

# Growth Prospect Raises Questions

By Philip Stoddard Brown

IN THE February issue of the magazine Industrial Development, there is an article entitled "Headquarters, USA." This article was written mainly by the staff of the Washington Board of Trade.

The main theme is "the Washington area stands on the verge of great industrial growth." To make sure we get beyond the verge, the Board is making a big effort to sell Washington "from coast to coast."

It has advertised in the Wall Street Journal and (though the word "advertisement" nowhere appears) this 22-page feature article in Industrial Development cost a substantial sum, I'm told—a sum that was shared by the suburban development committees.

The main points of this prospectus "to sell Washington," are as follows:

- "Washington, D. C. and its suburban allies are dealing a blow to tradition. A sign of glowing welcome is being flashed to private industry—coast to coast."

- "Expansion of payrolls not dependent upon Government is desirable—even imperative."

- The Government and universities offer unique advantages in the way of libraries, research facilities and professional people ("the lifeblood of research and development").

- "Gracious living" is a feature of Washington life. There's culture, opportunity for graduate study and fine recreational facilities. (A picture of canoeing on the Potomac is suggestive.) . . . "Modern as well as spacious old high-ceiling apartments are also plentiful."

- The consumer market is big and rich and well served by transportation and public utilities. "The National Capital Area will have five million inhabitants by the year 2000."

- "A large variety of (industrial) sites is available for purchase or lease."

- There is ample water supply—"vast stores of surface water"—for industrial use.

- Arlington is closest. "Driving time from the most remote part . . . is less than 12 minutes . . . average is less than 8 minutes." . . . "An authentic report has it that the Morris Cafritz and Charles Tompkins' companies will jointly build in the eastern part of the county a shopping center which could be the largest in the world."

- Fairfax is the fastest growing. "Growth . . . achieved by the cooperation and understanding of mutual problems on the part of residents, county officials and developers. New industries . . . will find the same understanding and cooperation."

- Prince Georges is strategically located between Washington and Baltimore. It is fortunate in having more land zoned for industry than any other political unit in the National Capital area.

- Montgomery's "select residential community looks forward to further rapid growth—with a doubling of its present population by 1980." . . . "County offers pleasant environment . . . to organizations best able to capitalize on unusual amenities offered by this isle of paradise in the Maryland Piedmont."

This sale—or, invitation to outsiders to share in the "gracious living" of Washington—is offered by the Economic Development Team of the Metropolitan Area, whose "research and field staffs are at the complete disposal of each and every interested concern—our clients." "These services," they say, "are, of course, gratis and confidential."



Brown

## More or Less Gracious?

The civic leaders who comprise the Economic Development Committees of the District and suburban counties are mainly businessmen who believe that what is good for business is good for Washington.

Certainly, rapid growth would be a boon to real estate firms, banks, utilities, dairies, department stores and many other businesses. The only question is whether it makes living in Washington less, or more, expensive—and also more, or less, "gracious"—for the families of Government workers, professional people and the many employes of private firms who may not benefit from higher business profits and land values.

No "Team to Discourage Economic Development" has been formally organized, so far as I know, but many citizen groups in residential communities are continually fighting to limit the extension of industrial and commercial zoning. They oppose many of the "developments" that local business groups favor. . . . They believe many of the statements quoted above are false and they resent bitterly the implication that these business leaders speak for Washington.

Will the bringing of new industrial firms and more people to Washington tend to raise or lower tax rates? Has Washington reached a point where further growth will increase, or lower, the per capita cost of transportation? What about the cost of public services?

## Clean and Dirty Industries

Can those "clean," light-industry plants that developers always talk about exist without "dirty" industries to serve them? Will more industry make Washington less, or more, vulnerable to the ups and downs of national business? Is a slower-growing Federal city as likely to maintain full employment as a rapid-growing city? Are the wages of store clerks and the fees of doctors and dentists likely to be higher in a fast-growing city? What about costs of living?

These and many other unanswered questions are basic to whether a faster-growing population is good for Washington as a whole.

The opening sentence of the Final Report of the Joint Committee of Congress on Washington Metropolitan Problems reads: "The immediate governmental need of the metropolitan region is to create a network of regional public works and services to support estimated metropolitan growth."

Whose estimate of growth? The Board of Trade in forecasting a population increase of 1½ million by 1980 assumed that "upwards of 80 per cent of additional jobs to support this population would be created in the private sector." Now it argues that it is imperative to foster a great burst of industrial growth to create jobs, so that we may achieve this population growth.

For a long time, the United States Employment Service has been recruiting all over the country to fill secretarial, technical and professional openings in Washington. The classified pages of this newspaper provide further evidence of how great the demand is for skilled labor. Consequently, the program of the Industrial Development Team implies bringing in people at an even faster rate.