



Peoria Plans

War production is zooming in this mid-Illinois city, but industry is also concerned about making jobs for servicemen when peace comes.

By Walter H. Gardner

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WHEN a Chinese writes the word "crisis," he dips a brush in ink and draws two ideographs. One means "danger"; the other means "opportunity." Events are now building toward a crisis in the Chinese sense of the word. Our boys are fighting to give us a great opportunity. If we "muff" it, our way of life will be in dire danger.

That truth was brought home to us Peorians last November when the CED* selected our mid-Illinois city of 122,000 as a "guinea pig." Most of us had been so busy turning out matériel we hadn't thought much about what we would do with victory after it was won. Now, without slackening our output, we are giving thought to post-war Peoria and jobs for the boys who will return.

Our plan is simple. We have an executive committee of seven men and three subcommittees for "action," "research," and "relations." Our tools are a few explanatory pamphlets, prepared by CED, and a "Check Sheet" for employers to fill out.

These Check Sheets call for 1940, 1942, and *probable* post-war figures on the following:

- Total gross sales in dollars.
- Total average full-time employees.
- Number of women employees.
- Employees in each shift.

"Admittedly," the Check Sheet states, "this all means planning in

the dark. We do not know when the war will end, or how. . . . But the best way to win the peace is to start now. . . . You will find it stimulating to your officers and production and merchandising departments to try to bring post-war problems into sharper focus."

Among questions for management to ask itself, for its own guidance, are the following:

What new products can we market when the war ends?

What development work can we start now—however slowly?

What plans must be made to organize men, money, and equipment?

How long will it take to convert our factories?

What technical improvements in design or processes can we apply?

What material, purchased for war production, can be converted?

Will new materials, lately developed, be applicable?

Shall we take our suppliers of raw materials into conference?

Will certain imports, when available, favorably affect costs or processes?

Are we building up proper depreciation and obsolescence reserves?

How will we rebuild our sales, advertising, or dealer organizations?

Shall we ask our customers to reveal their post-war requirements?

Shall we train present workers for post-war production?

Shall we plan to interest labor, so it will know what part it may play?

What provision shall we make for

* Committee for Economic Development, a nongovernmental organization. See *When Johnny Comes Marching Home . . .* a statement of its purpose, by Rotarian Paul G. Hoffman, its chairman, in the September, 1943, *ROTARIAN*.

rehiring former employees when they return from the armed services?

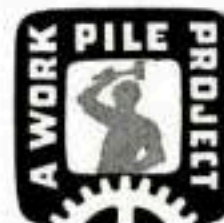
Within four weeks after Check Sheets had been sent out, the action committee had received filled-out Sheets from 45 of the 49 Peoria plants employing 50 persons or more. Many companies reported that they have set up committees to work on their own post-war problems of production, sales, and finance.

When all figures had been computed, we knew something that Peorians had not known before. It was that in 1940, Peoria factories had employed 22,000 persons; that in January, 1943, the number had risen to 30,000; and that *29,000 could be employed after the adjustments of peace.*

This means that Peoria industry, by its own best intelligent guessing, looks forward to employment in peacetime of almost as many persons as it does now at the peak of war production.

It means that if we at home do our part, jobs will be ready for Peoria men returning from the armed services; that women can go back to their homes; that service stations and automobile dealerships can be re-

opened; that retailers can look forward to paying customers; that, in short, we in Peoria can look forward





PEORIA'S Work Pile committee chairmen are (left to right): Garrett Roelis, research; Ted Fleming, relations; F. L. Ross, action; and Walter H. Gardner, executive. The last three named are Rotary Club members.

to a wholesome community life. Doubtless there will be difficult weeks and months when our economy is shifting from war back to a peace basis. But by starting now to give thought to such problems as reconversion, new products, new markets, and financing, Peoria industries will be in a favorable position to cope with them.

While Peoria may have been the No. 1 "guinea pig" in CED's post-war program, it is heartening that the same sort of surveys are being made in numerous other cities. For post-war preparations are much like making a will. One doesn't wait for the big event; it is then too late.

Surveys reveal important information, as we know from our experience in Peoria, but the greatest benefit is psychological. Instead of slowing our efforts to win the war, planning for peace motivates us by giving us a vision of better days ahead—or, to revert to the Chinese symbol for "crisis," *opportunity*.

We as industrialists, wholesalers, retailers, and professional men should become progressively aware of the new world in which we are to work. We should be

thinking of magnesium, aluminum, laminated woods, plastics, synthetic rubber, and electronic inventions. When the war ends, people will want to buy automobiles, refrigerators, girdles, golf balls, washing machines, rope, tractors, furniture, and the innumerable other things and services that are essential or desirable for a satisfying standard of living.

As private enterprise moves in to meet the demands of a starved civilian economy, jobs will be

created for thousands and millions of ex-servicemen. A peace that doesn't do that will be, for many men now in uniform or "civvies," a peace that isn't worth the travail of this global war.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For a small-city "case study" of post-war planning, see Carl Zapffe's Brainerd, Minnesota, Does It! in the September issue; also Paul B. McKee's Let's Heap the Work Pile High!, telling of Rotary's rôle in the Work Pile program.

For additional information on post-war employment write to:

Rotary International, 35 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois.

Committee for Economic Development, U. S. Department of Commerce Building, Washington, D. C.

U. S. Chamber of Commerce, Washington, D. C.

DRIVING the master pin in the track of a D8 tractor. . . . Caterpillar tractors are one of the many Peoria products which are being used on the fighting fronts.

