

CHRISTMAS and NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS FROM KING'S COUNTY

The Million Pound Toy Business

By Ronald Beall

You will not find one professional child psychologist on the staff of the biggest toy making firms in the world. Only businessmen and technicians. Yet in spite of this - maybe because of it - they have built up a multi-million dollar organization on the basis of knowing what pleases a child's mind.

And what does please a child's mind? Experience with my own two small sons suggests it is a home-made bow and arrow, rather than a shiny, chrome-plated bicycle; a saucer and spoon, used as a kettle drum, rather than a toy dog that goes "woof" when you squeeze it.

But Mr. Graeme Lines, who was "brought up" in toys and has spent his life selling them, has no time for the saucer and spoon theory. "Realism," he says, "That's what they want. The more like the real thing the toy is, the better they like it."

True or false? Well, Mr. Lines' family hasn't built up the world's biggest toy firm on a falsehood. And their toys are so like the real thing that, to my mind, many of them are hardly toys at all but collectors' items.

"A child," says Mr. Lines, "is above all, a realist. So long as the only toy car was a piece of bent metal with four wheels on it, he was content. But he wasn't fooled. What was good enough for us in our childhood isn't good enough for our sons and daughters. They know there are toys just like the real thing and they are satisfied with nothing less."

But here it is necessary to make a sharp distinction between toys and novelties. The essential difference is that toys don't change (oh no, they don't!), but novelties are here today and gone tomorrow. How many children of today have ever seen a yo-yo? It enjoyed a phenomenal popularity at one stage of my childhood, yet now I wouldn't know which way up to

appearance and purpose, but made of new materials. Dolls' prams, too; beautifully finished and well-sprung replicas of mother's, infinitely superior to the contraptions when they were children. But dolls' prams, for all that.

And so on through the catalogue. Dolls' houses, with all the furniture to go with them, fortresses with their garrisons of lead soldiers. And, of course, humming tops.

Aren't these the toys that you played with as a child? Certainly they are, but with a difference. The dolls' house is now a neat suburban detached villa and its fittings include a television set and washing machine. The fortress has hardly changed at all in appearance, but the soldiers who man it carry modern weapons of destruction.

But best of all I like the maker's description of the modern humming tops. It had individually tuned vibro-brass reeds, precision built gearbox, nylon gears to suppress gearbox hum, pressed steel case and other up-to-date wonders. The old-type top that had one note, rising to an ear-splitting scream as you bore down on the spiral winder, is definitely gone. We now have tops with triple change four-note chords, whatever they might be.

I have deliberately left the most important group of toys to the last because these bring up another of Mr. Lines' guiding principles. "Toys," he says, "are a reflection of history through the ages." And, by that, he means that as fast as scientists develop new machines, toy makers reproduce them in miniature for the current generation of half-pint realists.

And nowhere has this been more evident than in that vast range of toys that, for want of a better term, I shall call transportation toys. Grandfather might have been content to gallop around on a hobby horse, that bore, in his imagination, some resemblance to great-grandfather's real live horse.

that not only looks like the real thing but one that he can get into and drive.

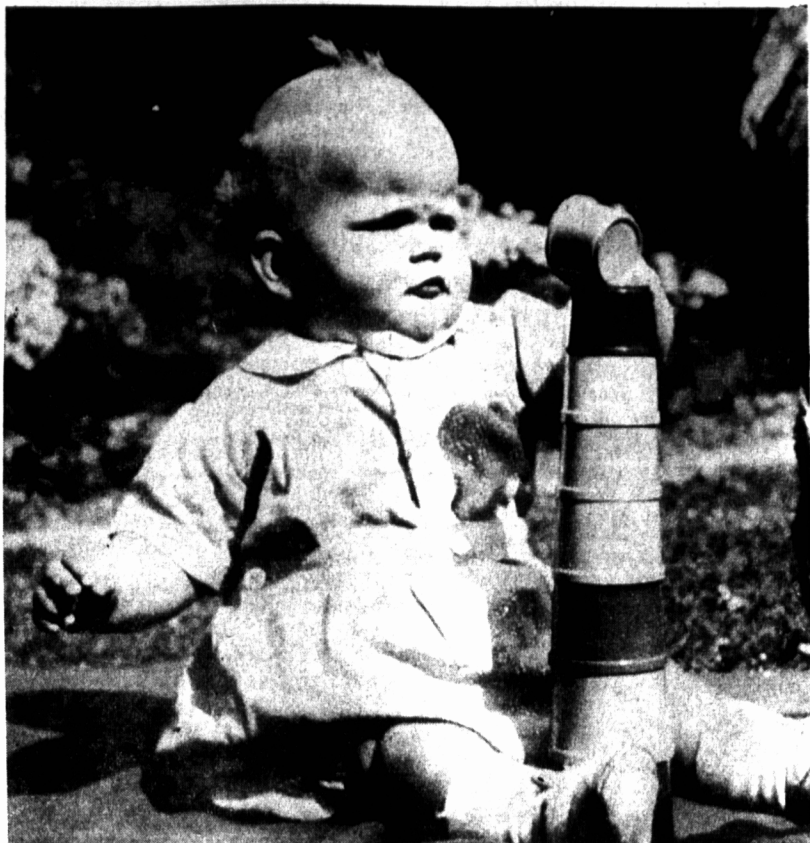
The toy makers' business is not only to see that he gets what he wants but that he gets it even before he knows he wants it. Anticipating "wants" before they are even formed in the child's mind is what Mr. Lines calls "knowhow". And it pays because the firm of which he is a member leads to the field.

"You'd never guess it," says Mr. Lines, "but we spend just as much time figuring whether our newest toy car will be fitted with a horn and electric lights as the car designer himself spends huddled over his drawing board puzzling over whether his latest model should be fitted with automatic drive. And, like him, when we have reached a decision we treat our plans as top secret. Why, do you know there are other toy makers who would give their eyeteeth for a look at our designs for future production!"

And what is the result of all this? It is a car that is fitted not only with electric lights and a horn, but windshield-wipers and a radio (actually a music box), too. It is a police squad car, complete with siren; a dump truck that carries, and actually dumps sand. It is a low truck with a winch that works; a fire-engine with ladder and bell. It is a racing car and a tractor, a jeep and a special de luxe job with shaft drive and two-gear transmission.

But if children are realists, so are their parents. And the parent's realism mostly taken the form of a simple question: "How much does it cost?"

Well, of course, there are cheap toys and expensive toys. Fortunately, a child usually finds the former as acceptable as the latter. Realist or not, he draws copiously on his imagination to supply the details that the designer has omitted or Mom and Dad couldn't afford. (Incidentally, where is the



'O THE INTENDED toddler it is just a game. But this game will pay dividends in later years. It was specially designed for its educational value.

send a little more than they can afford for their children's toys. Grown-ups are better judges of quality than children and they will naturally make the "Best buy", which usually means spending a little more than they had planned. But cost doesn't interest children. They will have just as much fun with a toy aeroplane that shoots out of a catapult as with one that is radio-controlled.

The plain fact is, however, that it isn't a rich man's children who have the most expensive toys. Working class families, I am told, spend more per head on toys than the people whose names are listed in the social register. But there is the exception - I like to picture him as a successful bookmaker or a sheik living on oil royalties - whose only criterion of value is money.

For him (hardly for his child), one British toy manufacturer has produced a replica of a grand prix racing car that is driven by battery and looks like all the world like a slightly smaller version of the real thing. I won't waste time describing it because I am sure you won't be tempted to buy one, but I can tell you, if you are interested, that in Britain it costs 110 pounds, plus another 10 pounds for the battery. So far, 200 of them have been ordered, which surprises me.

Your child may not be among the 200 speeding along at eight miles an hour in an electric racing car, but this I am certain of - he will be the happiest child on earth with whatever you buy him. That is what is so nice about children.

CHRISTMAS JOYS

It's the little things at Christmas That make the day worth while. The holly at the window, A neighbor's friendly smile.

The smell of turkey in the house, The postman at the door, The children's talk of Santa Claus, The parcels on the floor

The story of a little Child Who is a manger lay The joyous chime of Christmas bells, All these make Christmas Day.

—Ruth Hurst.

The Seaview Hotel

Beulah & Edwin Townshend, Props.

Souris Phone 51

PAQUET'S MEAT MARKET

SOURIS PHONE 35

Waldron Dingwell

Groceries & Trucking

Souris Phone 18-12

Christmas Candles

It would be astonishing, indeed, if no candles appeared in homes throughout the nation on Christmas Eve. The legend which surrounds the custom is believed to have started in Ireland.

There on Christmas Eve a large candle was burned which could be snuffed out only by one named Mary. As the Irish put it: "Who knows, on some Christmas Eve, Jesus and Mary and Joseph may come again, not to Palestine but to the Holy Isle on the farthest edge of Europe."

Their first use for Christmas is not recorded in the annals of any nation, but that the "Christ Child Candle," burned in the window on Christmas Eve is, according to an old legend, placed there to light His way if He makes an earthly visitation and atonement for the night of His birth when there was no room for Him.

Also among the legends is one about bayberry candles burned on Christmas.

During the early history of our country, animal fats were relatively scarce. The branches of the bayberry shrub were covered with wax-giving berries and children were given the task of gathering the berries when candles had to be made so that the animal fats could be conserved.

According to tradition, one who burned a bayberry candle on

Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, would have long life and a happy one.

An old verse reads:

"To learn your luck for the year they say, Burn a bayberry dip on Christmas day. If the flame burns bright and the light shines clear, Good luck will be yours throughout the year."



To all our friends and Patrons all Good Wishes for Christmas and 1957

Purdy's Grocery

Groceries, Meats and Confectionery

Souris Phone 39

Best Wishes To All Our Friends

ROLLO BAY GROCERY

Mrs. Gert Deveau, Prop.

Rollo Bay Phone 31-32

CHRISTMAS GREETING

And **HAPPY MOTORING** in '57

MacDONALD'S SERVICE STATION

Irving Products

Souris Phone 23

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL

LENNOX HOTEL

J. C. PETERS, PROP.

Souris Phone 64

SEASON'S GREETINGS!

We wish you and your loved ones our sincere best wishes for the New Year.

MacKENZIE'S GARAGE

GENERAL REPAIRS

R. J. MacKENZIE, Prop. SOURIS PHONE 21-2

HI FOLKS

Just a word of Greeting and Good Cheer for Christmas and the New Year. Thank you for past favors.

BANK'S JEWELER

Souris

A wish for all on this happy day - for all good things to come your way!

EASTERN PACKING CO.

Souris Phone 30

IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME

May Christmas' gentle spirit Fill your heart today; And through the New Year guide you Safely all the way.

SOURIS CO-OP.

BUY - BENEFIT - BUILD

It's a pleasure to extend the Season's Greetings to all

ATLANTIC POTATO CHIPS LTD.

SPUD ISLAND CHIPS

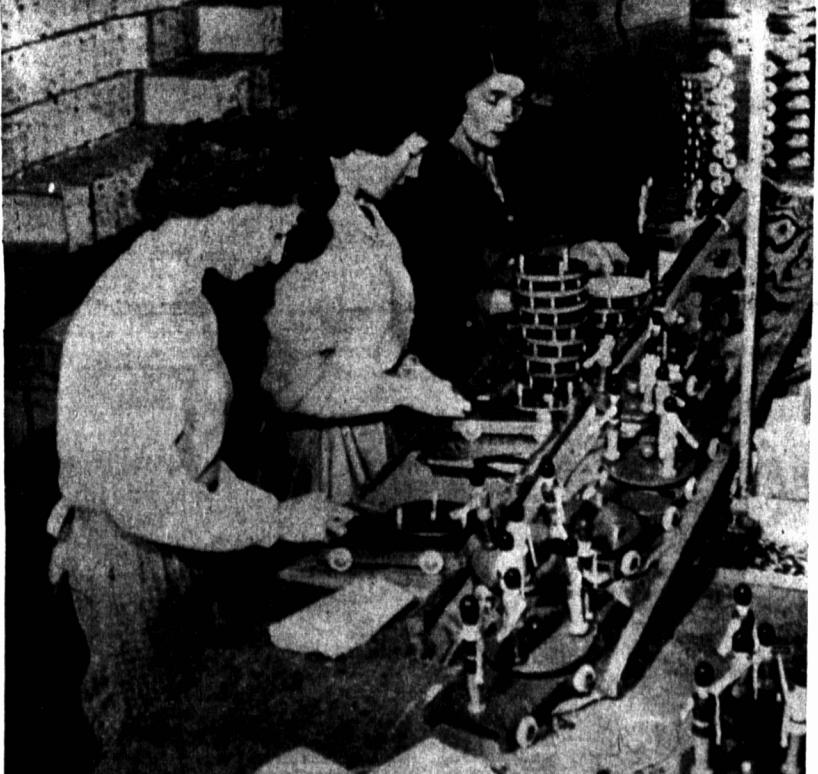
Souris Phone 86

Our wishes for your Health, Happiness and Prosperity are unlimited. May you have an extra share of all things good this coming year.

ST. PETER'S CO-OP.

BUY - BENEFIT - BUILD

St. Peters Phone 4



PRODUCTION line technique has taken over in the highly competitive toy trade. The shuttle in front of the girls is used to test the mobility of the merry-go-round toys they are assembling.

mechanical substitute for that "br-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r" that mak up for the missing unit? -at, like it or not, you can't separate toys and money. People being what they are, they usually changed, of course, technique. Have you ever thought of the amount of research and experience that went into that two-by-one inch model car that your child might at this very moment be showing off to the kids next door?

The first thing about is that it almost certainly looks just like the real thing that you saw in the car show-room only the other day. That is because the toy industry is one of the most competitive businesses in the world, so the maker of the toy car started to plan his prototype the moment the real thing was first shown to the public. Car makers co-operate with the toy industry by supplying original blue-prints from which the toy designer works. The result is a scale model, perfect in every detail. That is all very well as far as it goes, but the trouble is it only goes when you push it. What our modern child wants is a car

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL

JAY'S GARAGE

TEXACO DEALER

General Repairs

Morell Phone 8

May Christmas bring the very best To you and yours and all the rest.

J. F. STEWART

General Merchant

Five Houses Phone 13-1

We're all a-glow with warm wishes for you and yours for a Christmas season abounding in happiness.

HAZELDEN'S CANTEN

FISH & CHIPS, CONF.

SOURIS PHONE 107

For The Brightest Christmas Ever

May Christmas candles light your way To greater joy and peace And every single New Year Day Your happiness increase.

R. L. SANDERSON

GENERAL MERCHANT

ST. PETERS PHONE 11

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

We wish you every happiness For today and loads of cheer To brighten every coming hour Of 57's New Year.

McKENZIE'S SERVICE STATION

IMPERIAL PRODUCTS

SOURIS PHONE 76

CHRISTMAS JOY