

# MEDFORD MAIL TRIBUNE

United Press—Full Leased Wire

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Second Section

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## Government-Purchased Items Come at Less Than Wholesale

Washington—(U.P.)—The friend who says he can get it for you wholesale is a piker. The government can get it for much less.

Take automobiles. Or tires. Or electric light bulbs. Or ball point pens. Or almost anything else the government and the general public buy for everyday use.

Uncle Sam buys automobiles cheaper than even the dealers pay. Tires cost the government less than half the price charged the general public.

Manufacturers give the government a 45 1/2 per cent discount on light bulbs.

And those ball point pens that retail for 49 cents with a refill for a quarter. The government pays 29 1/2 cents for the pen and 4 1/2 cents for the refill.

How does the government do it? Buying mostly by contract and in big quantities is the answer.

The General Service Administration (GSA), the government's housekeeping agency, does all of Uncle Sam's buying except those items purchased by the Defense Department.

It buys most needed items through bid submitted by manufacturers, generally awarding the contracts to the low bidder. The bids must be equal to or below the ceiling price fixed by the government.

From July 1, 1956, to June 30 of last year, the government

bought 4,260 passenger cars and station wagons. Most were Fords and Chevrolets.

Four door sedans cost an average of \$1,288. They were six cylinder cars, with standard transmission. They had a little less chrome and a little less fancy upholstery, but otherwise were regular models.

"It's good business at the price for manufacturers," a GSA official said.

**How To Buy**

Some of the factors in the low price on government auto orders: The government does not have to pay a percentage of the national advertising costs of auto manufacturers. Such charges are made against dealers.

No dealers are involved in the purchase so there is no dealer profit.

The government takes delivery at the manufacturer's assembly plant and there are no transportation costs.

Another factor is the keen competition among manufacturers. Officials surmise that the production race between Ford and Chevrolet helps the government get cars at the price it pays. Plymouth does not bid on government orders.

**Purchase Off Season**

Off season buying is another factor. Government contracts usually cover periods when civilian demand is low, and this helps

the manufacturer to keep his production line going.

GSA recently asked Congress to raise to \$1,500 the ceiling price it can pay for lightweight cars. The present ceiling is \$1,250.

A GSA official said the increase would permit the government to buy eight cylinder cars equipped with automatic transmissions. He said experiences showed there is less maintenance cost on an automatic transmission.

The big limousines used by the White House, cabinet officers, and some congressional leaders are purchased under special legislative authority. GSA hasn't bought a car for a cabinet member since 1949.

**Break on Tires**

"There is a sort of an unwritten agreement," a GSA official said, "that a cabinet officer can arrange to get his own car. He can buy it or rent it, using money from his department."

The government gets a real break on tires. A 15x70, four ply tire, plus tube, costs the government \$15.42, including tax. A tubeless tire of the same size costs \$15.32. The cost to regular customers for a tire and tube is \$32.65; for a tubeless tire, \$32.08.

Government purchased electric bulbs are regular household type lamps. A 100 watt bulb costs the government 11.199 cents. The same bulb sold over the counter here costs 22 cents.

Electric fans are bought off season at greatly reduced prices. They are ordered in car loads in December for delivery in March, April, and May.

"Mass purchases permit easier and less costly distribution," a GSA official said. "In that way, the government gets a special price."



**MATERIAL WITNESS—** Mrs. Dorothy Dobrescu, secretary to Teamster Vice President James Hoffa, waits to tell a Federal Grand Jury "hatever she knows" about bribery charges against her boss. She came to Washington from Detroit under subpoena where she was arrested as a material witness.

**Deputy Director of Motor Vehicles Named**

Salem—(U.P.)—Kenneth E. Johnson, 28, managing editor of the Coos Bay Times has been appointed deputy director of the Department of Motor Vehicles by Director James F. Johnson.

Director Johnson said that deputy Johnson—no relation though both come from Coos Bay—planned to assume his new duties April 8. The post, created with the department last July 1, has not previously been filled.

## Elvis Presley Said Tapering Off From Pinnacle as Leading Recording Artist

New York—(U.P.)—Elvis Presley, meet Sir Isaac Newton.

Newton's law about "what goes up must come down" even covers record sales of the young "Rock-billy."

A United Press survey of record sales revealed Elvis, after a 12 month run on top, now is the second hottest popular record artist in the nation. Harry Belafonte has moved to the number one position, thanks to the latest calypso fad.

RCA Victor, which records both the singers, reported Belafonte now has five records in its top 10 sales list: "Day-," "Jamaica Farewell," "Mama Look At Bub," "Hold 'Em Joe," and "Matilda." Elvis has one record in the company's top 10, "Too Much."

Presley is "cold"

Belafonte, since Christmas, has sold 3,500,000 singles and 800,000 albums in his surge to the top.

In Cleveland, traditionally the record industry's barometer city, Presley singles and albums were selling best just before Christmas. Then came the decline. Said one store executive: "He's cold. The only ones who mention him now are television comedians."

In New York, Leslie's, a leading "one stop" record wholesaler, reported Presley sales have "tapered off, although he still has plenty of steam left." An-

other record shop, Tri Boro, said Elvis began his skid late in January.

It's the same story in Boston. A survey of Boston record stores revealed Presley sales are off anywhere from 50 to 75 per cent of his November and December highs.

**Holding Own in Chicago**

The Chicago picture was brighter for Elvis. He's holding his own there, although Belafonte has overtaken him. Atlanta record store owners agreed that Presley sales are "falling off" from "a little" to "quite a bit."

In Los Angeles, Presley record sales also have gone down.

Trade sources gave many reasons for the decline: Presley's been busy making motion pictures and his record output has suffered. Calypso came along just as the market was saturated with Presley records. And competitors such as Tommy Sands will come up with a "hot" record and this can hurt only one man's sales: Presley's.

But Elvis wasn't ready to hook his guitar and shave off the sideburns.

In the 15 months he has been with RCA Victor, he has sold 15,100,000 singles, at 89 cents each. That averages about 1,000,000 sales a month, thanks to those fabulous 3,000,000 sales of his two sided hit, "Hound Dog" and "Don't Be Cruel" last summer and fall. His "Love Me Tender" made industry history with more than 1,000,000 pre-release orders.

In January and February of this year, Presley kept up the million a month average. As for albums, he has sold a total of 2,900,000 long play and extended play sets. He's the first artist to have an EP (four songs on one 45 rpm disc) sell more than a million copies.

While most record artists would give an arm to be as

## Actor Ronald Coleman Declared Improved

Santa Monica, Calif. — (U.P.)— Actor Ronald Coleman, 66, was reported improved today at St. John's hospital where he has been under treatment for a lung ailment.

"cold" as today's Presley, the United Press survey showed he has hit his peak and now is leveling off at a less rarified altitude.

RCA Victor wasn't too unhappy. They will continue pressing 1,000,000 copies every time Elvis makes a record. It may take them a little longer to sell them, but they will get sold.

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## Farmers Expected To Produce Bumper Crop On Reduced Acreage

Washington—(U.P.)— American farmers this year are expected to produce a bumper crop in history's smallest acreage in 40 years.

The Agriculture Department estimated Monday that on the basis of farmers' planting intentions as of March 1, this year's crop will be grown on 334 million acres, which is 12 million acres or 3.6 per cent under the 1956 acreage which produced a record tying crop. In 1947 farmers planted 331 million, but produced a crop far off the 1956 total.

**Way of Increasing Yields**

Department officials are not counting on a crop production comparable to the acreage reduction. Farmers have a way of increasing their yields on reduced acreage with better types of seed, improved fertilizer, and all ground advances in agricultural technology. They have proved it before, and may come up with a 1957 overall crop equal to or near the 1956 production.

The department reported prospective corn plantings this year at 74.6 million acres. If yields approximate the 1951-55 average, production would amount to 2.6 billion bushels.

The intended planted acreage is the smallest in 70 years, a long stretch dating back to President Cleveland's first term when the nation had about 100 million fewer acres to farm. But the prospective acreage for 1957 is only 2.6 per cent under the 1956

acreage when 3.5 billion bushels, the second largest crop in history was produced. This whopping crop was grown on an acreage 11 per cent smaller than average.

**Increasing Other Crops**

The planting intentions report indicated that many farmers are reducing their acreage on such basic crops as corn, wheat, peanuts, rice, and tobacco, but are increasing the use of crop land for other crops. The latest department report on soil bank participation showed that about 20 million acres have been deposited in the soil bank acreage reserve and about 3.5 million acres have been put into the conservation reserve.

This adds up to about 23.5 million acres on which farmers will receive government payments for not producing crops. The soil bank acreage is almost double the 12 million acres they have indicated they will cut from overall acreage total.

**Legality of Pay Boost For Legislators Doubtful**

Salem—(U.P.)— Attorney General Robert Y. Thornton said Tuesday that there is a serious question as to the constitutionality of Senate bill 203 which would increase the salaries of members of the state Legislature from \$600 to \$1200 a year.

The opinion was rendered at the request of Sen. Warren Gill, Lebanon Republican.

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