

# Why They Went to Oklahoma



## Customer Convenience



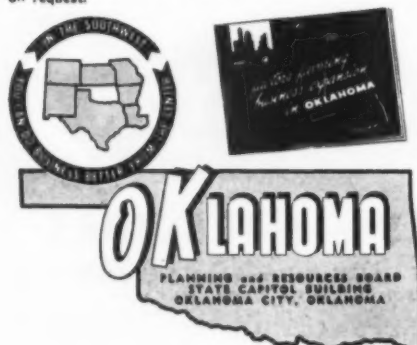
**LESLIE N. PERRIN\***  
President of  
General Mills, Inc.  
*Says:*

"General Mills has located its facilities in all cases with the thought of best serving the consumer. We have found that our Oklahoma operations not only serve local markets, but are advantageously situated to distribute our products all the way south to the Gulf Coast and east to the Atlantic south of the Mason and Dixon Line.

"It should be emphasized that when we act to best serve the consumer, we also best serve the interests of the farmer. It is to the advantage of the farmer that his products are distributed most economically with the widest possible market in view."

\*Above statement a direct quotation in Mr. Perrin's own words.

Oklahoma has many business advantages in addition to those which appealed to General Mills. Send for this book of information which describes graphically, 12 of this state's favorable factors. A special confidential survey report relating to your own business will be prepared on request.



## Perspective

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### Popular Government vs. the Polls

by RAYMOND MOLEY

As winter turns to spring, Congress and the President seem to have reached a parliamentary stalemate. It may well be that a considerable program of compromise legislation will be passed, and adjournment will be marked by mutual felicitations. But at the moment, perplexity seems to have captured both branches of government. Four questions must be disturbing congressional slumbers: What did people really vote for last fall? What, in the light of greatly changed conditions, do people want now? What, in the face of uncertainty about popular mandates, public demands, or whatnot, should we do? And, finally, a few public servants must be asking: How competent are people in general to determine exactly and in detail what they need?

The answers to the first three of these questions may be clearer if we consider the final question first. In that connection we may gain some light from the five-month controversy, denunciation, and ridicule that followed the poll debacle last fall. Out of the torrent of that debate there seems to emerge one profoundly important but ironical truth: The pollsters in their pretentious effort to provide a substitute for representative government have only succeeded in providing the best of all arguments for representative government. In seeking the wisdom and will of people in the mass, they have proved beyond doubt the deficiency of information among people in the mass on the basis of which wise judgments in matters of specific measures of policy can be given.

A good example has been provided by Dr. Gallup within the past two weeks in a poll on medical insurance, one of the major Truman proposals. Only 56 per cent of those interviewed had ever heard of Truman's plan for compulsory health insurance. Of those, 31 per cent had no idea how the cost would be met. Fifteen per cent more made a wrong guess about how the cost would be met. Only one in ten had heard of the plan and knew how it would be financed. Of the 56 per cent who had heard of the plan, one-fourth had no opinion about its

desirability, and the remainder was equally divided for and against.

At this point, it should be pointed out that to draw inferences, as the pollsters have always persisted in doing, from the opinions of the small proportion of the people who know the facts, is to risk another danger. That small proportion may be heavily loaded with members of pressure groups sup-

porting or opposing a measure. The quiet but uninformed wisdom of the great majority is not tapped. And to legislate on any such basis is government by the few for the many.

Thus, the assertion of the polls that a new form of democracy has been found is simply not true.

Considering this basic lack of knowledge, it seems silly to waste time on methods of polling, sampling, weighing. That is like devising new and expensive machinery to draw oil out of a dry well. What the world needs is more means of disseminating information, not more perfect means of weighing our ignorance.

This point is elaborated with great force, skill, and documentation in a recent book "The Pollsters," by Lindsay Rogers. The author is a distinctly unfriendly and at times bitter critic of the polls. He makes two points abundantly clear. The pollsters have been absurdly pretentious. And the polling of opinion can never be a substitute for conscientious and intelligent legislators.

THE answers to the questions posed at the beginning of this piece seem to me clear. It cannot be determined what the public ordered last November. In the face of economic changes since that time, something else would be in order anyhow. That cannot be determined by taking polls. Therefore, Congress should proceed as a representative, responsible body of specialists in government, debate the issues and do what seems best for the nation.

Then, in 1950, let its members ask the public to decide whether it is better off because of what has been done. That is the way of representative government, for which no good substitute has yet been found.

