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KING RANCH'S BOB KLEBERG JR. RIDING IN SPRING ROUNDUP

THE GOLDEN CALF

NOT for years has beef been such a bargain. Housewives in New York last week were paying 50¢ or lower for choice sirloin in many a store, little more than half the price of a few years ago. One result was that consumers were tucking away more beef than ever. The U.S. will eat 82 lbs. per capita this year, a pound more than in 1955 and almost 50% more than just five years ago, when pork was king. Beef is not only the biggest single item on the U.S. food bill (17¢ out of every food $1) but it is also the largest single source of U.S. agricultural income. Farmers and ranchers grossed more from beef in 1955 than for their crops of wheat, cotton, rye and rice put together.

But last week, despite the peak popularity of their product, U.S. cattlemen were in the dumps. In the Kansas City stockyards, beef on the hoof sold for $14.50 a hundred pounds, near the lowest point in a decade and about 50% less than four years ago. Said Jay Taylor, past president of the American National Cattlemen's Association: "Plenty of cattlemen are going broke." Undoubtedly many ranchers who jumped in to make a quick killing when prices were sky-high were being hamstrung. But many veteran cowmen were still making money, although, as a group, ranchers were just about breaking even.

Market Stampede. Actually, the cattlemen had ambushed themselves. In 1951 and 1952, with ordinary beeves selling at an extraordinary $30 per 100 lbs. and choice bringing as high as $36, the cattlemen had gone to work to breed and feed cattle as never before, boosted the total number of beef cattle from 53 million in 1951 to 63 million in 1955. Last fall the market was stampeded by 50% more beef than five years ago. Inevitably, prices started to slide.

The low prices, however, are only a partial explanation for the great shift in eating habits that turned Americans from pork to beef eating (13.6 lbs. of beef for every eleven of pork). Another reason is the increasing efficiency of cattlemen at breeding and feeding, which has not only turned out beefier animals (in 100 years the average weight of a yearling has been doubled) but also tastier meat with more sirloin, chops and roasts and fewer poor cuts. What the U.S. wants in beef, the U.S. gets, thanks to the great progress in developing new and better breeds of cattle.

The U.S. cattle business started off with Christopher Columbus, who took hardy, long-horned Moorish stock from Spain's Andalusian plains and dropped them off in 1493 at Santo Domingo on his second voyage. From there they were taken to Mexico. Half a century later Coronado, bound north in search of the Seven Cities of Cibola, drove 500 head across the Rio Grande for food along the way. Some escaped, and the famed longhorn found a home in Texas.

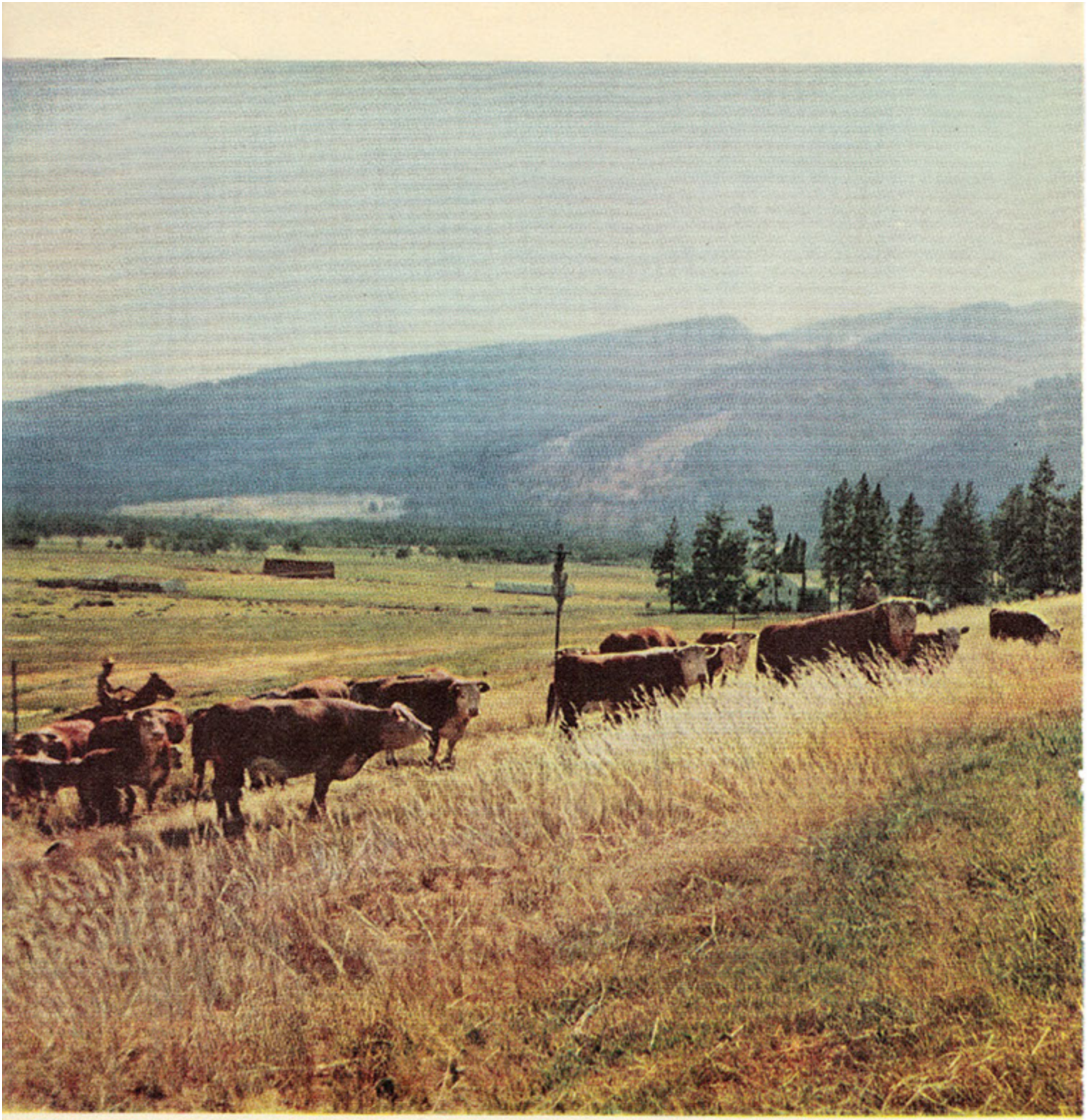
Bony, sure-footed, able to withstand heat and live on prickly pear and little water, the longhorn was a perfect mate for the environment and multiplied on the wild ranges. By the time the Lone Star State won its independence, there were 80,000 longhorns in Texas, more critters than humans. Yet by 1920 the longhorn was almost extinct. It carried too much leg, flank and horn in proportion to edible beef, and cowmen simply could not afford to keep it.

Various Breeds. Looking for heavier, meatier animals, the rancher turned to the foreign breeds that were trickling into the country as early as 1783: first the Shorthorn (Durham), then the Hereford and the Aberdeen Angus from Britain, and from India the hardy Brahman. But no breed possessed all virtues. The Shorthorn—for a time the most popular—is massive and placid but critics say it suffers from heat and a tendency to sterility. The white-faced Hereford—its successor and still the leading U.S. breed—is hailed by many ranchers as a hardy forager and the best beef animal in the world. But other cowmen complain that it is prone to some diseases such as cancer eye and udder burn. The Aberdeen Angus, still growing in popularity, is first-rate under ideal conditions. But it has a reputation for being hard to handle. The hump-backed Brahman, immune to India's heat and insects, is undeniably tough, but so is its meat. A few massive, pale brown Charollaise have been imported from France via Mexico. But since 1937 they have been barred by foot-and-mouth disease laws, and the U.S. herd numbers only 1,000.

Today, smart cowmen are working with scientists' precision to put together the best beef animal. In the search for a hardy animal that can convert the least feed into the most beef in the least time, cattlemen intermix genetic strains, carefully card-indexing the good and bad points of the progeny, unceasingly experiment with new vaccines and antibiotics. The competition for prize bulls has become fantastic; one Texas breeder paid $100,000 for a one-third interest in an Aberdeen-Angus

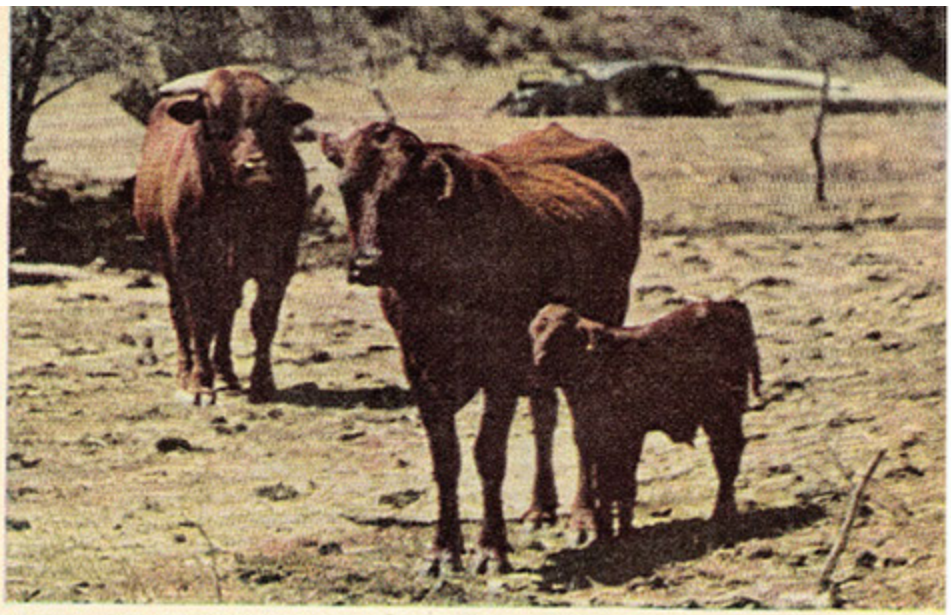
COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS BY STAN WAYMAN, JOERN GERDTS, GORDON TENNEY, WALTER BENNETT, ARTHUR SHAY, GORDON COSTER

BRAHMAN HERD of pure-bred bulls, cows and calves feeds at troughs on Norris Cattle Co. ranch near Ocala, Fla. Resistant to heat, the hump-backed Brahman, first imported to South Carolina from India in 1849, flourishes both in humid Southern states and the arid Southwest desert.



HEREFORD BULLS, on Curtice-Martin breeding ranch, move to pasture in Montana's Bitterroot Valley. Favorite breed on grassy ranges of the west, the "whiteface" was brought to Kentucky from England by Henry Clay in 1817.

BEEFMASTER COW, bred from Brahman, Hereford and Shorthorn, is part of development herd at Lasater Ranch in Matheson, Colo. Beefy new breed has proved its hardihood in drought areas.



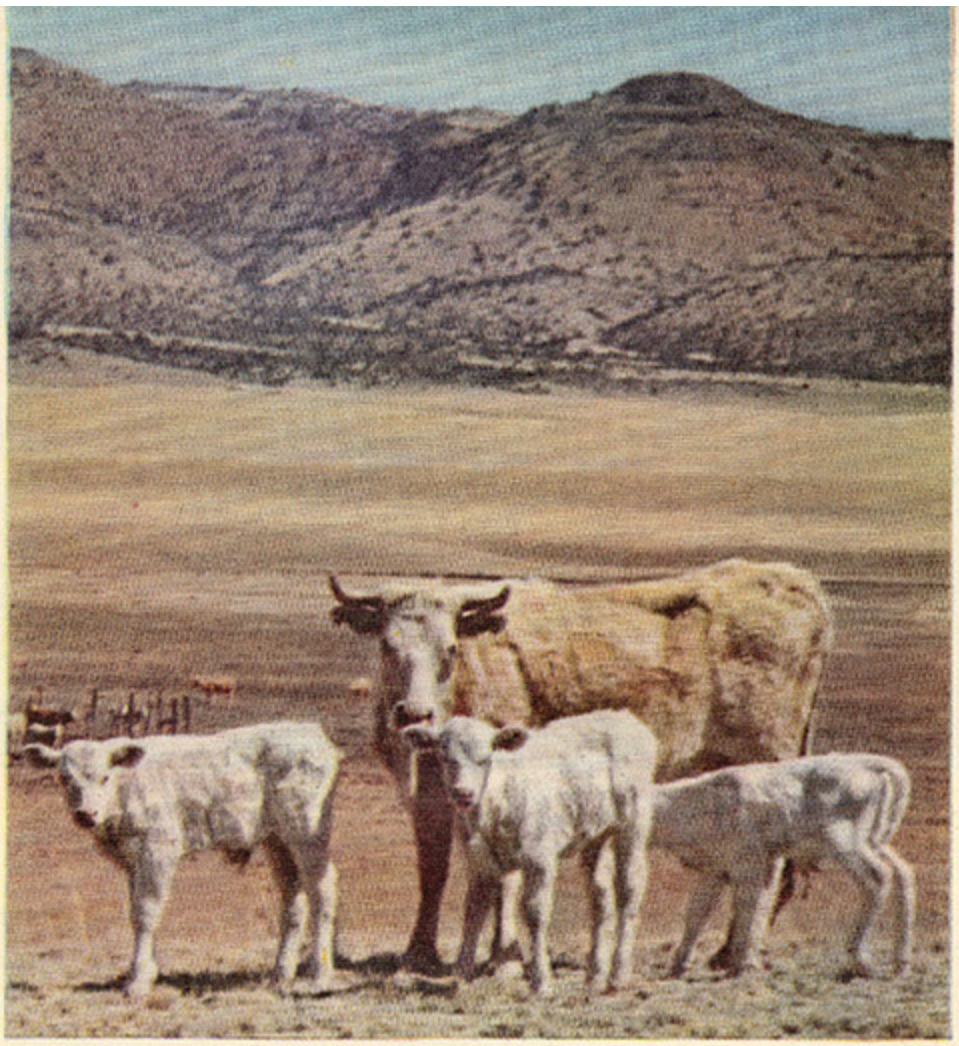
SANTA GERTRUDIS bull, cow and calf, shown at end of a dry winter on Yerba Buena Ranch, Nogales, Ariz., will fatten quickly on spring grass. Heat-resistant breed was developed by King Ranch from Brahmans and Shorthorns.

SHORTHORNS are raised mainly in the East and Midwest, where lush farmland supplies the abundant feed they require. Bull (*center*) on Herschel Allen farm at Phoenix, Md. cost $4,000, in five years has sired some 70 calves worth $30,000.

ABERDEEN ANGUS, brought from Scotland to Kansas in 1873, is prized for top quality of beef. Herd on J. Garrett Tolan farm in Pleasant Plains, Ill., is being driven to evening pasture from barn where calves were nursed during afternoon.

TEXAS LONGHORNS, raised as hobby on Graves Peeler Ranch near Christine, Texas, once ranged western plains, gave way to meatier breeds introduced in late 19th century.

BRANGUS BULL, three-year-old "King Tut," 1955 national champion, weighs 2,200 lbs., is worth $20,000. He was bred from Brahman and Angus on Clearview Ranch, Vinita, Okla.



CHAROLAISE COW, rugged French breed newly introduced in the South and Southwest, watches over two bull calves and day-old heifer (*right*) on winter range of Bar Z Bar Ranch near Ashfork, Ariz. Cattle raised here are fattened for market in Phoenix feed lots.

BRAFORD HERD of cross-bred bulls, brood cows and calves, grazing in pasture of rich Pangola grass on Sugarland Ranch of the U.S. Sugar Corp. at Clewiston, Fla., combines heavy-beef qualities of Hereford with Brahman's resistance to heat and ticks. Black calves (*left*) are three-way cross of Brahman-Hereford hybrid cows and pure-bred Aberdeen Angus bulls.

bull, figured the money well spent since the bull's first two offspring sold for $6,850 and $8,250. Artificial insemination is bringing down the price and increasing the range of a prize bull's capacities. Instead of servicing only two cows a week, a bull can theoretically father 100,000 calves in its lifetime, and ranchers 1,000 miles away can get semen by air within 24 hours and upgrade their herd at a nominal fee.

Cattle for the Reds. The genetic experiments have produced some interesting new breeds: the Brangus (⅜ Brahman, ⅝ Angus), the Braford (½ Hereford, ½ Brahman), the Charbray (⅜ Charollaise, ⅝ Brahman). The famed million-acre King Ranch has the Santa Gertrudis (⅜ Brahman, ⅝ Shorthorn), claiming that it is the best beef on the hardiest animal. Last summer the Russian agricultural delegation visiting the U.S. took a look at the Santa Gertrudis and said, "This is one thing we very much want."

Colorado Rancher Tom Lasater's handling of his Beefmaster (¼ Brahman, ¼ Shorthorn, ½ Hereford) is a good demonstration of how a scientific breeder works. Lasater gives his cattle a start—dehorning, vaccination against blackleg, a little hay and some alfalfa pellets in the winter; then he stands off and watches. Should a cow trip in holes, need its hooves trimmed, walk with a short gait, have to be milked out to prevent caked udder, or drop its calf one hour after the 42-day calving period, it is yanked out and sold for slaughter. The same end awaits a bull that has trouble at stud or a calf that is wild or too lean. Unlike many breeders, Lasater cares nothing about how the cow looks. Says Lasater: "Any breeder who gives his cows a second chance just doesn't give himself an even break. Survival of the fittest goes all the way here." Although most ranchmen frown on breeding without regard to general conformity, Lasater claims that his ruthless tactics have bred a herd free from cancer eye, pink eye, Bang's disease (contagious abortion).

Better Feeds, Better Breeds. The same precision carries over from breeding to feeding. In the old days, a steer grazed on its 20 acres of range, with perhaps some casual supplementary grain feeding. The modern cattleman, however, views his animal as a factory-like converter of carbohydrates into a protein food. Depending on weather and range, he may feed the beef a daily ration of two pounds of soy or cottonseed cake, fortified by molasses for energy, bonemeal for calcium, plus iodized salt and vitamins A and D. Antibiotics are added to increase the rate of gain and disease resistance; Stilbestrol, a female hormone preparation, helps to make the animal gentler and beefier.

At the age of seven to nine months the heifer or bull (castrated into a steer to hasten fattening) is sold to the feedlot operators or to farmers who also specialize in fattening cattle for market. In Warren Montfort's barn in Greeley, Colo., a huge, self-unloading truck moves unceasingly up and down the quarter-mile-long pens, pushing Montfort's special feed mixture into the troughs while a solid line of white faces eat their heads off. Says Montfort: "This is a factory. We manufacture beef and nothing else."

The process of breeding and feeding beef for profit has bred a lot of romance out of the cattle business. The closer the industry gets to its golden calf, the further it gets from its rootin', tootin' golden past. The cattleman has become a statistician, geneticist, chemist, endoctrinologist, pharmacologist, and market specialist.

Second Choice. In Phoenix, Ariz. last May, 491 housewives were given a selection of identical cuts of lean, bright, red, non-aged beef in good and commercial grades and of choice beef—marbled, dark red and well-aged. Without price tags or grade stamps to guide them, more than two-thirds picked the poorer beef. Though such tests cause cowmen to snort contemptuously about women shoppers and "supermarket cattle," they have also caused them to worry. If women shoppers prefer the poorer grades that look fresher and leaner, then cattlemen will breed lean meat.

Arthur Shay

CATTLEMAN LASATER
Woe to the cow that trips.

There is even a growing feeling that the great stock shows with their blue ribbons and hoopla show-ring standards are out of line with the new technology of converting feed into meat. Said a cowman recently: "You buy a prize bull and the first thing you have to do is thin him down. Not only is he not fit for the range, but he has no inclination to cover a cow until he's taken off 300 pounds."

A month ago an oldtimer to the National Hereford Congress in Tucson looked at his fellow cattlemen, most of them dressed in grey flannels rather than in big hats and boots, and pronounced an epitaph on an age: "The cowpuncher of olden days is the cardpuncher of today. We are entering the I.B.M. era of cattle production."

BANKING

Curbs for Holding Companies

Ever since the disastrous collapse of Samuel Insull's financial empire in 1932, Washington has viewed bank holding companies with suspicion but done little to curb their power. Last week the Senate and the House passed and sent to President Eisenhower a bill that would apply stringent curbs. Directed at the 39 U.S. companies that control two or more banks apiece, the bill would make them get rid of all their nonbanking interests, and would forbid buying new banking properties without approval of the Federal Reserve Board. Primary purpose of the bill is to protect independent banks from the interstate branch-banking competition they cannot match.

PERSONNEL

Changes of the Week

¶ Fred A. Manske, 55, became president of National Gypsum replacing Lewis R. Sanderson, who retired at the age of 65 in accordance with a company rule. Chicago-born Fred Manske, a graduate mechanical engineer (Armour Institute of Technology, '23) is a born go-getter who financed most of his education from a newspaper delivery route and a handbill distribution business, worked as a bill collector at 16. He broke into the industry as sales correspondent for U.S. Gypsum by day, by night studied accounting and marketing at Northwestern University, dabbled in inventions (20 patents). In 1934 Manske moved over to National Gypsum, 15 years later was general production manager, in 1951 became vice president in charge of operations.

¶ Edmond H. Leavey, 60, was named president of the International Telephone & Telegraph Corp., succeeding the late William H. Harrison. Leavey, a Texan and a West Pointer ('17) with a civil-engineering degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic, taught military science at M.I.T. and served as chief engineer for WPA before going off to war. He commanded the troops building the U.S. base in northern Ireland, then became chief of the Mediterranean base section in North Africa before going off to the Pacific theater to become deputy Army commander of the Philippines. There he signed for the U.S. at the surrender of General Yamashita's 40,000 Japanese troops, by 1951 was back in Europe as SHAPE's chief of logistics. The next year Leavey doffed his uniform, joined I.T.&T., rose to boss of its overseas manufacturing subsidiary in 1954.

¶ Robert S. Ingersoll, 42, was elected president and chief operating officer of Borg-Warner in a top echelon reshuffle at the auto- and aircraft-parts company. He succeeded his father, Roy C. Ingersoll, 71, who relinquished the presidency after six years, but remains as board chairman and chief executive officer. Young Ingersoll joined the company in 1939, during the war spark-plugged B-W's amphibian-tank project, became an administrative vice president in 1953.