



HIGHLIGHT



The House Magazine of
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Tanner's Quarterly Trade Journal

There will be many of you readers who will consider this number of our Journal to be dull and merely pontificating our opinions. But really what else can we do? All of us, you, me and all of you who read this, are somehow or other interested in the paper and print trade and therefore we should be considering the situation most of the time.

Sometimes we wish that we need not, and our holidays, now mostly behind us, gave us a welcome break from today's problems, yet here we are worrying again at the present and future.

We do seem to have become a nation of worriers. We worry when we have too much business as in 1974, we worry when we have too little as in 1975, and we worry whether we will obtain our share of the small amount of increased business that may be about in 1976. We worry that we may not be able to meet the boom in 1977, if there is one, and if not we worry as to why there is no boom.

It must be the times in which we live. Life is far from easy for most people, the outlook is even bleaker and it is not surprising that people feel frustrated. It is a case of jam yesterday and jam tomorrow, but never jam today.

We seem to have reached a state of depression possibly with a capital D, from which no one is prepared to eject us. The old man is always saying "we have not had a war for over a decade, so what do you expect?" Perish the thought that we have to start a war to unite the Country.

Then there is the housewife who hears that the next-door neighbour gets more from the Social Services than her hard working husband earns per week. These problems all seem to irritate the average working person. If only we could see the end of the tunnel,

the little flicker of light, which grows larger as time goes on. We can only emerge with our own efforts, if only someone somewhere would give us the lead and the will to get there.

We seem to remember that soon after the last war, when rationing and bureaucracy were at their height, the call went up "free the people"; we did just that—it worked, and it could work again.

In our opinion . . .

We have been taken to task more than once for running down the future prospects of British mills as opposed to the foreigners. None of them has argued the point that so long as the £ is depreciating they are on a hiding to nothing, and this is the point we have belaboured. With your raw material priced in dollars, what hope have the British mills of stabilising their existing costs, irrespective of the fact that pulp prices are certain to rise at the beginning of 1977?

It was pointed out to us very firmly that the overseas countries were losing money by importing to this Country at present prices considering the fall in the sterling currency and we fully agree. However the Scandinavians in particular are not going to leave this traditional market if they can possibly avoid it. True they will sell all they can in other directions to get a better return, but we must not forget that for many years pulp mills have added paper mills in order to cash in on a better priced article, namely paper and board. Now they have extended this by a huge investment programme, and many new machines are coming on stream in 1977. Where will this paper go? Much of it may be absorbed on the Continent and other far distant countries which are enjoying improving conditions of trade, but much will be sent to this Country even if the return is non-existent.

With raw material on their doorstep they will run their huge machines non-stop 24 hours per day 7 days a week and the output must be disposed of even at marginal costs, until such time as world trade improves. In spite of the depreciation in currency they will still be able to outsell the British mills for mass produced

Continued on page four

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Tanners for pockets

qualities, and they want this market, and through hell and high water they will retain it.

We do not want to infer that the British mills are finished, far from it, as there will always be a large proportion of the home market available to them. So long as they keep away from the mass produced papers they should have no difficulty in the matter of price and there are plenty of opportunities for export, especially for speciality and tinted papers.

However the main point of our previous articles on this subject is that the price of paper and board has reached a level where the user is economising, and this is the last thing we want at the time of a recession. Moreover by the year end we are likely to see further rises on both home and overseas produced papers. We can do no better than quote from a letter we sent to a Scottish mill recently on this subject.

"However we think that the main problem we have all got to face is the cost of paper. It has outstripped the capacity of the populace to pay. After all, paper is only the basic material upon which the printer exerts his wiles, and you will realise that the latter has increased in cost even more than paper. Add the two together and the result is now beyond the purse of not only individuals but industry and commerce. To this you can add the cost of postage and now realise that the sum result is a fastly diminishing market. What we have got to do is to stabilise the cost of the material, paper or board, somehow and wait for inflation to catch up, so that the ultimate user considers that he is paying a reasonable price for the object which it will reward him to send out."

We hate to be pessimistic, as it is not in our nature, but we must face facts, and realise that the boom which has been promised for some considerable time is in our opinion not around the corner. Certainly in our trade we shall not see normal conditions until the second half of 1977, and then only if this Country pulls itself together and works as if it wants to live rather than commit suicide.

Since writing this article the £ has dropped catastrophically. We are given to understand that every cent the £ drops adds £1.00 per tonne to the cost of pulp. We leave it to you as to when the next increase in paper prices will be!

page four

Our Journal

The next issue due in January 1977 will be the 100th of the new series.

With the exception of a few articles which have been reproduced, the editor has written in his spare time every word, good, bad or indifferent, and is getting weary.

The cost particularly of postage is getting heavy, and we would not be a party to lowering the standard by producing a mini news sheet.

What is the opinion of our readers, and we know we have some? Let the editor receive your reaction however rude this may be!

Sarum White Bank

In the centre spread we have published the prices of our Sarum White Bank. If you would look at these prices you cannot but be impressed, as they are way below any other White Bank.

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Of British manufacture this paper is perfect in all respects, especially the price. We do advise you to take advantage of this offer, which is unlikely to be repeated when stocks are cleared.

page five

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Envelopes & Pockets

We regret that we have had to review the prices of our envelopes and pockets, due to the heavy increases in paper prices and overheads.

Our prices have not been amended since July 1975, with the exception of a small increase in pocket prices only in June 1976.

In spite of holding prices for so long, you will only see a very nominal increase in many lines and in some they are kept the same or even lowered.

We have however discontinued the additional 20p per 1,000 charge for under 10,000 lots and brought in a smalls and 5,000 rate in line with most manufacturers.

With the heavy increase in delivery charges there has had to be a considerable uplift in the small quantities, but we feel that you will find the quantity rates of 25,000 and upwards highly competitive and where possible we suggest that you endeavour to make up your orders accordingly.

Where this is not possible we feel you will agree that we must charge the actual cost, rather than expect the 100,000 rate to subsidise the small delivery.

New price lists and sample sets will be issued to all our customers in October/November.

We wish that we could say that these prices will hold firm for some time. However, with an imminent increase in pulp prices in the new year, it is more than probable that paper prices both British and overseas manufacturers will be raised sharply, with the result that envelope and pocket prices will be forced upwards in the early part of 1977.

Postal News

It is interesting to know that the British Stationery and Office Products Federation are continuing to harass the Post Office on every possible front to prevent yet further increases in postal charges.

We as members of the Postal Panel of B.S. & O.P.F. have recently been asked to forward our opinions for evidence to be submitted to the Carter Review Committee which has been set up to report on the position.

Among the points we raised were: —

1. The Corporation should be divorced from Government interference, other than from guidelines laid down on a 3/5 year programme.
2. The deficiency on the pension fund, as this was largely occasioned prior to the formation of the Corporation in 1969, was the responsibility of the Government and not the Corporation. The charge for administering the fund, a staff of 750, should be upon the fund and not on the Post Office finance and management services.
3. The difference on the 1st and 2nd class to be widened. 1st class with a 95% guarantee of next day delivery to 10p and 2nd class to 6p or even 5½p. If well marketed we envisaged a considerable increase in mail and therefore income.
4. Mechanisation of mail to be pressed ahead, after many years of standstill.
5. Sunday collections to be reinstated except in remote country areas.
6. Possibly to separate postal services from telecommunications and Giro.

Continued on page ten

7. POUNC, Post Officer User's National Council, to be strengthened. This should be non-executive, but act between the Government and the Post Office, and not a sop to public opinion.

However although much of this may be passed to the Carter Committee it will be a long time before it sends recommendations to the Government, and then even longer before any action is taken.

It would appear that the Post Office will continue on their path to ruination by neglecting any possibility of obtaining further business by slight reductions in price, because they say it runs them into further costs. So they are sitting back waiting for a further increase in trade to arrive. This should not be difficult, looking at the depressing figures at the end of 1975, but not much thought seems to have been given, as to what will happen if the post further drops. Oh yes they have the one panacea—put the price up again!

The Post Office have publicly stated that they will hold prices for 1976, but we are well aware of the glint in their eyes. The next move upwards will be fairly early in 1977. They are considering not only a price rise but a reduction in the minimum weight step. At present this stands at 60 gms which is the nearest equivalent to 2 ozs. They wish to bring this neatly into line with 50 gms steps. We would dearly like to know how the Post Office will police the drop of 10 gms in the major part of their mail. This is of course the mail which is sorted mechanically wherever possible. To our knowledge the machines are not geared to weighing every letter, so maybe we shall see an army of postmen carrying weighing scales!

We've got them licked!

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Tanners for Envelopes

Staff changes

We are sorry to say farewell to our representative Peter Smith, who has been with us several years—firstly in the office, and then as a representative. He has joined one of our customers and we wish him the best of luck.

We now welcome two additions to our team. Jeffrey R. T. Sainsbury and Dennis J. Manning. The former will cover West London and Buckinghamshire, and the latter Kent and part of Sussex. Both have experience in our trade and of the printing industry, and undoubtedly will be able to give valuable assistance to the customers in their respective areas.

Waste

Waste paper now provides 49 per cent. of the U.K. industry's raw material requirements, and this is expected to increase very considerably within the next few years. Some further planning will be required to encourage local authorities, particularly those who have discontinued collection, to save every available scrap of waste paper to prevent an inevitable shortage in the future.

page twelve

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