



LUMUMBA'S SON IN SCHOOL — Young Patrice Lumumba points to his answer on the blackboard in reply to his teacher's question at Lycee in Bak El Louk, Cairo, where he is studying French and Arabic. Patrice and his brother started classes at the school this month. They are children of Congo Premier Patrice Lumumba. (UPI Telephoto)

Parker Pen Solves Dilemma Of Product in Low-Priced Field

By HENRY J. BECHTOLD
UPI Financial Editor
New York—(UPI)—It took a few years, but Parker Pen Co. finally has solved its dilemma

of entering a lucrative low-priced market in its field without sacrificing a precious reputation. This is the same problem faced by many other firms today.

Back in 1957, the Janesville, Wis. company looked with envy at the mushrooming market of ball point pens priced at below a dollar. An estimated 300 million ball pens were being sold annually at that time, as against 40 million fountain pens, and the average retail price of the ball pens was 44 cents.

Parker already had entered the ball pen market in 1954, but its ball pens ranged from \$2.95 to \$8.75. And the company was getting ready to launch another pen in this line in 1958 at a price of \$1.98, still a rather high price for a ball-point pen.

Doing Quite Well
Parker was doing quite well with its ball pens, dollarwise, but it felt it could do much better by getting closer to the profitable lower-priced market.

Its production methods could not be geared for a quality instrument priced under a dollar, and management felt it could not step into the bottom of the low-price field without sacrificing the image it had built up over 70 years.

So Parker did the next best thing. It purchased a company already in the lower price field, one with a good brand

name but with a record of drastically declining sales. In January, 1958, Parker acquired the Writing Instrument Division of Eversharp, Inc. for \$1.6 million. Eversharp had been plagued by wrong timing with its products since Milton Reynolds beat it to the gun with a ball pen by seven months, a pen that Eversharp thought it had all the patents on.

Completed Successfully
Eversharp successfully competed with Reynolds for a short while, but in 1947, when the ball pen market began to falter, Eversharp faltered with it. The company's efforts to regain its marketing position never got off the ground, and a management battle further complicated matters.

Parker executives believed that Eversharp's record of declining sales could be reversed with Parker research,

new products, and merchandising know-how.

But keeping Eversharp an autonomous, organizational structure did not prove suc-

cessful. Eversharp's small, 12-man sales force found it difficult to recapture lost outlets and open new ones; outlets were clogged with pens from scores of other low-priced

manufacturers; Eversharp needed more identification with Parker, especially at the trade level, and more sales manpower; than an autonomous operation could support.

Oregonians Injured In Idaho Wreck

Grangeville, Idaho — (UPI) — Two persons were critically injured and four others including three children hurt near here Saturday afternoon when an auto skidded on ice and tumbled over an embankment.

Reported in critical condition were Bob Wallace, about 70, Adrian, Ore., and Mrs. Lorna Ward, 42, Nyssa, Ore. The auto driven by Mrs. Ward left Highway 85 on White Bird hill about eight miles south of here the Idaho county sheriff's office said.

children, Gary 13, Ronnie, 16, and Mark, 12, and her husband, Earl, 63. Their conditions were not considered critical.

Deputy Dick Seay said Mrs. Ward apparently stepped on the brakes and that the auto skidded off the road and over an embankment. He said the auto tumbled end over end and threw out all six passengers.

BULK INCREASE
Rio de Janeiro — Coffee loses 12 to 20 per cent of its weight in the roasting process but increases its bulk by one-third.

Late in 1959 a series of steps were initiated to integrate Eversharp into the Parker operation, and the final step came in September this year when the small Eversharp sales force was integrated into Parker's staff.

Meanwhile, Eversharp began introducing new pens, all with the mark of Parker quality and design. A company spokesman said results already are beginning to show—the number of Eversharp outlets are on the increase, and sales are rising.

Parker now has sales strength in pens ranging from 70 cents to \$1.50 and has lost none of its reputation in the high-priced field.



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