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Hoover Reform Shows Need for Others

Nothing could illustrate more clearly the need for just such an organization as he heads than a case cited by Jess Larson, general services administrator, in recent testimony before the House appropriations committee. Checking the warehouse of a federal agency in Denver, representatives of Mr. Larson's department found enough fluorescent light tubes to last that agency for 93 years at the current rate of consumption. The agency had stored away enough loose leaf binders for 247 years. Its buying of paper for those binders had been a little more conservative — only enough to fill them for 168 years.

Any well managed private business keeps a pretty careful eye on its purchases of supplies and materials, buying only the amount that can be consumed within a reasonable period. It is expensive and often wasteful to have too much money tied up in inventories of such things, especially in times of unstable prices.

But not so the government, under the helter-skelter system of purchasing it has followed in the past which permitted many agencies to determine their own supposed needs and do their own buying. The Hoover Commission's task force found last year that the government had \$27 billion tied up in such inventories, civilian and military. It found also that some departments were selling their ex-

cess supplies of certain articles, at a fraction of their original cost, while others were purchasing quantities of the same article and paying the full price for them.

In substantial accord with the Hoover Commission's recommendation, Congress last year created the General Services Administration and gave it responsibility for all the so-called "housekeeping" duties of the federal government. In this category are included centralized purchasing, the selling of government surplus materials, operation and maintenance of federal offices and buildings throughout the nation, and provision for keeping the voluminous government records.

Buying of materials and supplies alone amounts to \$6 billion a year, and it is obvious that in so vast an operation there is plenty of room for saving or waste. Under Mr. Larson's able administration, great strides have been made toward effecting economies by tightening up purchasing methods, eliminating duplication, and keeping efficient control of inventories. From the activities of this one agency a saving of \$250 million a year is envisioned. Yet this agency is only a small part of the system of greater efficiency in government recommended by the Hoover Commission. Its example should serve as a demonstration of the urgency of putting the remainder of the money-saving, efficiency-promoting Hoover reforms into immediate effect.

PITCHING HORSESHOES

by Billy Rose

The class in Theatrical History will please come to order.

Q.—Why are most New York theaters located in the dozen blocks north of 42nd Street?

A.—Because a producer once hissed a prima donna in his own theater.

Wait a minute—let's have a little order in the classroom! The professor isn't in the habit of making statements he can't back up.

Back in the gay and garish nineties, a man who had made a lot of money in the cigar business built the first Manhattan Opera House, a 2,600-seat temple to Thespis located on Herald Square which, at the time, was the center of New York show business.

This cigar manufacturer was quite an artistic fellow, and for openers, he presented the American premiere of "Cavalleria Rusticana." The opera, however, nose-dived so badly that he subsequently nicknamed it "Busticana."

'After this fancy fiasco, he sponsored several other esthetic flops and finally, down to his last opera hat, he signed over control of his theater to a pair of button-shoe showmen named Koster and Bial.

Seldom Together.

This duo, convinced that art and opulence seldom go together, booked a series of cheap attractions which packed them in, but even though he was getting a cut of the profits, the switch in policy didn't sit well with the culture-loving cigar maker. When he heard off-color jokes on the sumptuous stage he had built for opera singers, he began to simmer, and when Messrs. K. and B. signed Marietta de Dio, a soprano

Still a Job Ahead in Wind Erosion Control