

Why Dry Cleaners Tumbled 20 Per Cent

By W. W. EDGAR

Men's double knit suits, double knit shirts and slacks, along with the ladies' latest fashions in colorful synthetic materials, are most pleasing to the eye — but don't mention them to the dry cleaners.

The fruits of man's ingenious mind that brought us such things as permanent press and washable materials have cut heavy inroads into what was once a most profitable enterprise.

A recent survey through Overland revealed the dry cleaning business has suffered a decline of more than 20 per cent in the last year, and the end is not yet in sight.

There was a time, not long ago, when dry cleaning outlets were numerous along any of the main highways. Now, one by one, they are falling by the wayside under the pressure of the synthetic materials.

Jean Webb, owner of the Webb Cleaners in Garden City, one of the hardest hit, cited three firms that went out of business in her area during the past year and a half.

"Our business is down considerably," she said, "and at a time when it should be booming. Folks are back from their vacations, and with the start of school, we should have been busy. We were not — and all because of the polyester, dacron and other synthetic materials."

The same story was told at the large Indian Village outlet in Livonia.

"We're down at least 25 per cent for the past two months," management stated, "and during the month of August, it was just terrible."

"I noticed the change coming about two years ago," said John Hogan, new owner of Tait's Cleaners in Plymouth.

"These double knits — both shirts and men's suits — have decreased the number of garments a person generally needs. And these fewer garments need even less care."

"We've been in a slump since 1969," said John Matels, owner of Gould's Cleaners in Plymouth, and it has now reached a 30 per cent reduction in business in the past three years.

"Most of the business we get is in women's wear, but even that is showing a decline as more and more women are washing their garments at home."

The slump is not confined to any one segment of Overland.

Bill Gardner, of Farmington Cleaners, is quick to tell you that business is down between 15 and 20 per cent, and he traces it to the increasing use of the latest garments that are synthetic, woolly or in part.

"We've lost the pants pressing business," he said, "but the women's wear is where we are feeling it the most now."

Asked what effect the synthetic materials had on his business, Ernie Matasky, owner of the Ten-Tel Cleaners in Southfield, answered: "Just terrible. These new garments that are washable and the pants and shirts that are permanently pressed are knocking everything down."

"Women used to wear woolen skirts and sweaters, and we'd get them. But no more. They've gone for the new stuff — and we're hurt."

And it is all in the name of progress.



JOHN F. ZISEK, a Livonia resident, is now treasurer of Helm, Inc., a Detroit based distribution and promotional services firm.

Engineers To Convene

The American Society of Mechanical Engineers will hold its 94th winter annual meeting at the Detroit Hilton and Sheraton Cadillac hotels from Nov. 11-15.

The meeting, which provides a platform for engineers to exchange ideas on new concepts in the field, will officially convene on Nov. 11 at 5:30 p.m., with a reception and buffet dinner.

Awards will be given to engineers who have made outstanding contributions in the technical, managerial and educational areas of engineering.

Deer Veto Gets Weak Backing

An Observer Roundup

LANSING

Only two of Overland's 11 state legislators backed Gov. Milliken's veto of a bill which would have banned antlerless deer hunting in the eastern upper peninsula.

The Legislature failed last week to muster the two-thirds vote in both houses to override Milliken, whose veto in effect upheld an earlier decision of the Natural Resources Commission.

The State Senate voted to override, 28-6. Among the yes votes were Sen. David Plawecki (D-Dearborn Heights), William Faust (D-Westland), Carl Pursell (R-Plymouth) and Daniel Cooper (D-Oak Park).

The bill to reverse the NRC failed to get the necessary 74 votes in the House. It got only a 64-40 favorable vote.

Voting no — upholding Milliken and the NRC — were Reps. R. Robert Geake (R-Northville) and Ray Baker (R-Farmington). Absent was Raymond Smit (R-Ann Arbor).

Voting yes were Reps. William Keith of Garden City, John Bennett of Redford, John Markes of Westland, Thomas Brown of Westland

and Joseph Forbes of Oak Park. All are Democrats.

The argument pitted upper peninsula hunters, who oppose killing 3,500 antlerless deer, against biologists in the Dept. of Natural Resources, who say a harvest is necessary in order to control the herd size.

Dr. Gene Gazlay, director of the DNR, said, "It's difficult to make people understand that we have to harvest both sexes of deer in order to control the herd size."

"If the herd gets too large, many of them will starve in the winter and also do considerable damage to the range areas."

"Hunters have shot the 'last deer' in some areas of the state many, many times, but the herd keeps coming back."

"Selling the concept of harvesting does and fawns has always been a very difficult public relations problem for us. The local sportsmen in a hunting area won't accept that."

But every other state in the country has learned that you have to allow hunting of both sexes in order to control the herd size."

John W. Stauffer, president of the 215-member Eastern Upper Peninsula Sportsmen's Assn., threatened "armed

patrols" to keep hunters out of Luce, Chippewa and Mackinac counties.

"We're just going to make life miserable for anyone who comes up here hunting does," said Stauffer.

Had the override attempt been successful, it would have been the first time since 1951 that the Legislature had overridden a governor's veto.

In that case, the Legislature overrode Gov. C. Menen Williams' disapproval of a 1.5 cent a gallon hike in the gasoline tax.

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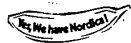
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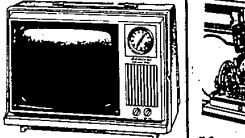
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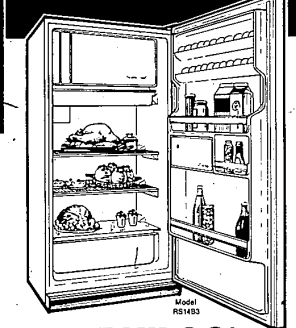


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