

Sloan Stresses Need for Highly Competent American

By DELOS SMITH
UPI Science Editor

New York—There's no point in sending a birthday present to the lean and efficient man who will be 88 years old next Thursday. But he would if he could make a present to you and to you and to you — indeed, to each and every American.

His fortune, estimated in financial circles at something like \$200 million or more, has in large measure already been dedicated to people. But unhappily the gift for every one is unpurchasable in massive lots. Yet it is something almost anyone could give to himself if he really puts his mind to it.

It is the burning and unquenchable desire to be competent. According to the dictionary, to be competent is to be able "to answer to all requirements." That takes a great deal of doing in the present world, what with the enormous complexities which science and technology have wrought.

For the secure future of our country and its free enterprise system there can't possibly be too many highly competent Americans. Yet millions of us are more delighted by games than by technology and more fascinated by television escapism than by the meanings and strivings of science.

Competence Needed
This would-be gift giver believes nothing is more important for America than high competence in the even more difficult years and decades which are to come. To be sure, he is biased. He has proved himself to be one of the most competent of men.

He is Alfred Pritchard Sloan Jr., arriving at yet another birthday bright of eye, sharp of mind, and hard of hearing. This man is the prime maker of General Motors Corporation as it has evolved today with its working capital of \$3,328,030,000, its gross 1962 sales of \$14,640,241,000, its investment of

\$6,650,972,000 and its some 605,000 employees.

He also is the prime developer of thousands of highly competent minds and, what's more, the layman whom history may well single out for a share of the credit when science finally licks cancer. These are the free enterprises which now absorb his still sizeable energies.

Sloan at Desk
At 88 he has outlived almost all his contemporaries, including a dearly loved wife with whom he had 58 years of tranquil marriage. He is childless and so there is an aloneness which could isolate him from people and the real world, as it does so many aged persons.

But he doesn't allow this to happen to him. If he did it would show he was no longer "answering to all requirements." Every week day morning he is at his desk by 10 in the offices of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation on the 25th floor of a Fifth ave. office building.

It is now endowed with a little over \$240 million and is set up to work through perpetuity for high American competence in technology, science, economics and all other requirements for living and achieving.

He is board chairman, the policy maker. As he was when he was head man at GM, he is surrounded by executives of demonstrably high competence. Dr. Everett Case resigned as president of Colgate university to become president of the foundation. Dr. Warren Weaver, one of the most accomplished of American men of science, is a vice president. So is Albert Bradley, a GM financial superbrain who was Sloan's successor as GM chairman.

This is no giving - money-away enterprise, please understand. It is directed at investing money in people (rather than in projects and other "things") and most definitely Sloan and his foundation expect these investments to

yield returns in the public interest.

Fighting Cancer
Up to the end of 1962 it had spent or committed about \$65 million toward improving the competence of Americans and about \$25 million into the search for the knowledge which will relieve people of "the greatest curse levied on mankind by nature." That is Sloan's characterization of cancer.

The money seeking high competence went into education at all levels — "high," professional, elementary, secondary and even "popular." Most of it was invested in individuals seeking to make their high competence even higher, and in individuals with the burning desire to achieve it.

The cancer millions went into the Sloan-Kettering Institute for cancer research in New York which Sloan got going in the late 20's, enlisting the late Charles F. Kettering of GM. It was one of the first large-scale and fully staffed and equipped organizations devoted exclusively to conquering cancer and provided an impetus that encouraged the present world-wide massive effort. It now get financial support from many sources, especially from private philanthropies attracted by Sloan's initiative.

Giving money away is no problem, as anyone knows. But private philanthropy which is intended to be highly competent in producing benefits for Americans and their country is the toughest of problems. The federal government could be a competitor, an overwhelming one. The hundreds of millions of general tax funds which go annually into such old-line philanthropic causes as education and medical research dwarf the potentials of even the largest fortunes.

Not Competing
The Sloan philanthropies avoid competition with government funds. In one way or another, they're designed to get selected balls to rolling, as Sloan got the cancer research ball rolling. Another ball of his was formal research and study to improve the competence of industrial management. A current ball is to stimulate continuing technical education of engineers and teachers of engineers.

In his vocabulary, "imagination" and "aggressive" are big words. He looks for the imaginative idea which is meaningful enough to be pursued aggressively. These ideas come to him in abundance still, as they always have. One such resulted in the foundation's keen interest in "popular" education. Science and technology need both an interested and knowing public and Sloan grants are being used to build such a public.

Sloan does not quarrel with the use of tax funds for many philanthropic purposes. But he has been concerned lest private philanthropy should get discouraged by government competition.

"I believe that every one profits by the opportunity presented by this country of ours," he told this reporter. "I hold, therefore, that each accumulates a debt or obligation, subconsciously, of course, to our society and to the degree so benefited there is recognized an obligation to contribute in proper measure one's talent and one's substance to promoting the general cause, especially in the area of greatest need."

Aids Increasing
"I believe the increasing realization of all this in the face of urgent social needs of all types expanded by the advance of science, explains in part the great increase in private philanthropy in recent years."

At 88, Sloan remains incredibly well-informed, as he was during the 30 years he was at the top at General Motors. (From 1923 to 1946, he was the chief executive officer; from 1946 to 1956 he was chairman of the board.) Appraisals and reports of all kinds, (including those from GM where he remains

a director, member of two governing committees and as honorary chairman) are channeled across his desk.

An executive is likely to exclaim, "Why, Mr. Sloan! You should have had your secretary phone! I'd have come to you. I'm younger than you are." Such a remonstrance Sloan brushes off with, "Yes, but you're busier than I am."

There's not a single "yes" man in the Sloan Foundation. His affectionate trust is in the people who can conceive of Alfred P. Sloan being wrong and are loyal enough to him to speak up. He expects to be proven wrong, of course, and when one executive succeeded in doing so with utter finality, Sloan said to him, "Did I flop on that one?" All the while beaming with the gratitude of the rescued.

No Protege
This reporter asked one of his right-hand men at the foundation, Albert Bradley, "Were you Mr. Sloan's protege at GM?" Bradley, who is almost 72 by the way, bristled. "Certainly not," he said and then made it plain he had risen to the top job on his own high competence.

With that crisis surmounted, he talked of "Mr. Sloan" with bright humor and manifest affection.

Sloan has a way of standing off and having a look at himself. He jokes about his poor hearing and his creeping age. "It's hell to get old but I don't care much for the alternative," he said. His personal humility and his modesty are among his most charming qualities.

Yet he is "aggressive" — to use a favored word of his. He aggressively expects people to be competent and to grow increasingly more so with age and experience. It hasn't yet occurred to him that this attitude could be old-fashioned.

He is "Mr. Sloan to every one, and he has been through his adult years. Not even Bradley calls him "Alfred" and as far back as Bradley can remember, only a very few people who were close business associates of his youth, ever have.

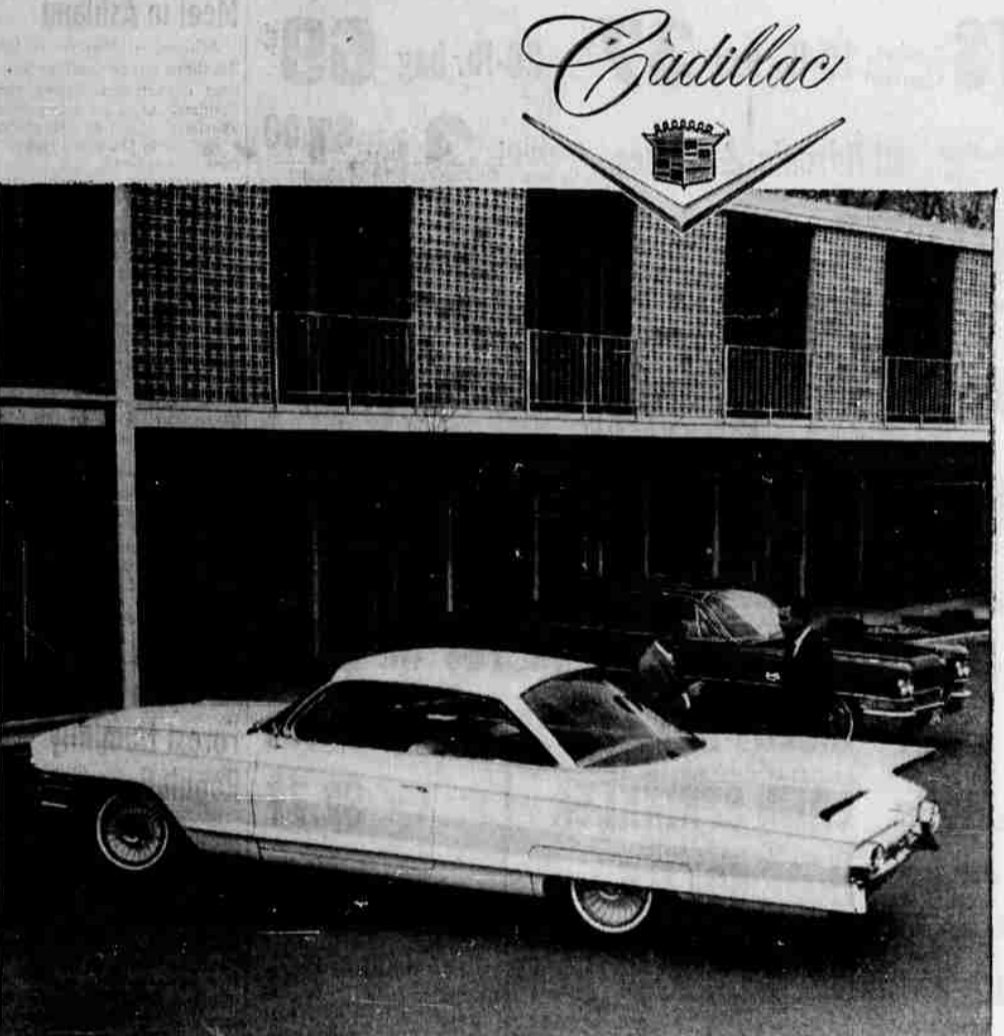
There is no apparent reason why this is so. He appears to be a simple man although of course he couldn't be since no man really is. But he is easily approachable, a man to whom you can say anything. But there's something austere, detached and elevated in his personality which makes chummy familiarity unthinkable.

Dines Alone
Aside from his late wife who is often in his thoughts, he has had no true intimates, no cronies. When he goes out to lunch, he goes alone.

After Mrs. Sloan died in 1956 he sold their homes in Florida and on Long Island and he now lives only in their co-op apartment on Fifth Avenue, some 15 blocks from his office, attended by a small staff of servants. Compared to the usual run of multimillionaire homes, it is no great shakes. There isn't a single Rembrandt in the place. But there is a television, of course. Sloan enjoys the night baseball games.

His hair is both sparse and white. His voice may quaver at times and his face is lined. But he has intense drive still, and intense interests, and a dedication which he does not advertise but which is always evident.

Look back over his long life and you'll find only consistency from boyhood to the present. As a teen-ager in Brooklyn he was seeking special instruction so he could get into Massachusetts Institute of Technology ahead of



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his age group. He needed only three years there instead of the usual four to get his degree in electrical engineering.

He was then 20 and imaginative enough to realize anti-friction bearings were going to revolutionize mechanical design, since they overcome the destructiveness of friction. Even now most people would say automobiles revolutionized it, but the fact is anti-friction bearings made automobiles possible.

Well Endowed
Obviously he was well-endowed by nature. His parents had education and culture, and were comfortably well-to-do without being wealthy. He has three brothers and a sister, all living but all younger than he. Two brothers have distinguished themselves, Dr. Raymond P. Sloan as a public health scientist, (he is a pro-

fessor at Columbia University), and Harold S. Sloan as an economist.

This reporter reports science in the main, Sloan became a vibrant personality to him, rather than merely a name at the top of American industry at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center where he is an inspirer, an encourager, and an "incentive"-maker-to use another of Sloan's favored words. The scientists regard him with affection. To them he is a powerfully stimulating force.

Yet this man has never had cancer strike close to him. You could wonder why his deep emotional involvement with cancer was such an intense interest. Slowly you realize why—cancer offends him deeply. It cuts down competent human beings in their

prime. So far it has made mock of the most competent scientific efforts to lick it.

This reporter asked Sloan if he felt discouraged, if only now and then. "No," he said. "Cancer has only been under attack during the last 25 years and intensively only during the last 15 years. It is a

most profound problem. It involves the very processes of life concerning which science knows little. I hold that any problem, such as cancer, attacked aggressively and progressively, given adequate time, essential talent and the required facilities, will be solved."

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Mercy Flights Takes Patients to Homes
Several persons have been flown to hospitals outside of the Rogue valley or returned home recently, according to Mercy Flights, Inc.
Mrs. Edith Warnock, Medford, was returned to her home from Wheeler, Ore., after receiving medical treatment there. She was the 1,457th patient flown by the non-profit air ambulance service since it was started.
Douglas Loudon, Yreka, was flown to San Francisco for emergency medical care, and Bert Blondell, Agness, was returned to the valley after medical treatment at the Veterans Administration hospital, Vancouver, Wash.
Earlier, Patricia Stroh, 11-year-old daughter of Mrs. Catherine Stroh, 147 Fourth ave., Gold Hill, was flown to the Children's hospital, Seattle, Wash., for medical care.

ASTROLOGER EXPELLED
Katmandu, Nepal — Jaganath Misra, an Indian astrologer who predicted trouble for King Mahendra's two-month-old parliamentary government, has been expelled from this mountain kingdom.