

Computer Center Keeps an Abacus For Emergencies

Cleveland (UPI)—The ancient abacus, one of the first man-made computers, is playing an emergency standby role in the heart of the \$2.5 million computing center at Case Institute of Technology.

The abacus is enclosed in a wall-mounted glass case, labeled for "Use in Emergency."

The abacus is noted for its lack of mechanical parts and ease of operation. It was originally designed by the Romans and had units—fives, tens, hundreds, thousands, and so on—which were represented by beads which could be moved in grooves.

Case's abacus is similar in style to the suan-pan still in use in much of China and other Asiatic countries. The Chinese version, which Case has displayed, uses rods rather than grooves, and although abacus users add and subtract more quickly than those using pencil and paper, multiplication and division problems present more of a problem.

According to several experts and students of mathematics, means of counting such as the abacus are no longer necessary, but they are so convenient and useful that civilization can never dispense with them.

The use of the abacus has increased greatly within the past few years and the time may conceivably come when, in its proper form, the abacus will again find the common use of five centuries ago.

The ancient computer still is prominently used in the Soviet Union.

Legislature Cost Bill Sent To Gov. Hatfield

Salem (UPI)—The Oregon Senate has passed and sent to Gov. Mark Hatfield a measure to allocate \$1,250,000 to pay for the 1961 legislature and interim costs until the 1963 legislature meets.

Construction Should Show Increase

New York (UPI)—The construction industry got a bit ahead of itself with its sharp rise in 1959, leveled off in 1960 and now appears set to resume its upward course in 1961.

Industry experts look for construction to be a sustaining force in the economy in 1961. They see particular strength in residential building and public works—sufficient to offset expected declines in non-residential building and private building categories.

The Department of Commerce anticipates a \$55.1 billion construction total for 1960, a 2 per cent dip from the \$56.2 billion volume in record 1959. It estimates a figure of \$57.3 billion for 1961.

The decline in 1960 marked the first time since the end of World War II that the building business failed to set new records. While the 15 per cent rate of gain enjoyed in 1959 proved impossible to maintain, the industry in 1960 still operated well above the 1958 level.

Dr. George Cline Smith, chief economist for the F. W. Dodge Corp., construction marketing specialists, looks on 1960 as "the end of an era—the year in which the last nail was driven into the coffin of the post-war period."

Housing Lags
Housing, which had suffered a 16-year hiatus during the depression and the war, probably was further in arrears than any other important activity, and it is not surprising that it has been among the last to revert to normal, Smith said. However, by late 1960, there was evidence that even housing was finally falling into phase with the rest of the economy.

Nevertheless, Smith feels, the outlook is bright for the decade ahead. "The fact is," he said, "that markets during the 60s, for business in general and for construction in particular, are going to be colossal. What is different is that competition among sellers will be fierce, and that buyers

will be more coy and elusive than they were in the post-war period. There will be plenty of business and plenty of profit, but it will go to those firms who do the best job of identifying, locating, studying, reaching, intriguing and selling their customers."

Housing, with non-farm starts off to around 1,300,000 units in 1960, compared with 1,531,000 in 1959, was the chief contributor to the construction decline in 1960. Monetary conditions, with financing costs up and FHA and VA-insured mortgages in poor competitive position, were to blame in large part

for the housing slowdown.

Pressure Off
There is evidence—in an increased vacancy rate and a weakening market for second-hand houses—that some of the pressure if off in housing demand, at least until the next big population surge due in the mid-1960s.

However, the housing people feel that in 1961 the effects of easier money and possible special government action will offset any effects of a further general business downturn, and it is estimated starts for 1961 will run to about 1,325,000.

And, while over-all housing

demand is less intense than in recent years, it is pointed out, the rate of replacement still is extremely low and there are millions of sub-standard dwellings. The basic annual demand for housing, according to the experts, is about 1,300,000 units: 900,000 for population growth, 300,000 for replacement, and 100,000 a year merely to keep the vacancy rate steady as total housing stock grows. At some point, it is generally agreed, the replacement rate will have to rise.

Heavy Work Up
Heavy engineering, up 9 per cent in 1960, is expected to rise still further, with a percentage increase in 1961 expected to be better than that of any other major building category. Sparking the rise will be highway construction, which accounts for about half the total heavy engineering contract volume. If general economic activity slackens even moderately in 1961, it is thought, one of the first anti-recession measures could well be a step-up in the federal-aid program.

In addition, increasing awareness of the dangers of water pollution and more effective regulatory measures will help boost contracts for sanitation facilities.

Non-residential building in 1960 set a new all-time high, paced by sizable increases in contracts for industrial and educational buildings. However, the capital spending cycle which began just after the 1958 recession appears to be topping out. Some declines are in prospect in industrial and commercial building which will offset gains in other sectors to result in an overall decline in non-residential activity of around 2 per cent.

Ashland Chamber President Calls For More Effort

Ashland—President A. C. Fries Jr. called for more individual effort on the part of members during 1961 at the Ashland Chamber of Commerce meeting Tuesday in the Mark Antony hotel.

Fries said he hopes the chamber's income can be increased this year. "This can only be done through an expanded membership," he said. "The chamber has done exceptionally well with what we have had to work with in the past," he said. Fries mentioned that a prospective member list of over 100 names has been prepared as a start in a membership campaign.

In outlining other 1961 chamber goals Fries said the proposed \$165,000 ski resort on Mt. Ashland would receive as much help as the chamber can give.

Airport Committee Report
He said the chamber airport committee has learned it is not feasible to attempt to build an airport that would accommodate large commercial passenger planes. The proposal arose originally when it was thought development of an airport would make it possible for planes to land in the Rogue valley when the Medford airport was fogged in.

However, Fries said the federal aeronautics administration had advised against such a plan because of complications presented by mountainous terrain in the Ashland area.

"However, we can develop the present airport into a first class small plane port," Fries said. The FAA has recommended extending the present runway an additional 500 feet and widening it 50 feet, he said.

More Picnic Areas
Fries also called for development of more picnic and pleasure driving areas in the Ashland vicinity. "The pressure on Lithia park is becoming more than the park facilities can handle," Fries said. He mentioned Mt. Ashland, Grizzly peak and Wagner butte as possible areas which could be considered for development.

The possibility of encouraging some organization to stage a regatta on Emigrant lake was also mentioned. The county court's approval would have to be secured for such a project, Fries said.

Plans for highway signs on approaches to Ashland are also being completed, Fries told the group. He said a slogan for the city is needed.

New chamber organization plans call for elimination of many standing committees now existing, the president revealed. He said new committees will be appointed at the chamber luncheon next Tuesday.

St. Louis Cardinal Gets Red Hat Symbol

Vatican City (UPI)—Joseph Cardinal Ritter of St. Louis received the red hat symbolic of his office from Pope John XXIII Wednesday, along with three other newly created cardinals.



ADMIRE SHOES—Ten-year-old Betty Radcliffe looks admiringly at a collection of miniature shoes on display at a hobby show in Chicago. The miniature collection is owned and shown by Miss Betty DeLage of Chicago and won first prize at the show. (UPI-Telephoto)

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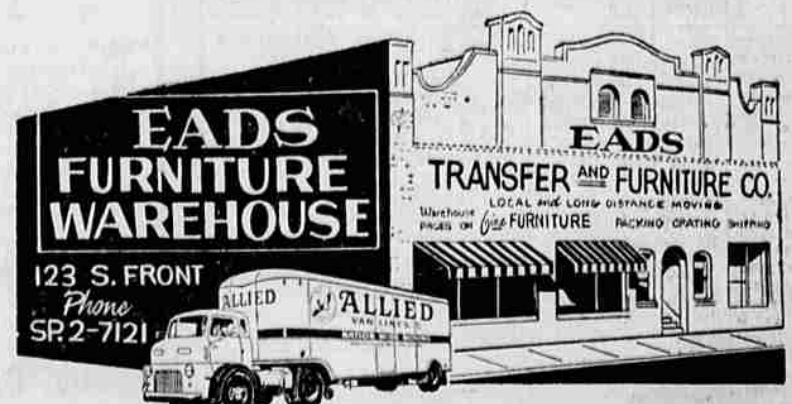
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