

Sunday, July 3, 1960



Business Beat

BY MILTON BECKERMAN

AN AMBITIOUS PROGRAM FOR BUSINESSMEN: There are businessmen who believe they can act together to improve sales, hold down tax liabilities, push for positive political action and get positive public response. It's a big program.

These were some of the decisions that came from a steering committee meeting of the new commerce division, St. Petersburg Merchants Association. They met Thursday.

Wholesalers, jobbers, manufacturers representatives and others will group in this recently organized division. Committee chairman, Russ Staff said, the businesses have a lot in common and a lot of problems to solve.



STAFF

In concerted action locally they expect to get better licensing laws, control misleading ads, promote local buying, appraise closing hours and get more businessmen to participate in government affairs.

"State-wide they hope to get relief from the inventory tax, hold the line on labor legislation, improve bulk sales laws, and contain expansions of the unemployment tax.

Staff said they needed to take a long hard look at "economic leaks," losing local business to firms from other communities.

Other members who helped formulate these plans are: Henry M. Douglass, A. R. Spaulding, William E. Edwards, and Lon C. Gillham.

DYNAMIC SPEAKER SCHEDULED

Millard Bennett is called, by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, "the best platform speaker of them all."

George R. Dempster, former Mayor of Knoxville, Tenn., said: "It is truly a compliment when I truthfully told you that you surpassed (William Jennings Bryan) in every branch of oratory."

Bennett, will be the speaker at the installa-



—Times Photos by Bob Moreland

PUTTING A BARRACUDA PLUG TO THE ACID TEST

... are Jack (left) and Carl Reynolds. Their lures now are being merchandised all over North and South America. Born in St. Petersburg during the

depression, their Florida Fishing Tackle Manufacturing Co. Inc. now employs more than a hundred persons.



Florida's Hand-Filling Card: Constant-Payroll Industry

By DON SIDER

Picture a poker game. Draw. The table is a continent wide. The players are the 50 states. There are billions in the pot.

Florida has been coming out strong, betting big, drawing to a four-flush: Tourism, citrus, cattle and fishing.

It's a chancy hand. Bad weather, a recession, red tide or one of a dozen other conditions can spoil the draw and make the whole thing worthless. One bad card, one bad season, can lose the pot, and all the state has bet into it.

In this game of economic poker, Florida has won big — and lost big too. Private fortunes have been made and lost a dozen times. And with each loss, the entire state has suffered.

How to insure a winning hand every time? By being dealt a pat hand. By filling that flush with a card that can't miss, despite the fortunes of Wall Street or the weather. The fifth card is industry. Year-round, rain-or-shine, constant-payroll industry.

After years of waiting, we're being dealt industry on the Sun-coast. Pinellas County now claims branches of such industrial giants as General Electric, Minneapolis Honeywell and Sperry-Rand. Good fifth cards in our hand, dealt with fanfare and flourish.

But some industries here didn't come in our recent economic upsurge. Some, smaller in scale but no less valuable, have been in our hand for years — and we dealt them there ourselves.

Meet the Reynolds brothers, Carl and Jack, secretary-treasurer and president, respectively

of one of the busiest of these home-grown industries. Their outfit, Florida Fishing Tackle Manufacturing Co. Inc., makes Barracuda brand tackle. Located in St. Petersburg, it produces a million salt- and fresh-water lures and other "terminal" (end of the fishing line) gear a year.

PLANT TOUR

Tour the Barracuda plant with the brothers. Watch more than 10 people busily working at machines or hand-tying or dipping tackle. Listen to them as they tell how this thriving, local industry started:

"We were Depression-born," says 55-year-old Jack. "Back in 1930, I was clerking in a local hardware store. The job wasn't bad, but the only thing I really liked to sell was fishing tackle. So, one day I quit and went in with Charles F. Clark, who was then making expensive, split bamboo fishing rods on a small scale.

"It seemed to me that people might not have the money for expensive gear, but they'd always be in the market for cheap items like floats and sinkers. Fishing for recreation and for food is important when times are bad.

"The business did fairly well with the inexpensive items. A couple of years later Carl left his bank job in California to join us. A year later, we bought Clark out."

Carl, a trim, athletic 50, gestures toward the mass of machinery in the new plant. "We weren't very big those first few years. Our factory was an old, dirt-floored building. We only had five employees. Sometimes it was tough to make the payroll. We

weren't doing much, but neither was anyone else."

"Sales started picking up about 1936 or '7," Jack continues. "We started traveling as far as Texas in 1930. By '36, we were covering most of the South, promoting our lures. Our original plan to manufacture just for Florida had to be revised. There just weren't enough customers here to keep us going. But by expanding our market, we took off all limits on the amount of business we could do."

As their market grew, so did the scope of their business. From a simple start with floats and sinkers, the brothers expanded to all types of salt-water tackle. Then to fresh water. They tell how they got into the national market in a big way:

"We'd thought about expanding all across the country in the late '30s, but along came the war and we changed over to making torpedo parts. After the war, we were still considered just a salt-water outfit. Then a tourist who'd bought one of our Baby Dudes here took it up to the TVA area and started catching striped bass right and left.

HADACOL LURE

"Everyone asked him what he was using. Hadacol was popular then, so he told them it was a Hadacol Lure. Pretty soon we had a call asking about this Hadacol Lure. I guess dealers up in Tennessee had gotten a lot of calls for it too. When the caller described the lure, it turned out to be our Baby Dude. So we sent up a few dozen and they sold out immediately. We sold a thousand dozen Baby Dudes in that section the first week.

"From then on, our reputation as a fresh-water manufacturer was made too."

months a year, it pays out more than 100 salaries. Twelve months a year, it acts as that fifth card in our economic flush.

This didn't just happen. It was made to happen. Here. And it is being made to happen again. In a dozen small machine shops, in a score of home workshops, the Reynolds success story is starting anew.

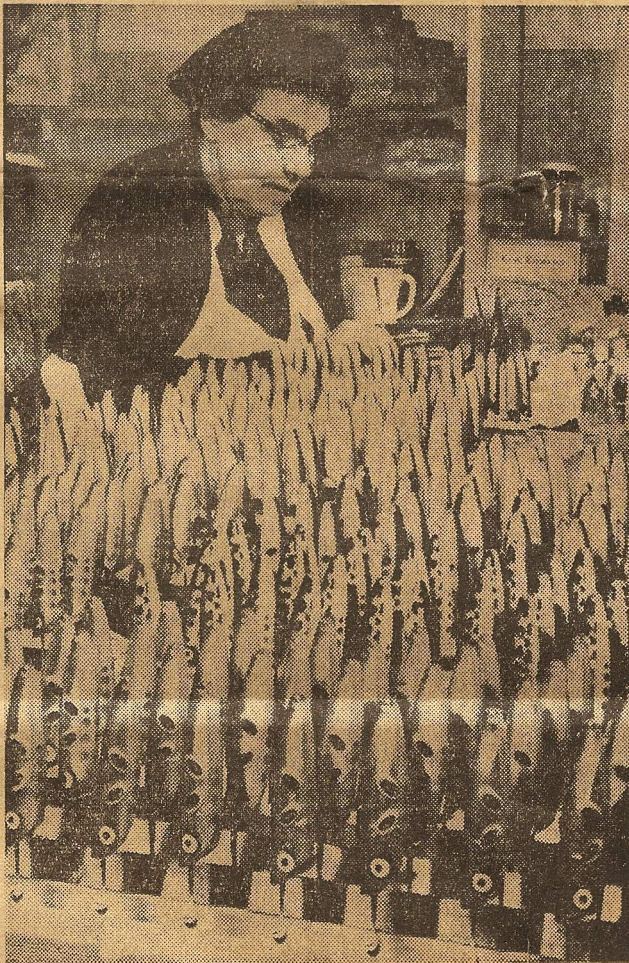
Card players will tell you the odds are that some of these outfits will wind up winners, just as Carl and Jack have. And when they win, we all win.

**DON'T MISS
OTHER NEWS
OF BUSINESS**

ON PAGE 8-B TODAY

**PURCH
PURCH
BANKI
AND
ENTIRE
WILLIS**

Consisting
● LIVING ROOM
● BEDROOM SE



LIKE A GLEAMING FOREST

... of rigid fish, freshly-painted lures dry on dozens of spindles at the Barracuda plant.

The national name of Barracuda lures has become international now. Carl pilots his own plane and the brothers are in the air constantly, opening new markets, meeting new dealers. On a 1950 trip to Cuba they learned that sports fishing equipment was almost non-existent in Latin America. So they invaded the hungry market with Midas-like results. It was this year they realized the business had grown too big for them to handle jobbing as well as manufacture. So they set up a hemisphere-wide system of distributors.

The brothers design all their own products. Both are avid fishermen. Often Carl will bring a block of wood and a knife along in the boat. While fishing with one lure, he crafts another, testing its action on the spot.

Sometimes ideas came at the darnedest times. Jack walked into the office one morning and the night before. It was about a spoon with a series of ridges on it, to refract the light under water. He described it in detail and Carl set about making one by hand. The Reflecto Spoon, a direct copy of Jack's dream, is today one of their biggest sellers.

Every lure isn't so successful. The Reynolds boys figure on one in five hitting as a good percentage. It takes about \$10 thousand to design and promote a new lure.

Florida Fishing Tackle is big business. Twelve months a year, it brings fresh money into the state and St. Petersburg. Twelve

- DINETTES
- BEDDING
- LAMPS
- PLATFORM
- ODD CHAIRS
- BABY FURN
- END TABLES
- COCKTAIL T

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