

# SIDELINES

By S. M. Miner  
 (The following is a continuation of the subject discussed in SIDELINES of last week. The remaining two social policies are considered: enforced competition and government ownership.)

WHERE REGULATION as a means of industrial control meets its difficulty, the enforced competition method demures. Since regulation cannot be attained because of the extensive diversification of industrial endeavor, enforced competition offers a solution which tends to allow the small business man to remain free, to set his own prices on the basis of competition. From there it goes on to attempt control of the large, giant, monopolistic types of business organization; not control of the regulatory type, however, but definite rules of procedure and conduct, requirements and standards, thereby setting the limits within or under which big business may operate.

WITH THIS accomplished it is assumed that industry will control itself on a price-adjusting basis, thus the title of enforced competition, "maintained freedom"; as one economist has drawn the analogy, "ban the Mack truck from the highways and the baby Austin can roll on unhampered and unafraid."

DEFINITE policies along the line of enforced competition are carried by such regulations as the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, and the Clayton Act, and have been forwarded by such actions as Theodore Roosevelt's "Trust-busting" campaign, La Follette's (the elder) attempt to break up all big business, and Wilson's "new-freedom." Its culmination, to date, was reached when both major political parties declared strongly against monopoly.

HOWEVER, EVEN enforced competition does not answer the problem. It too has its difficulties and shortcomings. It has been said that "A good corporation lawyer could take a law designed to be a wall and make it into a triumphal arch". This figure of speech brings out the fundamental difficulty with enforced competition. No one can be so naive as to believe that prices in the steel industry have been set by free competition. And again, everyone realizes that there are many large companies in the industrial world, whose policies are law and to defy those is certain death.

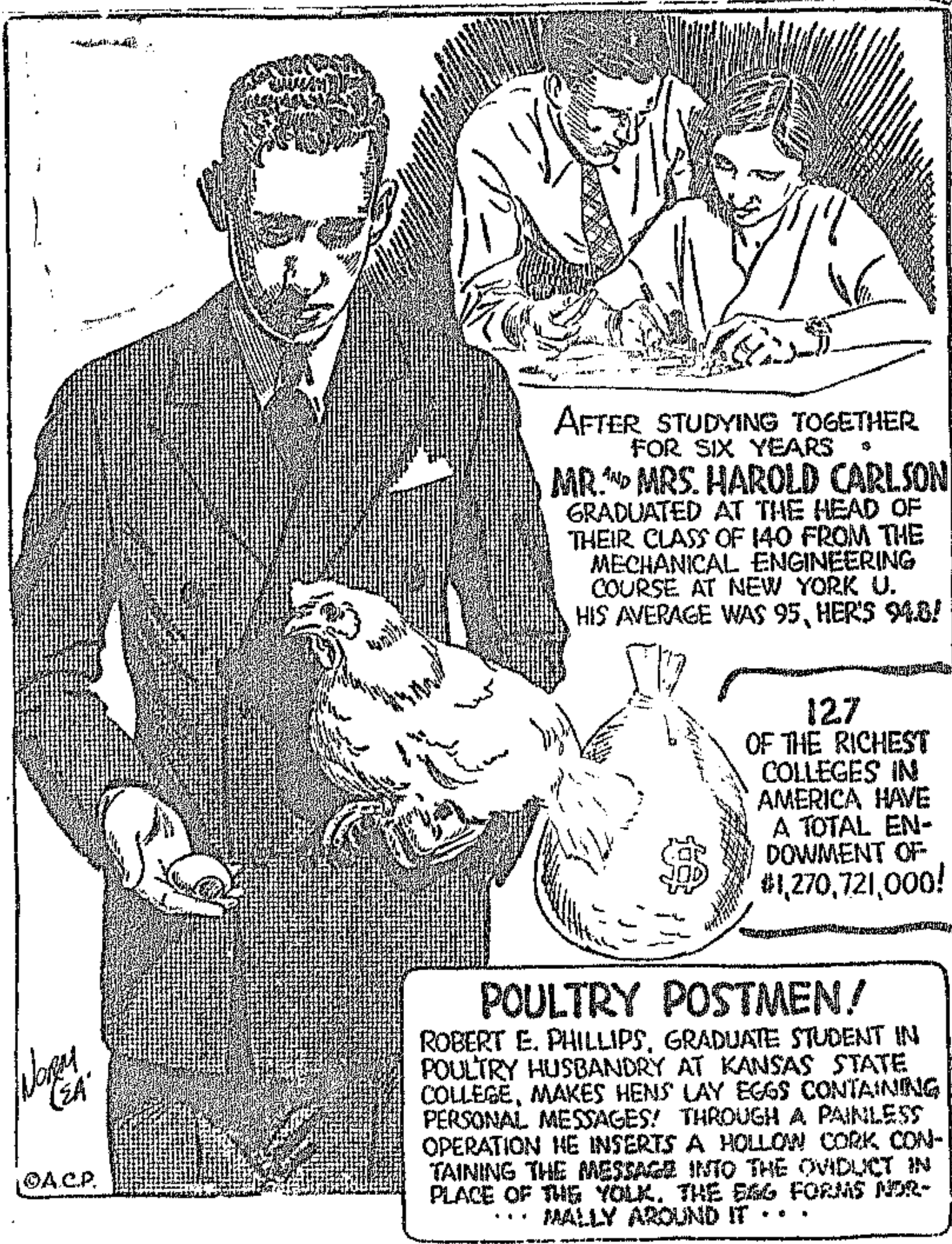
THE CAUSE OF this difficulty lies in the inability to obtain efficient, honest and intelligent policing. This inability can be traced to three origins. First, legislation has been slow and difficult to obtain. Second, the problem facing the policing official soon tears down any strength of endeavor which he might have had. And third, court decisions have tied the hands of the authorities to a very great extent.

THE FINAL POLICY is one which receives much discussion from liberal theorists and from radical fanatics, but for the common people is still too much of an experiment to be worried about; it is government ownership. In one respect, it has an advantage over enforced competition and regulation in that it allows for one man (a government executive) to do the work formerly handled by two (a business executive and a government official to watch him.) Furthermore, from the view point of society as a whole, there is an advantage in the elimination of the profit motive.

HOWEVER, AS A possibility on an appreciable scale within the next few years, the governmental ownership policy may be ruled out. It goes too much "against the grain" of the American people. It involves too much of a change in our manner of by the rank and file of the people.

AS PROFESSOR TAUSSIG has said in describing the antipathy of the American people toward government control, "... it is an inheritance from the older political philosophy of *Laissez-Faire* and non-interference. In part, it is due to sad experience of misgovernment in this country.

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### POULTRY POSTMEN!

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But to no small degree it arises from a lurking fear of dispossession. Public management is 'socialistic'; it is feared as the entering edge to complete expropriation."

OF COURSE THIS division into

four main divisions is only superficial. Government is, has been, and will be a combination of features from all four. It is only a question of the ratios in which the constituents are present in the mixture.

## BALLOT—

(Continued from page one)  
 lic works program is preferable to cash relief, that an amendment making state minimum wage laws constitutional is desirable, that the government should aid the American farmers by protective tariffs and the regulation of prices, and that relief should be administered by the local government in preference to the national government.

Opinion was divided on the effect of a new administration on the business conditions of the country. From the vote, thought is divided on the handicapping of business by a large unbalanced national government budget.

### The Relief Question

The *Why?* question on the advisability of having a public works program or cash relief drew some interesting answers.

Generally the ideas in favor of a public works program were: "Prevents a dole," "Less graft—but no boondoggling and waste," "Have something to show for the money," "No work, no eat," "Aids basic industries," "Idleness induces crime," "Work promotes self-reliance" and "There's individual cheating with cash relief."

In favor of the cash relief were written: "Public work interferes with normal development," "Too much administration cost," "Cheaper form of relief—makes relief less attractive," and "Private industry could do the work much cheaper."

The opinions on the relative values

of the administration of relief by the national and local governments are in most cases contradictions. Many of the same advantages are claimed for both methods of administration.

### Thought Trends

Consensus of thought of those favoring local relief administration is that the local government knows the needy individuals, has a clearer understanding of the problems, and could operate more efficiently and at a lower cost.

Claimants for national relief say there is less chance for petty graft, local problems are least understood by local agents, some local governments are not wealthy enough to finance relief, and that it centralizes control.

Separate tabulations were made on the way in which the followers of each candidate answered the questions in the ballot.

Followers of the "Old Guard" standard believe a new administration would have a marked beneficial effect on business conditions. In contrast, the Roosevelt followers give a vehement No!

### Business Handicap

Is business seriously handicapped by a large unbalanced budget? The Republicans say yes with 55 votes against 63 negative votes of the Democrats.

According to 79 votes by followers of the "Donkey" party, the T.V.A. and other public utilities would be properly owned by the government. Seven Thomas' followers and six Browder advocates agree with them, while 51 of the 59 Landon men voting and the two Lemke

followers are opposed to the idea. Has the present administration taken undue control over business? Fifty-three Landonites think so while 78 Democrats disagree with them.

As to the question on the present relief policy forming a permanent dole supported class, 57 Republicans and 17 Democrats believe it will. A weaker group of 49 Roosevelt men think otherwise.

A higher percentage of both factions believe that the government should not have a strict control over business and an approximately equal number from each faction want the *Laissez Faire* (let alone) policy. The followers of Browder and Thomas voted against both strict control and let alone policies.

### Split on Court Power

On the liberal interpretations of the constitution, Landon followers split on the issue, 28 for and 28 against with 11 doubtful. Seventy-six strong Roosevelt advocates and five of the Socialists favored it. Strangely enough, two of the Browder followers were for liberal interpretation and three against it. Lemke's two followers also split on the issue.

The Republicans definitely voted to oppose the enabling of Congress to re-pass an act over a Supreme Court decision while the Democrats were evenly divided on the question.

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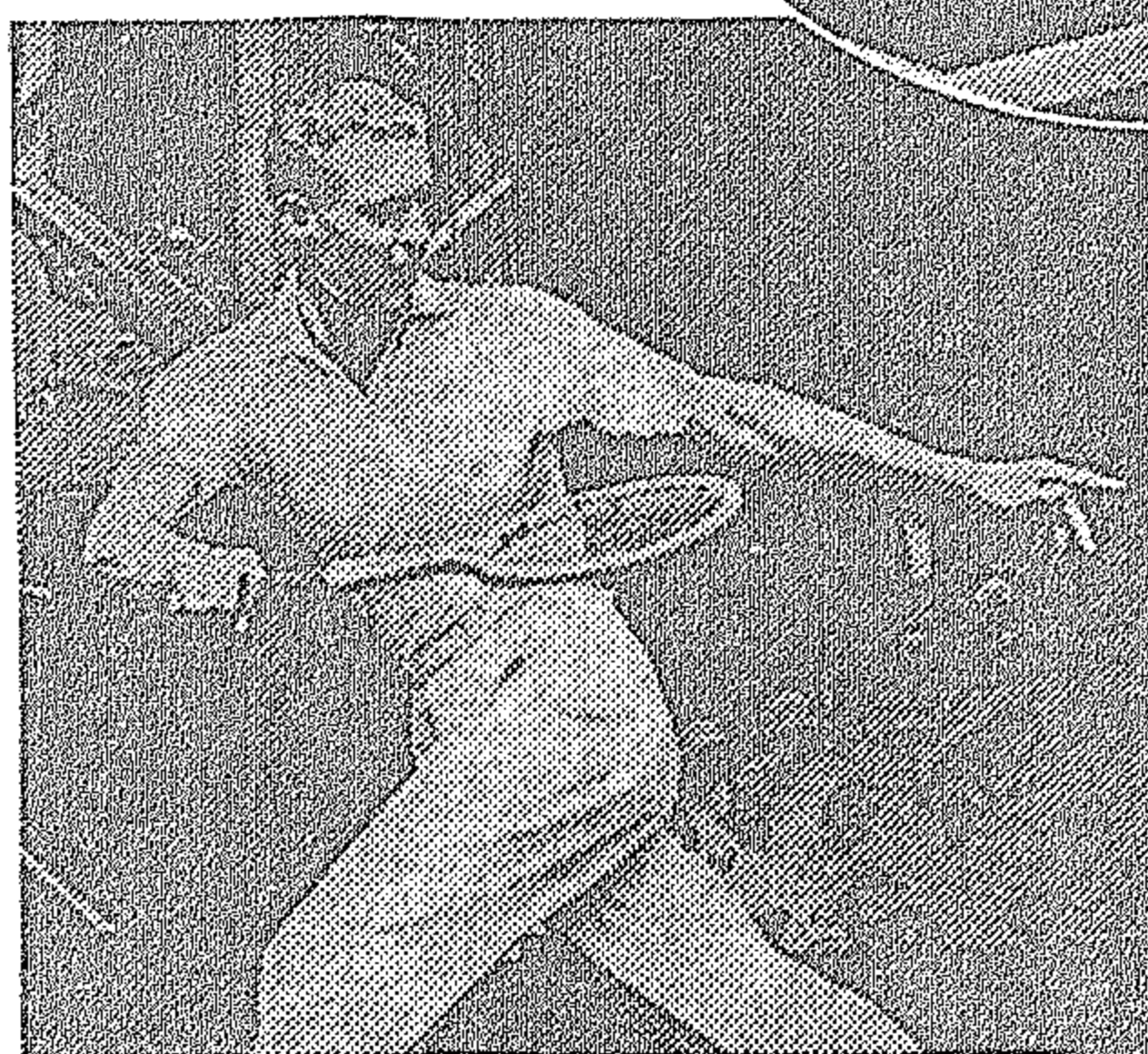
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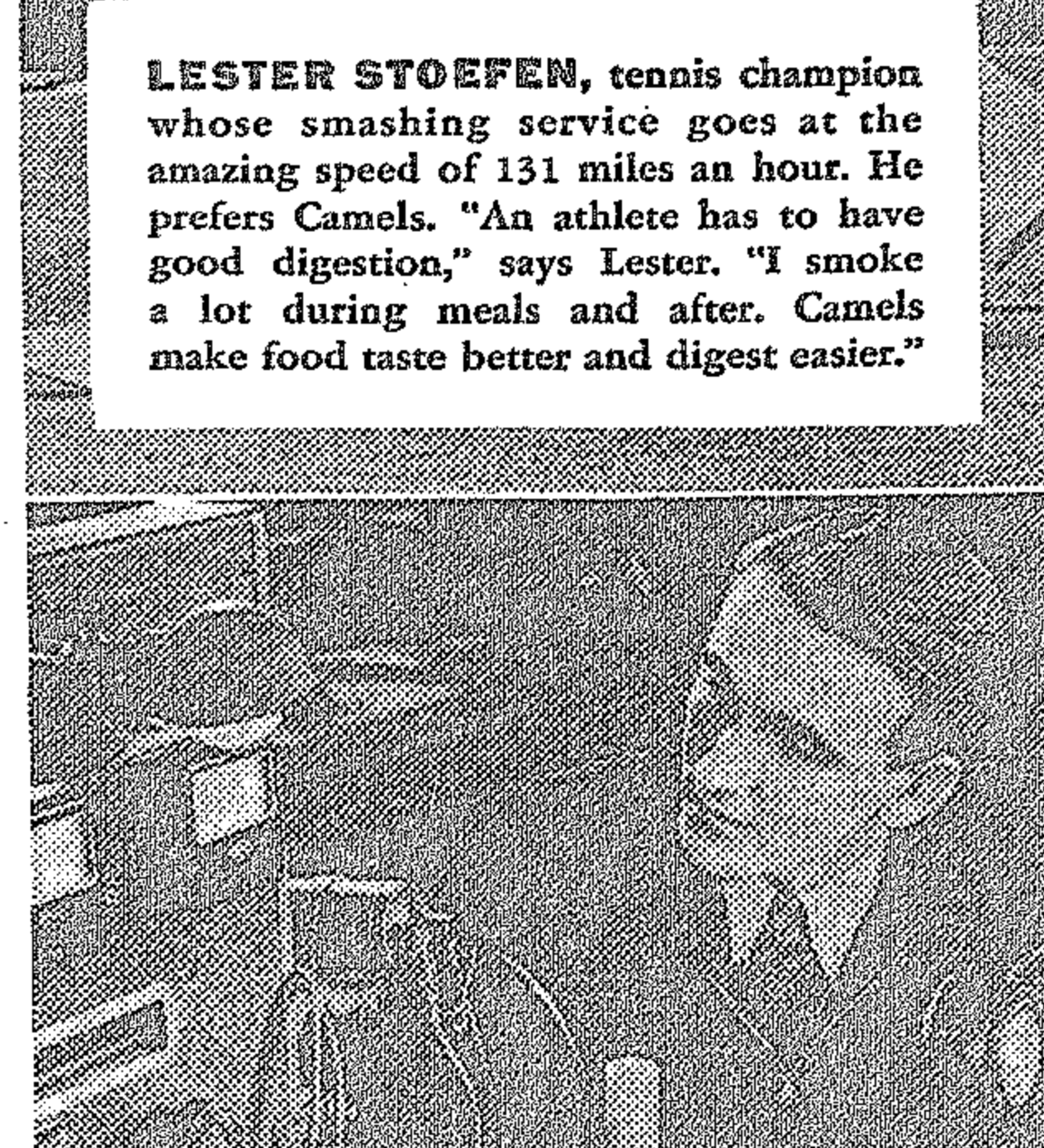
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