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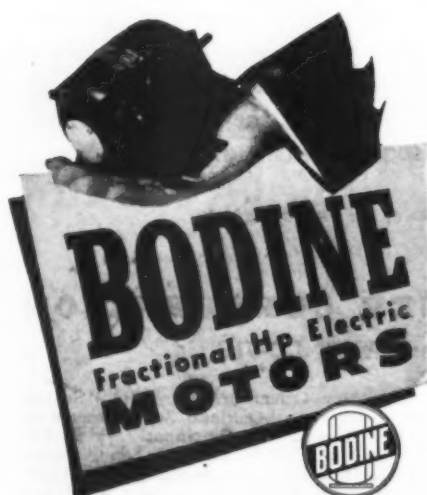
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A 1/15-hp Bodine electric motor drives the vacuum pump and master roll. The Bodine motor was selected because it is in keeping with the precise workmanship and simple, compact assembly of the Robotyper.

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Perspective

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Collective Political Bargaining

by RAYMOND MOLEY

SINCE President Truman's new labor bill is now introduced as the direct fulfillment of a political promise, its political implications are of first importance.

It is, of course, the unwanted child of a desperate campaign alliance between the Democratic Party and the chiefs of labor. I say "unwanted" because clearly the President would not wish to cast away a law which extricated him from some of the most desperate crises of his first term. Unwanted, also, because he could not rationally believe that the Wagner Act, designed for conditions prevailing fourteen years ago, can be made adequate today.

The Administration's bill certainly sets up no permanent labor policy. It must, rather, be characterized as a gesture toward keeping a promise. It suggests a comfortable conviction that it will not be passed—at least not without considerable amendment. The President's course is in the eternal pattern of political buck-passing: you say you will, you try, and you blame somebody else for failure.

Secretary Tobin confessed that the bill is not designed as a permanent labor policy when he said that John L. Lewis would not permit a strike when there is a 90- to 100-day supply of coal above ground. This is an unusual situation induced in part by an open Eastern winter, a decline in coal exports, and other factors. It is not a permanent condition.

THE parliamentary situation makes it abundantly clear that the bill as it stands has little chance of passage. The CIO, which certainly would seek the brightest view of Congressional sentiment, confesses that at least sixteen representatives and eight senators "must be persuaded" to repudiate their past record, if the Taft-Hartley Act is to be repealed. A CIO analysis points out that 227 congressmen and 50 senators who voted for the Taft-Hartley bill are now in office. It points out, in addition, that six new congressmen and two new senators won against labor opposition and that four new senators voted Taft-Hartley

as representatives. Thus, in the view of the CIO, 233 congressmen and 56 senators, a comfortable majority, stand against the present bill. It should be added that although a few, like Senator Morse, oppose the Taft-Hartley Act, they also oppose the present bill.

Implicit in this bill is a collective bargain between the Administration and the big labor-union officers. Those bosses are given back powers of compulsion over their memberships. The closed shop is to be restored, and union-shop limitations are removed. Other annoyances are lifted from union leaders. They won't have to sign loyalty affidavits. They won't be pestered with so many plant

elections. Teeth are removed from arbitral awards in jurisdiction cases. In short, union officers win protection from their members. It is not a workers' bill. It is a union officers' bill.

In return, the Administration can turn over to the union officers a large area of its political labors. Members of unions can be restrained from independent political action. Money in the form of dues can be collected from members and used in political activity with precious little responsibility. Union members are thus locked into support of the Administration.

Presumably, since this is an agreement among politicians who have a rough code of fair play, union chiefs can be counted on or at least expected to refrain from rocking the Administration's boat by threats embarrassing to the President. That the Administration is not counting too heavily on this, however, is shown by Attorney General Clark's opinion that the injunction stick is still behind the door.

THE President is paying dearly for labor support. The defense of the bill is not in strong hands. Secretary Tobin was not impressive in his first appearances. Senators Thomas and Pepper will find rocky going on the Senate floor. Senator Taft will be a towering figure and will carry the fight which should have been made in the late campaign. He may mobilize the public opinion necessary to defeat or drastically revise this bill.

