

streetcars or motor buses though both of these forms of transportation have made big gains.

Numerous rider polls have indicated that the trolley coach, on account of its speed, smoothness, and quiet operation, is the most popular of all types of transit vehicle. Moreover, it is claimed to be considerably cheaper to operate than either the streetcar or the motor bus in comparable service.

A good estimate is that the transit industry will be in the market for about 1,000 new trolley coaches a year after the war.

All this does not mean that the motor bus will take a back seat in postwar transit modernization. Without doubt it will continue to be a major factor. But developments in electric transportation promise to give it some lively competition.

Ball and Bat Crisis

Sports supplies will be so short that military demands will leave little for civilians. Tennis now fares better than golf.

Baseball teams will retrieve as many home-run and foul balls as possible this season and will take special care of bats as the nation experiences its tightest pinch yet in sporting goods supply. Golf and other sports supplies will be so short that many would-be purchasers will be turned away empty-handed. This spring's opening up of golf club production will benefit only the military this year.

• **Lean Times for Sandlots**—The American and National baseball leagues will get almost normal supplies of 9,000 dozen balls and 6,500 bats. Minor professional leagues probably can get enough equipment for the season, but semipro and sandlot teams may have to curtail schedules for lack of supplies. Retailers expect to get less than 5% as many bats as usual and less than 40% as many baseballs.

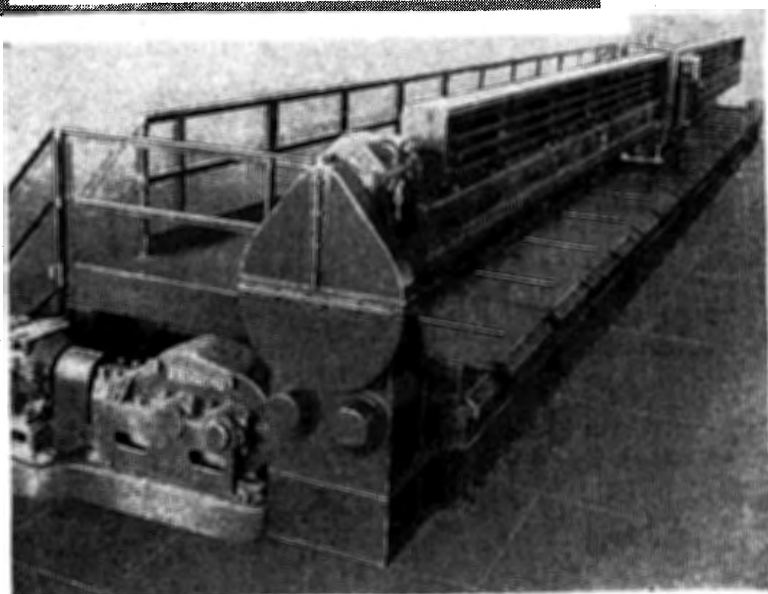
Many dealers already are wondering how they will fill next season's demands for footballs, football suits, and shoes.

• **Reason for the Pinch**—Most sporting goods production is going to the Army and Navy. Baseballs, bats, mitts, and other sports equipment are particularly important to men on garrison duty or serving in armies of occupation.

The growing military demand for all sorts of sporting equipment would leave little plant capacity or labor for civilian athletic supplies even if raw materials were available. The Athletic Goods Manufacturers Assn. recently reported

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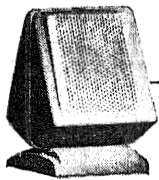
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that 65 raw materials used in the industry are subject to WPB orders. Examples: wool, silk, cotton, fiberboard, leather, rubber, zinc, copper, brass, steel, kapok, and textiles. Quantities are small (for instance, 200-300 tons of steel annually) but this does not make them easier to obtain.

• **Disappearing Golf Balls**—One of the most serious pinches will be in golf supplies. A satisfactory golf ball using Neoprene synthetic rubber has been developed, but these balls go exclusively to the rehabilitation of war veterans. Only 20% of used golf balls return to the plants for reprocessing, despite high-pressure campaigning by makers, dealers, pros, and country clubs. Some used balls have been reprocessed several times, and the supply of reconditioned balls is steadily diminishing.

• **Bull Market in Tennis**—Golf's loss may be tennis' gain. Manufacturers report surprisingly great demand for tennis equipment. One reason may be that tennis courts are accessible to more people than are golf courses while gasoline rationing persists.

Another tennis advantage is that tennis balls made from Buna S synthetic rubber are a tremendous boon to players harassed by the stodgy balls of reprocessed rubber that slowed down the game for two years. Tennis ball supply looks sufficient to meet reasonable demand unless manufacturers' manpower is cut further.

• **Netting Goes to War**—Few, if any tennis or badminton nets will be available, because netting has gone to war as camouflage material. There are more tennis rackets than last year, but most of the young men who were frame benders have been drafted. Manufacturers have scoured the byways for stringers, have boosted production by farming out the work in bits and pieces.

Nylon strings, which some players fancied because of resistance to moisture, are out—probably for the duration. But adequate lambgut, better known as catgut, is available, along with silk. Dealers expect to have some tennis shoes with reclaim or synthetic rubber soles, but at best count on no more than 15% of normal.

• **Few Fishing Rods**—This year's production of fishing rods will not exceed 5% of normal. Manufacturers are permitted merely to assemble from parts on hand. No reels are being made in the United States for civilians, but some few are being imported from Canada.

Some silk lines should be available, but few gut and nylon leaders. Manufacturers continue to make lures, without using metal, and fair quantities of flies are to be had. Rubber wader boots are reserved on priority for workers who need them in their jobs.