.

The racket is also common in some areas with physicians rebated by pharmacists and physicians collecting kickbacks from surgeons, but the oculist-optician deal was publicized, evidently, because someone who didn't get his cut, "talked."

### Jealousy Blamed

At least, Dr. Harry A. Brown of Salem thinks it is all the result of professional jealousy. Medical doctors (usually eye-ear-nose-throat experts) have not been fond of optometrists in some areas, although optometrists, trained vision specialists, refer patients needing medical care to their MD competitors, he said.

So, by pointing out the sins of some oculists, some optometrists are revenging the slighting they've taken from the medics. And in a recent Oregon supreme court case, State vs. Standard Optical Company, the firm's general manager took a poke at optometrists with his assertion that "it has been the practice of optometry to charge all the traffic can bear."

Propaganda Charged  
Manager G. Lewis of the Salem Riggs Optical Company blames the oculists' union for the expose. He says it's all "malicious propaganda by the Guild Prescription Opticians who want to force the eye glass business into retail trade." The Riggs firm is a wholesale dispensary whose workers are non-union. Lewis warns that "if the Guild oculists take over, glasses will cost 30 per cent more than now."

In the Maisel article the Guild is mentioned as one organization opposed to the rebate system.

Dr. W. N. Thompson, of the Findley, Clement, Baum, Thompson and Dunham clinic, said Riggs Optical was their agency for grinding and dispensing glasses and that Riggs did not handle the financial transactions—thus negating any opportunity for rebating. He pointed out that the rebate system was more common when there are several competing dis-

## Stock Market Continued to Grow Steadier

NEW YORK, Feb. 14 (AP)—The stock market continued to display selectively steadier tendencies today, after Tuesday's sharp break since last April, but dealings were the slowest in more than three months and the averages showed a substantial loss on the week.

An early rally in recently slumping commodities, which did not follow through for grains, buoyed sentiment for securities to some extent in the final session. From Monday on nose-diving staples had received part of the blame for the retreat in stocks. Bidding, mostly by professionals, in the concluding sessions was credited mainly to the idea a technical comeback was overdue. Throughout the week, however, brokerage customers held aloof or sold holdings because of persistent doubts regarding business, taxes, European economic situations and labor.

In today's proceedings, variations for virtually all pivotal issues were in fractions. Transfers of 280,000 shares compared with 330,000 last Saturday and were a low since last November 8. The five-session aggregate was 4,812,580 shares against 5,126,100 in the preceding six sessions. The Associated Press 60-stock composite was unchanged on the day at 60.5 where it was only 2 above the low of last May 27. For the week the decline was 1.5 points.

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## Scout Leader



Mart P. Bushnell, national Boy Scout training officer from Los Angeles, who is conducting a three-day training course, ending today, for about 30 faculty members of the Cascade area council adult training and leadership committee at Silver Creek recreational area camp. Bushnell will leave Monday for Aberdeen, Wash., to conduct a similar course.

## Public Records

### MUNICIPAL COURT

Darrell Miner, Salem route 9, driving without driver's license, posted \$5 bail.

Blaine Merritt Cline, 879 N. Liberty st., violation of basic rule, posted \$10 bail.

Carl F. Cox, Salem route 7, violation of noise ordinance, posted \$5 bail.

### COUNTY COURT

C. E. McKibbin vs Hattie McKibbin: Default order issued.

Anna C. Holmes vs Earl Holmes: Default order issued.

Mortimer A. Rowe vs Elizabeth C. Rowe: Default order issued.

Rosemary Spraker vs James Spraker: Suit for divorce asks \$500 alimony, possession of certain personal property and restoration of plaintiff's former name of Rosemary Grenz. Married March 30, 1946, at Vancouver, Wash.

Vera Jackson vs Charles Wesley Keller and L. Allen Perkins: Defendants file answer admitting and denying.

### PROBATE COURT

Frank B. Burns estate: Order appoints Mary Ellen Burns as administratrix and I. N. Howe, Li-

## Grain Price Plunge Halts

lie J. Howe and George Pense appointed appraisers.

### POLK COUNTY RECORDS

Circuit Court  
DALLAS—J. K. Parmenter vs Harvey Wheeler; plaintiff asking judgment for \$1429.24 for labor and material allegedly delivered to defendant and for costs.  
Lloyd V. Henry vs Juanita S. Henry; cruel and inhuman treatment cause for action. There is one minor child.

County Court  
DALLAS—Winona G. Riggs has been appointed executrix of the estate of Cecil Lynne Riggs, deceased. Claims to be presented within six months.

Marriage Applications  
DALLAS—Theodore F. Nova, truck driver, and Dolores Wallace, waitress, both of Valsetz.

John William Agard, Monmouth, sawmill worker, and Donna J. Vanderteen, Independence, typist.

Look over The Statesman classified columns for bargains, opportunities.

CHICAGO, Feb. 14 (AP)—The plunge in grain prices was halted on the board of trade today. Wheat and oats ended with modest gains while corn contracts were mixed. Soybeans extended their dive and lard advanced.

Brokers said the market was the most orderly since the current break began on February 4, although there was one sinking spell late in the session when corn tumbled several cents within a few minutes. The urgent liquidation appeared at least temporarily ended, traders said.

Wheat closed 1/4-2 1/4 higher, May \$2.34 1/2-3/4; corn was 1/4 lower to 1 cent higher. May \$1.96 1/2-3/4; oats were 1 1/2-2 1/4 higher, May \$1.02 1/2-3/4, and all soybeans were down the 8-cent daily limit, March \$3.25.

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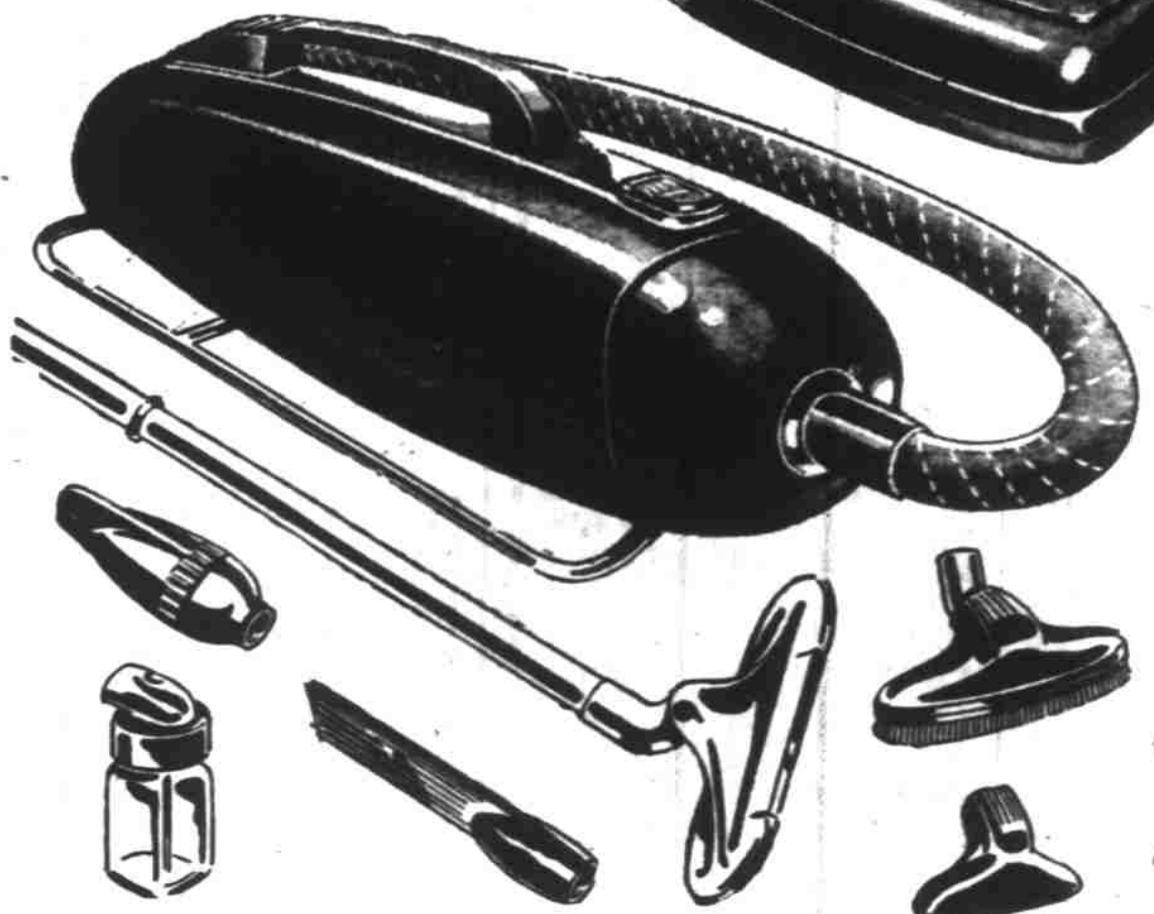


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