

SAVING MANY BILLIONS NOW

How the American People Have Learned to Cut Out Useless Styles of Goods Since the World War and Saved All Its Costs Time and Again.

The Sentinel's senior editor used to read a good many of Charles Edward Russell's so-called muck-raking magazine articles a generation ago; but none of his exposures of graft in government and in business then interested me more than the article he wrote for the last Century in which he showed how the American people since the world war have been saving more a year than that war cost them—more than 10 billions a year, not 10 millions, but ten times a thousand millions of dollars each year. It seemed incredible to me at first and scarcely more than a wild guess, but after a little while I read it a second time and concluded that Russell was right, as he used to be in the muck-raking days:

The Federal Department of Commerce and the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, being the chief revolutionists, have united in certain wide-spread, searching, and unquestionable investigations, from which business—in the mass—emerges convicted of bewildering extravagance and waste, and poor old government which we have always regarded as doddering and incompetent, treads the stage in the role of teaching business how to be efficient.

Such is the fact, however incredible—and unpalatable. But even this result of the new day will seem like a by-product when compared with others, attained or indicated, for these are of a nature to remind one of the introduction of steam-driven machinery and the first day of iron ships.

It was the War Industries Board of which Bernard M. Baruch was chairman that started the upheaval. In the days of war stress, there was no time to trade jack-knives, the utmost possible production with the utmost possible celerity was the incessant pressure from an inevitable demand. Munitions supplies, food, we must have them in great quantities and at once.

The War Board asked the manufacturers to drop everything but strict essentials, and at once remarkable discoveries were made in the number of things, processes, commodities, and machineries we could easily get along without. Throughout all this period the National Chamber was the close ally and assistant of the board in securing every quickening betterment. When the war was over, when the board ceased from troubling and the high-presurists were at rest, the disciplined producing agencies began to relapse. But executives in the chamber had been taking good and careful note of all that reform had meant. They said what was good for production in war times must be good for production in peace times. They turned to the Department of Commerce, where they found the glad hand of Secretary Hoover thrust through the door at them, and together they completed the revolution.

All intimations of waste must be made with tact and caution. The Department of Commerce of the United States government is without mandatory powers. It cannot order any factory to cease to make useless things; it cannot interfere in any way with our precious right to waste our own as we will. If we should attempt anything of that kind, up would rise the deafening howl of insulted freemen in all parts of our broad land. Captains of industry are not in the way of being told where they get off. Rather their habit is to do themselves the telling.

So the revolutionists go round to work. When the conference meets, the department and the chamber are prepared for it with the statistics and facts that show the waste. The conference usually takes one good look at these and appoints a committee to consider the spillage and how it may be stopped. It is a wise committee; it does not need to be argued or lured out of tradition's lethal grip. It reports a plan, the conference adopts the report to go into effect on a certain date as a trade agreement, and the next thing the retailer knows, instead of being bothered with twenty-seven kinds of wash-boilers, there is but one.

All this, being the affair of one trade, nobody else pays attention to. Yet day by day we pay attention to a thousand things that are nothing to us compared with this. For if we multiply the wasteful conditions about wash-boilers into every product of every factory, and follow along where that leads, at home and abroad—where shall we fetch up? Among

figures that soar and sums that dazzle. In 1921 the Federated American Engineering Society experts, headed by Mr. Hoover, did exactly this. They undertook a survey of conditions in six great typical American industries and laid bare things that struck the attentive into an amazed silence.

They found the preventable waste in these industries ranged from 29 to 64 per cent, the average waste among them all being 49 per cent, or nearly one half their total effort.

What were these six industries? Textiles, metals, boots and shoes, printing, building, men's ready-made clothing—six that were supposed to be among the most carefully managed of all that make our industrial greatness.

From this shattering fact they deduced another. They concluded that the total of preventable waste in all American industry must be something like ten billion dollars a year.

This was our first broad-gauge enlightenment on a momentous subject. The total cost of all government in the United States, federal, state, and municipal, is only six billion dollars a year; so that if all of it were waste, graft, and incompetence we should not lose as much in it as we lose annually in business. Ten billion dollars a year—it is the total cost of all government, plus the cost of all automobiles sold here in a year, plus the cost of all the gasoline sold to run them, plus the cost of all the American homes built in a year. Ten billion dollars, and all waste.

How waste? Waste in competition gone mad in last motions, in making things that few persons wanted or nobody at all, in duplications, septuplications, efforts to sell the unsalable. Ten billion dollars a year of it, after the War Industries had shown the better way. Not because of anybody's will or anybody's inaptitude. Custom, competition, and tradition accounted for almost the whole of it—this evil triad and one other thing, which was the innate reluctance of the American to co-operate. "Every man for himself" was proving but a dumb-bell motto. Look at the results.

The always lengthening list of industries remade now includes many that directly affect people's lives and households' budgets. Range-boilers afford one illustration. At the outset of the efficiency campaign the manufacturers were making 130 varieties. To produce them was a heavy burden; to store and try to distribute them another. As for the poor retailer, to carry them, account for them, protect them, and have capital invested in them, were so many items in the load he must try to shift, by one route or another, to the consumer's tottering back. There was a national conference, a committee, a report, and 117 varieties of range-boilers disappeared into the past.

Of hot-water storage-tanks there were 120 kinds. A committee cut out 106 of them and so slammed the door on Old Man Waste.

Hardware manufacturing underwent a great change. Of the simple tack and the unassuming nail 426 kinds were being made and marketed—more or less. A committee buried 247 of these. Of shovels, scoops, and spades there were 4460 varieties on the market. One of these might differ from another in the glory of curve or angle indiscernible to the layman's eye, but each had its own pattern, each meant time and labor lost when its pattern displaced another on the machine, each required handling, storing, invoicing; each meant so much in taxes, insurance, storage-space, and idle capital. A committee went through the list and actually knocked out 4076 of the 4460 varieties. Ninety-two per cent were found on investigation to be redundant. It is two years since this breaking of old idols was effected. The nation's digging, scooping, and spading have gone on as before, but about ten million dollars' worth of lost motion preliminary to the digging, scooping, and spading has been laid aside forever.

The use of concrete in building operations has necessitated steel reinforcing bars, of which about 600,000 tons are sold annually in the United States. In the days of hit-or-miss when there were forty varieties of steel reinforcing bars, some dealers felt obliged to carry as much as 150,000 or even 200,000 tons, for which the needless costs in space, time, labor, and capital were reflected in the cost of building and thence into the tenant's rent. After a committee had

cut out twenty-nine of the forty varieties, the dealer that had carried 200,000 tons found he needed only 75,000, while \$4,500,000 of annual waste had been elided from the nation's industry.

Plow-bolts would seem normally to be about as simple a thing as man could devise, and one plow-bolt about like another. Yet fifteen hundred varieties of them were manufactured in the United States. The imp of the perverse could hardly have gone further. When a farmer bought a plow with a certain kind of bolt and the time came to renew that bolt he must keep on hand all of the 1500, although of half of them he might not sell a cent's worth in ten years. Joy must have been unconfined in those precincts when a committee knocked out 44 per cent of the plow-bolts.

Then what? A company that operates a chain of hotels cut thirty styles of glassware to ten, fifteen designs of carpet to three, all patterns of table-linen to one, and simplified nearly two hundred other items of supply. Thus it released from former inventories \$350,000 and saved \$100,000. And the guest? Indeed, worry not about the guest. He was doing quite well, thank you. The twenty extra styles of glassware and the twelve extra carpet-patterns had meant nothing to him. He never missed them nor any other of these retrenchments.

A company that owned a chain of drug-stores, decided to do a little revolutionizing on its own account, reduced its stock to varieties most in demand and cut out the moribund or inactive items. Twenty-two thousand varieties of commodities that it formerly carried came down to 10,900. Whereupon this company increased its volume of business 40 per cent, its turnover 70 per cent, decreased its investment account 14 per cent, and its inventory 56 per cent. With these savings it was able to increase its wage rate 100 per cent.

The percentages of increased selling recorded here may sound like fantasy, but are not. Industries that have experimented with the new order commonly report some gratifying change. The reason is simple enough. It is the concentrated salesmanship and the elimination of scattered efforts.

A hat manufacturer was making and carrying 3486 varieties of men's hats, varieties in style, grade, and color. His factory, like so many others, ran virtually on part time. That is to say, he had a rush season to get out hats for the spring trade and a rush season to get them out for the fall trade, and between these were weeks when the factory was all but closed. He summoned to meet him many of his leading customers and proposed to cut down his varieties to about six hundred, if I remember correctly, to make these all the year around, and to ship them as they might be needed. He said that with these reductions, if the customers would order direct instead of waiting for a traveling salesman to pick up the order they had already decided upon, the factory could save 40 per cent, which he proposed to apportion fairly among the consumer, the dealer, and himself. The dealers accepted with pleasure on their brows, and the whole program went through exactly as the manufacturer had outlined it. Among its beneficiaries were the workmen in the hat factory. They now had continuous work and no periods of unemployment, all the year around.

In boots and shoes one manufacturer found he had three grades and 2500 styles in each grade. He cut this to one grade and 100 styles. Then he discovered that he had cut his production cost 31 per cent, overhead 28 per cent, inventories 26 per cent, and cost to consumer 27 per cent. He was selling 22 per cent more of women's shoes and 80 per cent more of men's.

In great things and in small, to plug up the leaks is the word now. There used to be 150 varieties of men's collars on the market; a little study cut them to twenty-five. There were 200 varieties of certain lines of canned goods; study reduced them to twenty-two.

Four hundred and sixty varieties of cotton duck came down to ninety-four; 179 varieties of electric lamp bases to six. A committee found 1114 varieties of brass lavatory and sink traps on the market and recommended that 1042 of these be dropped. In lumber 60 per cent of the varieties made and offered for sale were cut out and all the rest standardized. The out and all the rest standardized. The economies that resulted astonished even the revolutionists.

Eighty-seven per cent of the energy used in this country is derived from coal, oil, and gas. Four per cent comes from water, and three per cent from working animals.

COUNTY AGENT'S WORK

Root Demonstrations

A series of root crop demonstrations of particular interest to Coos county dairymen have been arranged by County Agricultural Agent C. R. Richards during the past two weeks.

The demonstrations are put under the direction of experts of the Oregon Agricultural College and will determine the best varieties of root crops, as well as the best fertilizers for root crops in this section.

The plan of each demonstration is to plant 16 varieties of roots, including mangels, carrots, rutabagas and turnips in 1-20 acre plots, the rows running lengthwise of the field. This field then is divided crossways and one fourth of the area is left unfertilized, one-fourth has barnyard manure applied at the rate of 10-20 tons an acre, one fourth receives in addition to barnyard manure superphosphate fertilizer at the rate of 400 pounds per acre.

The fourth plot has in addition to the manure and superphosphate, lime added at the rate of 1 1-2 tons per acre.

"This plan will show each of the 16 varieties of roots under four different conditions of fertility and should give us some very interesting results," says Mr. Richards.

At two of the demonstrations 1-8 acre plots treated with a complete "4-10-10" commercial fertilizer at the rate of 400 pounds per acre will be added.

During the harvest season, field meetings of farmers living in the vicinity of each of the demonstration fields will be held so that the progress of each variety and method of fertilizing can be observed. In the fall at harvest time the yields of the plots will be weighed and compared.

The locations of the demonstration plots were chosen as representative of the three districts in which they are located.

Beet Demonstrations

The farm of Vern Lundy, near the Lundy co-operative cheese factory on the South Fork of the Coquille river near Myrtle Point is the location of the demonstration. A second field is planted on the farm of Kay Smith across the river from Riverton on the lower river, while the third demonstration is established on the farm of Henry Gustafson on Larsen Inlet north of North Bend.

Blueberries

The first crop in Coos County if trials being arranged by C. R. Richards, county agricultural agent, prove successful during the next three years. Three sets of blueberry plants of 12 plants each, including seven varieties, have been received by Mr. Richards from a New Jersey Nursery company interested in having the trials conducted and have been located at three farms in different parts of the county.

Blueberries sell for very high prices on eastern markets, it is said, as high as 45 to 55 cents a quart being realized. The average price for the berries on the New York market is said to have been more than \$10.00 per crate, (32 quarts), for the last eight years. Being a firm, solid fruit, the blueberry stands shipping well, so would be a useful addition to the berry crops of Coos county.

A. C. Chase of the Holt-Chase canning company at Myrtle Point was instrumental in obtaining the trial sets of plants for Coos county and stated that they should be successful in this region.

The three co-operating growers have agreed to make a report each year on September first, for three years which will be sufficient time for the crop to prove its merits, it is believed.

"There is not much doubt but that the blueberry will thrive in Coos county," says Mr. Richards, "as they require a distinctly acid soil. Wild blueberries grow in abundance in some places in the county now, while the huckleberry, a plant related to the blueberry surely thrives here."

E. R. Forrest, whose berry farm on the Powers road north of Broad-bent, was chosen for one of the demonstrations. He will try the plants on typical river bottom soil.

The second trial was established at the farm of A. T. Morrison on the Marshfield highway near Coquille where the plants will be grown on bench land.

Soil near a cranberry bog will be tried in the third demonstration which will be located on the L. C. Eaton farm about seven miles south of Bandon.

"This will give us three distinct types of soil for the trials," says County Agent Richards, "not only will the trials determine the suitability of the crop to this region, but it will show which kind of land is best for their culture."

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New Stamp Issues

The special two-cent stamp marking the 150th anniversary of the signing of the declaration of independence, which is to be celebrated with a sesqui-centennial exposition at Philadelphia, has been issued by the postoffice department and may be received here.

philatelists is the five-cent stamp to be issued soon to mark the unveiling of a statue in Washington, D. C., to John Ericsson, designer and inventor of the Monitor, famous civil war craft. The date for issuing this stamp has not been announced.

Radio Batteries and tubes at Another issue of special interest to Oording Hardware.