

## Inside Indianapolis

By Ed Sovola

THERE ARE TIMES when a man can't believe his eyes. But even through the perspiration there I was seeing Christmas in July.

The temperature in the second floor showroom of A. C. McClurg, Chicago, at 322½ E. Market St. I estimated to be close to 175 degrees. The sight of toy Christmas trees, snow scenes and a smiling Santa Claus didn't help to bring the heat down one degree.

"It's only about 95 up here today," argued Charles F. Johnson, sales representative for the firm and head man of the display.

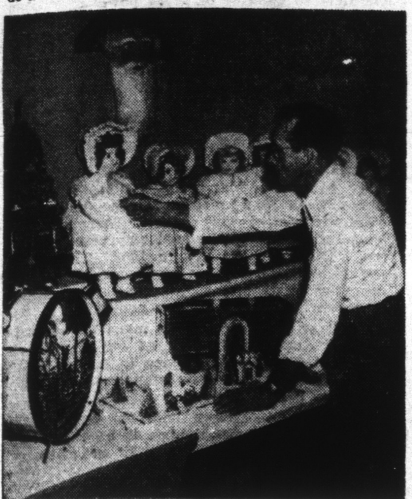
"How come you don't have any buyers?" I asked Santa's little helper. "Don't people buy wholesale anymore?"

Mr. Johnson had to wipe off his face before he answered. I was ready to bet the temperature was closer to 175 than to 95.

"Most of the department store buyers come in the mornings," said Mr. Johnson. "I had a hardware store man just before you came. He didn't say too much about the heat."

## It Will Be Musical Christmas

THE 6000 sq. ft. of display space was packed with merchandise. There were no crowds. The aisles were wide and passable. What a place to do a bit of Christmas shopping.



WHOLESALE CHRISTMAS—You might not have given the Yuletide season much thought but the wholesale boys have. Santa Claus is riding high already as far as Charles Johnson is concerned.

## Melting Men

By Robert C. Ruark

NEW YORK, July 20—It occurred to me last week in Philadelphia, as the sweat rolled in hollow breakers down my legs, that the American male is approximately as silly as the dodo.

And like that benighted bird, he, too, will become extinct—done in by the glass of fashion and the mold of form.

He will melt and merge with the asphalt, to be mourned by a band of women dressed simply in gossamer sunback dresses, and a pair of abbreviated pants.

In the mountains, on the beach and in the country, the American man cavorts in a brief belted, exposing more meat, if possible, than his fair consort.

But loose this silly citizen on a city street, and he will assay the following articles of pore-smothering clothing: Shirt. Tight collar. Constricting necktie. Pants. Socks. Garters. Suspenders. Drawers. Undershirt. Coat.

Why?

When in the tropics you dress for the tropics, and if New York, Washington, Philadelphia, Dayton, Cincinnati and the rest aren't tropic cities in July and August, then it is cool 365 days a year on the Persian Gulf.

The better eating houses, hotels, bars and other public conveniences have always conspired to sell the suspicion that a necktieless man—even in a 98-degree heat wave—is a sassy bum. They have you believe he is unfit to be fed or watered in the presence of ladies and gentlemen.

They will hand the rush to a fellow who is attired comfortably in an open-necked sports shirt—even if he is an oasis of coolness and as handsome as Tyrone Power.

They'll feed Partly Nude Woman

BUT THEY will feed a fat man in a wilted collar, his chins cascading perspiration onto his twisted tie, which has become jammed in the knot and is busy leaking smudgy rainbows all over his shirt front.

Nothing is more horrid to the eye than a sweating character in a coat and tie, his breakfast oozing through his undershirt, shirt and suit-coat, his face a shiny purple, and his hair sweat-plastered to his skull.

Yet he can get in where the comfortably tielless taxpayer can't—and so can a dame who is

bare halfway to the waist, who is slipless, stock- ingless, for all I know, shoeless.

There seems to be something heinous about a shirt that is not moored at the Adam's apple by a length of expensive cloth—which is functional only for hanging yourself from a light fixture.

I went to grab a quick bite in Philadelphia, between sessions, wearing a sort of shirt-coat of Cuban make, sans cravat. It was a real smart hunk of haberdashery for that weather.

Certainly Not Undignified

BUT THE maitre d' wouldn't seat me until he had reached into the cloakroom and produced a shoddy brown coat of the type worn by unsuccessful waiters.

That, and a tie. The coat looked like a dog had been at it, and the tie, although it had a sulka label, was grease-decked. Resembling the ghost of Heywood Brown, I was then allowed to feed.

This put me off an idea of showing up at Convention Hall in shorts. Holy twirling shades of Beau Brummell! I'd have been stoned in the streets. And for what? For being intelligent.

I looked around me, in Philly, at the thousands of males who were reducing themselves to salty puddles on the pavement.

Suits, they wore. Seersucker suits that look like the musky wrappings on a moist mummy. Gaudy, with huge dark patches of wetness under the arms. Cotton opds, which resemble a shroud with legs on it. Miserable, greasy-faced, ill-tempered men, functioning poorly at their jobs and exuding enough water to float the Queen Mary.

A decent sports shirt and a pair of shorts would have changed their lives, but no sirree. Undignified. Sissy, maybe. Undignified.

The British wear such ensembles in every hot- weather profession around the globe, and no man is more dignity-bitten than a limey who is selling empire prestige on other people's real estate. Shorts are worn by generals and kings, when the occasion demands. The toughest soldiers I ever saw—the Austrians—they wear shorts. Adm. Nimitz wore shorts.

But not the American male in a shimmering city. It is my candid opinion that we are a bunch of jerks.

High Prices

WASHINGTON, July 20—I am the fellow who used to like hot pastrami sandwiches. Until last night, that is.

Casually I strolled up to the meat counter and told the man to give me one pound of spiced beef, sliced. He sliced it and he wrapped it and with a leer, he said: "That will be \$2, please."

Being a mere man, without the spunk of the female sex, I gave him the \$2 for one pound of sandwich meat. Felt like a fool. So today I've been investigating the high cost of living and, fellow citizens, the results are confusing.

We might start with a piece I did a week or so ago about the millions of bushels of surplus potatoes the government is buying and burying.

From all over I have been getting mail from embittered ladies asking how come I can write such things when they have to pay 65 cents for 10 pounds of potatoes, and not very good potatoes, at that.

Living Cost Can't Come Down

AND WE get to my sandwiches (somehow they didn't taste right) in a minute.

The trouble is that the government has promised to pay a whopping big price for all sorts of eatables. The cost of living can't come down. This isn't just Othman talking, either, I've been conferring with experts.

Take corn, from which come pork chops eventually and sirloin steaks. The biggest corn crop in the history of America is about to be harvested.

Demand for corn in Europe has fallen off, because the folks over there are beginning to grow their own. So you'd think the price of same would fall.

Well, sir, it has, down almost to \$1.60 per bushel. But it won't drop any more because that's the price the government has promised to pay.

How many millions of dollars worth of corn the federal grain buyers must take in order to hold up the cost, they shudder to think. The same thing goes for wheat. It's in big supply—piled up in the streets in some western towns—and it looks like the government'll have to buy.

It's a Vicious Circle

SO THE price of meat and milk and bread stays up, unless Congress changes the law (which is unlikely), or the slide-rule boys figure that "parity" has gone down.

This "parity" business is a complicated deal, which means in effect that if the cost of tractors goes up, so does the price of the food they harvest.

All this sounds as though I'm denouncing the farmers, who persuaded Congress to pass the law and Mr. Truman to sign it. I'm not.

Farmers' costs are up as high, if not higher relatively, than the price of their corn and potatoes.

This is what the philosophers call a vicious circle. Somewhere it's got to break. When it does somebody is going to suffer, though I doubt if things can get much worse than they are now for customers of city grocers.

So along comes a federal official—I don't think I'll dignify him by naming him—who says the only way to bring down prices of costly food is not to eat it. Nuts.

And I don't ask you to pardon the expression. Not eating potatoes won't bring down their prices. It'll just cause the government to buy more (with our money) so it can pour cold oil on 'em.

Later this season I'll check on how much the fed has had to spend on serotense to make surplus potatoes unfit to eat. I'm off hot pastrami sandwiches in the meantime.

But what really makes me sore is that I don't know who, if anybody, deserves a punch in the nose.

Which opera is based upon a book by Edna St. Vincent Millay?

"The King's Henchman," by Deems Taylor, produced in 1927.

What is necessary to join the DAR?

One must submit proof of a direct ancestor who rendered patriotic service during the American Revolution.

How did Greenland get its name?

According to a Scandinavian saga, in 985 A.D. Eric the Red named it Greenland in order to induce colonists from Iceland to settle in the new country.

How many amendments to the Constitution have been repealed?

Only one, the 18th, prohibition.

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