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Agency Letter

for December 18, 1939

Looking at the Ads: Wonder if those Nash ads are all lifted from the old Jordan ads. Remember "Somewhere West of Laramie" and all that? Any true Nash-ad fan, such as the undersigned, gets a distinct feeling of disappointment in seeing the car itself... Wonder why Bill Esty, obviously out for the youth trade with his tea ads, doesn't make a play to displace coffee for breakfast... BBD&D, with the local Borden Dairy business in New York City, has only a tiny percent of the total. But the little ads were so well done, the cows so humanized and the showing so immediately under the nose of the brass hats in New York that Young & Rubicam had to compete. That started Y & R on a glorification of the cow the ad of which is not yet... General conclusion upon the season's offering of liquor advertising is that most of it is bad. Wonder who gives and gets liquor for Xmas, anyway. Willing to bet that these fancy bottles don't get under the trees along with the kids' toys. More likely to be business presents from one guy who wants to sell something to another guy.

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THE DIES PLOT, DETAIL

Berlin Was Serious: When Hearst's Richard E Berlin saw red last August 17, on being cited by FTC for guaranteeing, through Good Housekeeping, false & fraudulent advertising, the saner advertising element was inclined to give him the laugh. Nobody, not at Good House, worried much about what would happen to the magazine. Some, even, thought it a pretty good idea to cauterize pathogenic areas in publishing periodically. But this is the age of angry feudalism. And the New Deal has rocked many of the thrones of America's feudal lords. Now the boys will pay anything or do anything to fight back. So Dick Berlin had no trouble in recruiting bigshots for his "holy war" upon the American consumer. None of them, naturally, wanted to see something done to scotch the growing consumer movement, or to "Send the damned reds back where they came from". They were scared. And mad. They went along with Berlin. They began to operate behind the scenes.

This might have gone on unnoticed. But bigshots can't go far these days without moving publicity. No U S Tories have ever been able to collect & connive to put down a popular movement without someone smelling gunpowder, someone hearing the rattle of arms. Last week Washington began to talk. Someone had let the cat out of the bag. Later the story was picked up in New York. Now, here are the details known to date of this "fascist grand council" which was formed to put the U.S. consumer back in his place.

The auspices are indistinct & obscure, probably intentionally. But the organizing meeting, which gave the whole play away, took place on or about November 30 in the home of Mr. George Sokolsky, a clever writer whose connection, as paid apologist, with the National Association of Manufacturers has been brought out in open court. The NAM was further tied in, inferentially, by the presence of a representative of Young & Rubicam's Raymond Rubicam, who is the public relations expert for the Manufacturers. But no direct connection with Hearst has yet been revealed.

Other Members present were Henry P Bristol, president of Bristol-Myers, Robert Lund, executive vice president of Lambert Pharmacal Co, J. B. Matthews of the Dies Committee and his old boss F. J Schlink, president of Consumers Research. There were a dozen or so others, all men controlling vast advertising expenditures.

The Food & Drug Putsch: When the meeting got under way, the idea was obvious. J B Matthews declaimed his call-the-consumer-a-red"report to the Dies Committee". George Sokolsky outlined general purposes. Obviously the boys were all set to take over all the heights on the publicity front--by withdrawing advertising from recalcitrant publications. Within three days the Dies Committee held its famous meeting of one member, and released the report that had been OKayed by the grand council. The report, of course, is a plea for funds. And Martin Dies assured a favorable press reception ahead of time by discussing it with this little group of top-flight executives, whose hands are upon the pursestrings of the press.

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Meantime Trial Ends: Also at Washington, the hearings which are the cause of the shouting, came to a close last week. The FTC has completed its case, after almost two months, and it now remains for Hearst Attorneys Isaac W Digges, Gilbert Weil and Frederic B Warder to present the evidence for the defense beginning at an unannounced date late in January, probably in New York.

Highlight of the closing days of the testimony was the evidence that Warren G Akers, publisher of Good Housekeeping, had admitted that certain of the advertisements in the magazine were "misleading".

The last two days were taken up with pro & con arguments about the Good House-sponsored Certified Rug Cleaners Institute. Previously, when adducing evidence upon these ad-getting "institutes", FTC had contented itself with calling members to show that Good House could have no adequate knowledge of the services it OKayed. Members always insisted their work was of the best. This time, FTC brought forth one Oliver W Brantley of Jackson Heights, N Y, to testify that Good House did not take the best cleaners into its Institute, but profited from granting seals to cleaners whose methods were distinctly inferior. Specifically, Witness Brantley asserted, "non-members of

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the Institute do not as a rule use chromptone". He described this as a GH-recommended "finish" which is deleterious and has the power to burn & destroy the part of the rug to which it is applied. On cross-examination, Hearst attorneys attacked, but not to the satisfaction of Examiner Charles P Diggs, the competence of Witness Bradley.

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