

## Agriculture and Industry

Iowa's corn crop was better than knee-high on July 4, 1952. Prospects were so favorable that farm experts were predicting that the record crop of 1948 would be exceeded, producing Iowa's first billion-dollar corn year. Such glowing prospects overshadowed other chapters in the story of Iowa agriculture. For agrarian Iowa, the corn production totals (and the market price of corn) are the best barometer of both farm and business conditions. Thus the 685,736,000 bushels harvested during 1952 spelled continued prosperity for Iowans generally.

Corn prices held up well during the year, due in part to the comparatively poor 1951 crop. March corn brought  $\$1.91\frac{1}{4}$  as the year opened, and sold for  $\$1.64\frac{7}{8}$  twelve months later. Hog prices, which had slumped from record highs, rallied in December and closed at Sioux City's stockyards with a  $\$18.75$  top. On the other hand, cattle prices declined late in 1952. Good steers brought  $\$37.00$  in January, and only  $\$34.75$  in December. The old law of supply and demand was at work again, as statistics showed that the spring pig crop in Iowa had declined 8 per cent, while the beef-producing population increased.

Despite the record corn crop, the total farm income for Iowa was down in 1952 to \$2,328,845,000 as farm prices dropped to their lowest level since the Korean war began. Lower hog prices accounted for much of the decrease. The latest figures released by the Bureau of the Census ranked 14 Iowa counties among the top 100 in the United States, based on the dollar value of products in 1949. Pottawattamie County was Iowa's leader with a \$37,400,000 income, but ranked only 33rd in the nation. Iowa trailed California and Illinois in the total number of counties among the ranking 100. In corn production, however, Iowa was first and had 35 counties out of 100, with Illinois second on the basis of 23 counties.

The bumper corn crop came in spite of a decrease in the acreage planted and the damaging Missouri River floods. The muddy waters covered 326,000 acres in western Iowa at one time, causing farmers to evacuate hundreds of farms and start all over again after the floods had receded. Determination, hard work, and favorable weather after the April floods permitted farmers to harvest crops in fields that had been ten feet under water during the early spring. Farm leaders estimated that 85 per cent of the flooded land had gone back into production. Government funds helped many of these farmers by paying the cost of clearing debris, replacing fences, and repairing drainage systems with relief allocations.

A census of Iowa livestock in 1952 showed that Hereford cattle were preferred by state farmers over other breeds. Slightly more than 20 per cent of all beef cattle were Herefords, 12.5 per cent were Aberdeen Angus, and 10.7 were Shorthorns. The dairy cattle census indicated a heavy preference for Holsteins, with Guernsey, Brown Swiss, Jersey, and crossbreeds making up the other 80 per cent.

Faye Mugge, a teen-age farm girl from Cleg-horn, made a grand sweep of livestock show honors in 1952. She won the Iowa State Fair championship, the 4-H grand championship at the Kansas City Royal Show, and the junior grand championship at the Chicago International Live Stock Exposition with her Angus steer, Shorty. The 1,040-pound animal was sold in Chicago for \$1.50 a pound. Bandolier 170th of Wilton, an Angus bull owned by Otto G. Nobis of Davenport, won the reserve senior Angus champion ribbon at the National Western Stock Show. Young Robert Schmidt of Delmar won the International reserve champion Angus honors with his steer, Black Magic, and the International reserve champion Hampshire ewe was exhibited by Roy B. Warrick of Oskaloosa. In a sale at Indianola a purebred Hereford bull, Baca Duke 1st, brought \$51,000. A two-year-old bull, Barington Imperial, won the senior and reserve grand championships in the national milking Shorthorn show at the Waterloo

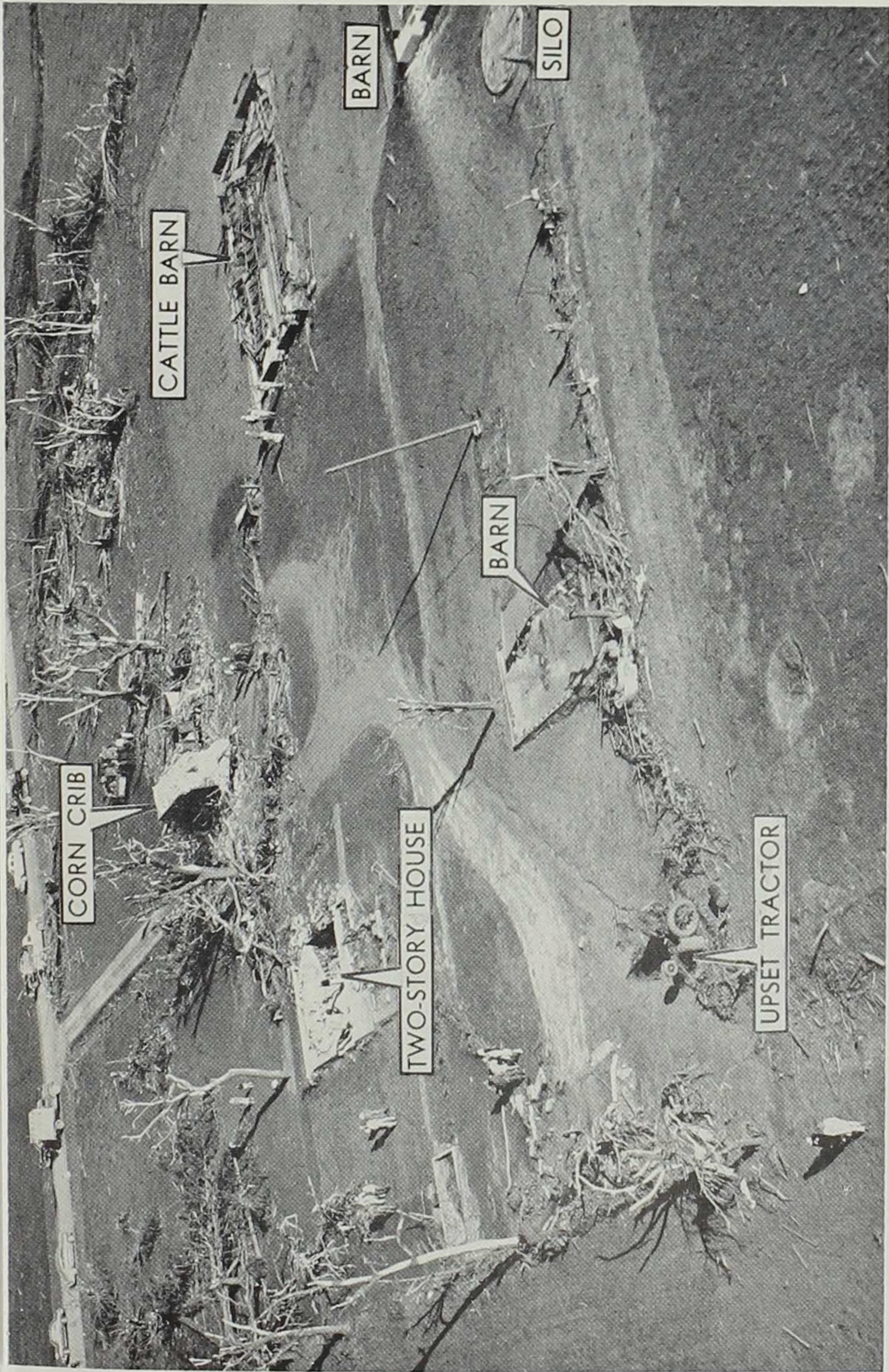
Dairy Cattle Congress for owner George W. Haines of Walker.

In addition to the warning sign to agriculture posted by the decline in total farm income, there was the checked spiral in Iowa farm land values. Professor W. G. Murray of Iowa State College reported that the average price for land and buildings in Iowa dropped from \$212 in 1951 to \$209 per acre. "Sales activity was decidedly less than in 1951 in all areas of Iowa," he added. Farms still brought much more than the \$88 per acre average of 1941, however. Near New London a 160-acre farm sold for \$81,500, and another 160-acre farm at Holstein brought \$423 per acre. Besides the ever menacing price situation, the Iowa farmer faced a growing threat to his well-being from another quarter. Statisticians concluded that the alarming rate of corn picker accidents was a major source of concern. They found that a fifteen-foot swath of corn across Iowa from Burlington to Sioux City could have been purchased with the money spent for doctor and hospital bills because of a year's accidents. These figures did not include a tabulation of the suffering and life-time handicaps caused by the accidents.

Iowa industry, often in alliance with agriculture, kept the pace which has accounted for a revolutionary growth in a ten-year span. The Iowa Development Commission reported that 820 new industries had come to the state since 1945. Pay-

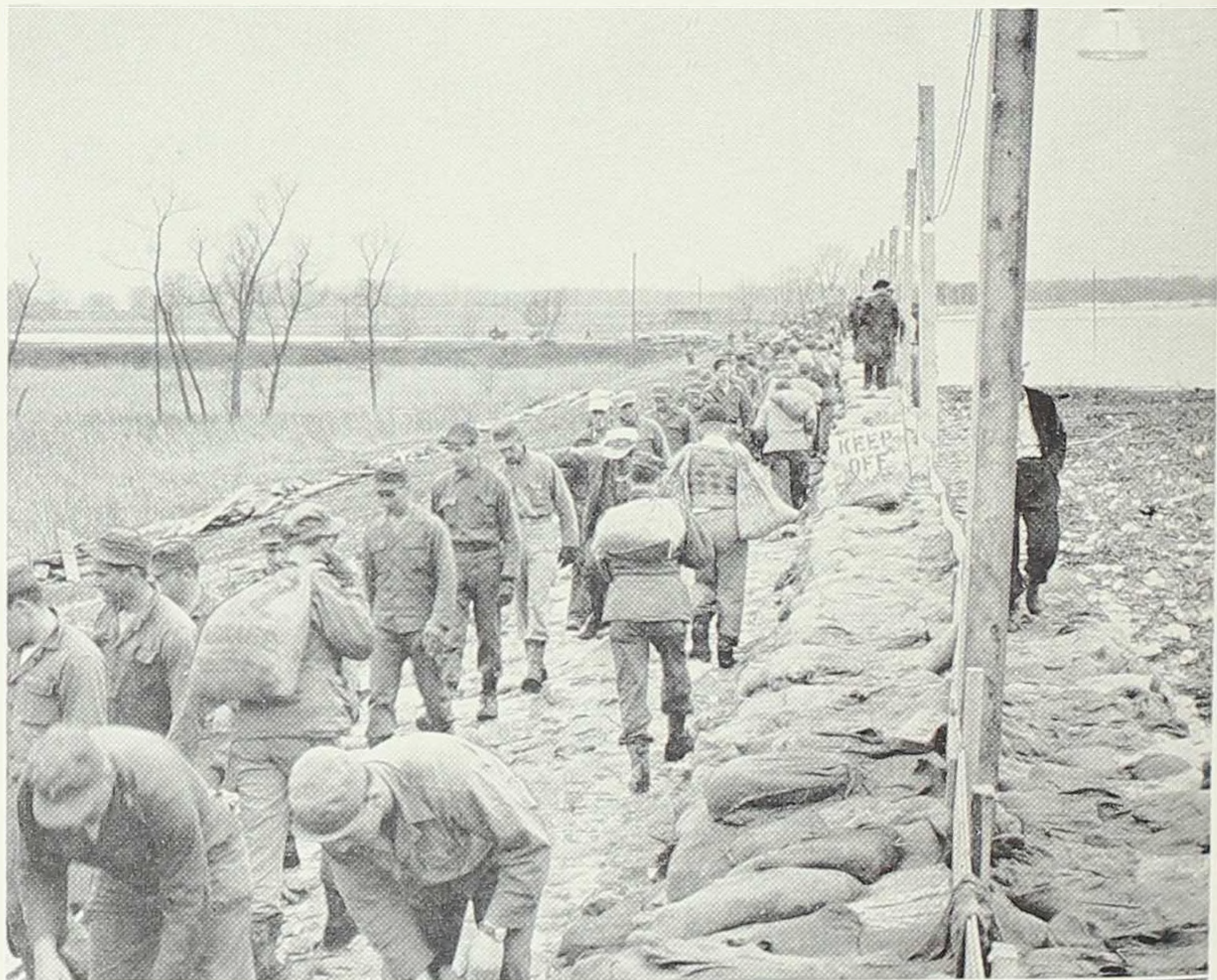
rolls to Iowa's 169,000 factory workers had risen from \$327,000,000 in 1947 to over \$600,000,000 in 1952. The new industries represented a half billion dollars in plant and equipment investments, and the number was increasing at the rate of one new concern each week. The 1952 non-agricultural employment averaged 640,000 workers, and unemployment in Iowa was at an all-time low. The Iowa Employment Security Commission paid \$4,030,157 for unemployment compensation, which called for a .4 per cent unemployment insurance contribution rate from employers, the lowest in the nation.

No signs of a let-up in Iowa's industrial expansion appeared to cloud the horizon. Camanche hummed with excitement after the March announcement that a \$66,000,000 steel mill would be built near there, with production scheduled to begin in 1953. Eight major electric companies announced the launching of a construction project in Iowa that would add 1,259 miles of 161,000-volt lines to the 356 then in operation. The initial cost would be \$38,000,000, but by 1965 the project was expected to cost \$268,000,000. At Fort Madison the W. A. Sheaffer Pen Company swung open the doors of a new \$3,300,000 plant. Continuing the trend noted in 1951, business and commercial construction declined 27 per cent, but residential housing increased over 4 per cent, and for the first time in history there were 500,000 home owners.



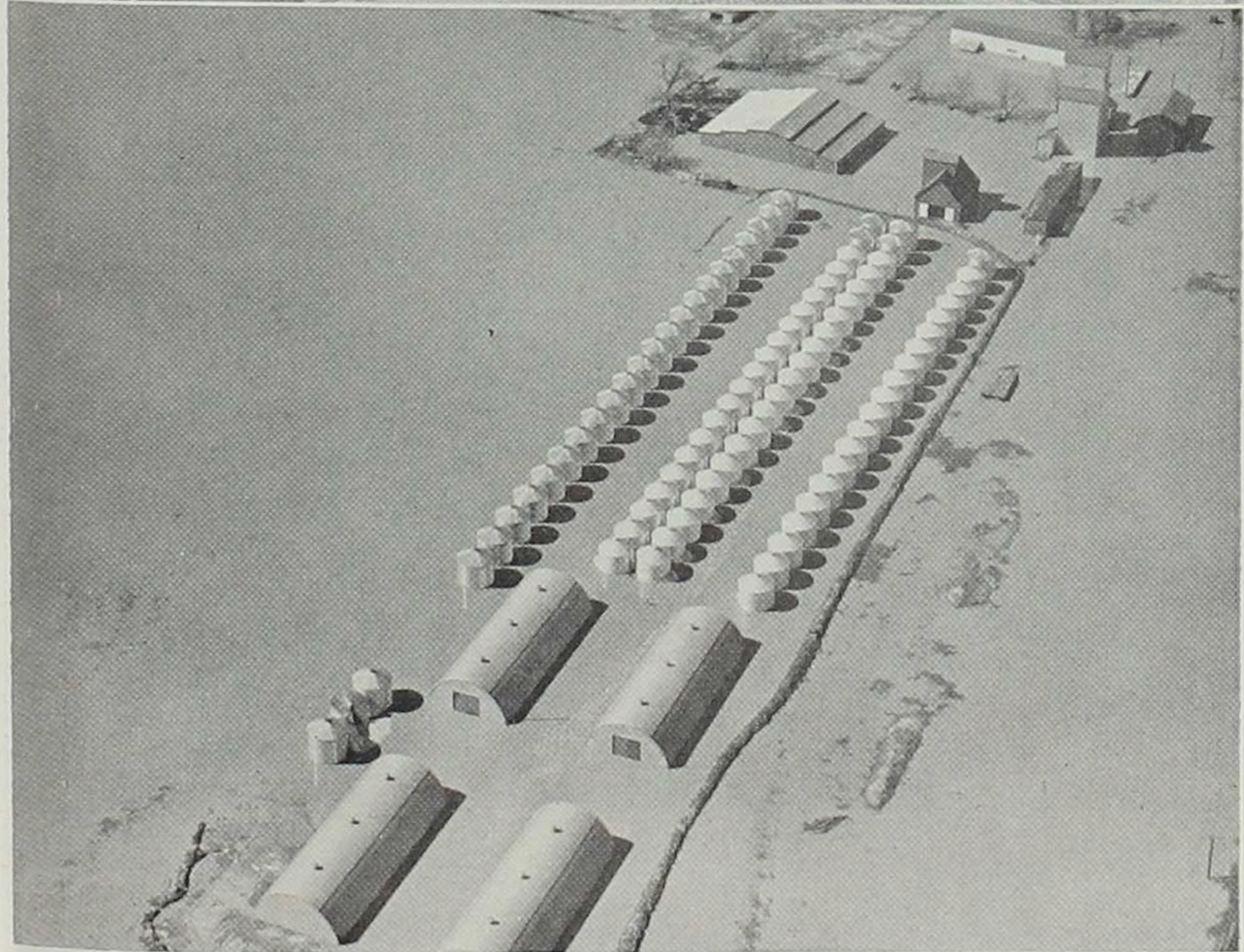
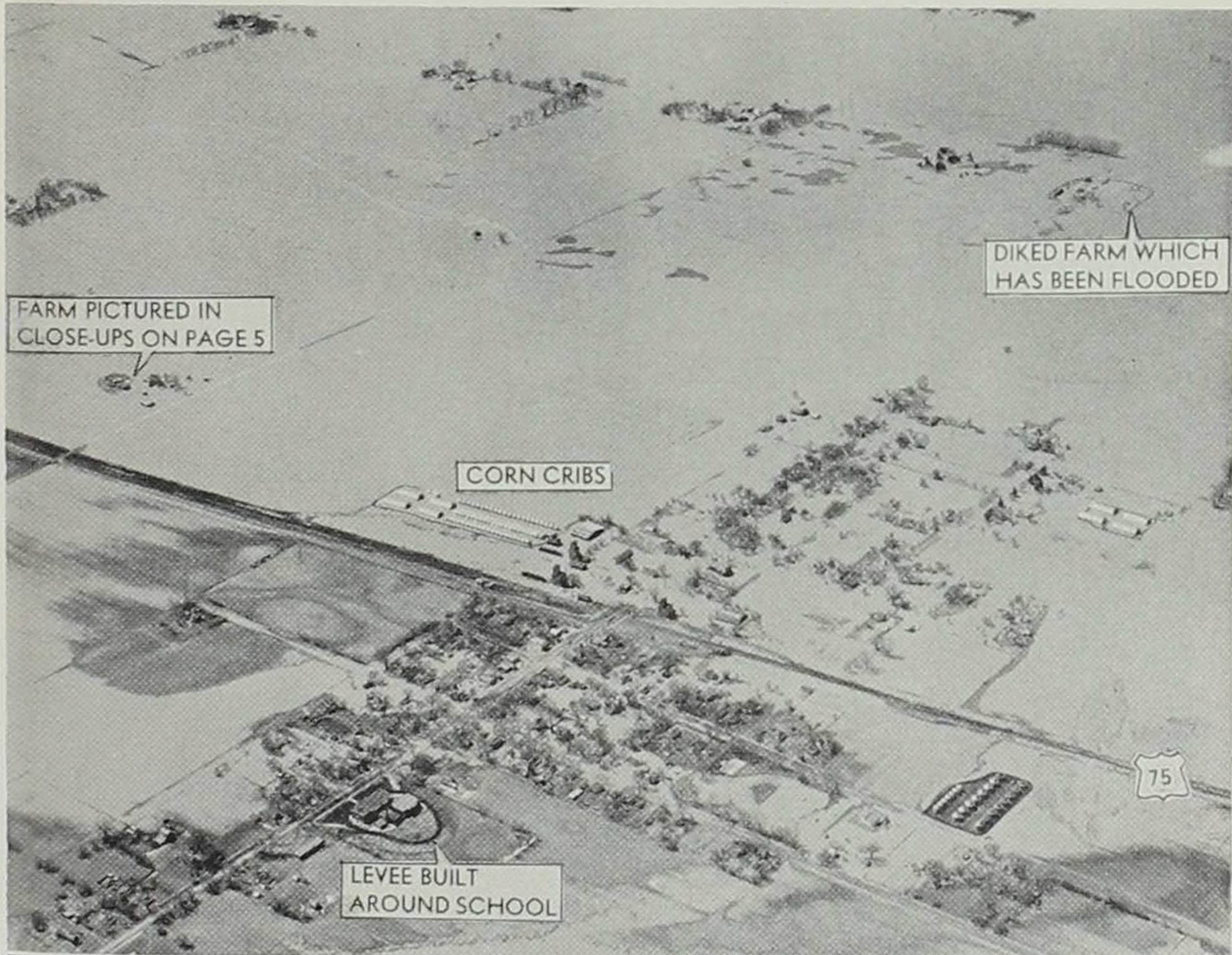
A Tornado Near Buck Grove Community Leveled the Ole Niehuis Farm.  
The Family Fortunately Left Shortly Before the Twister Struck.

THE RAMPAGING MISSOURI



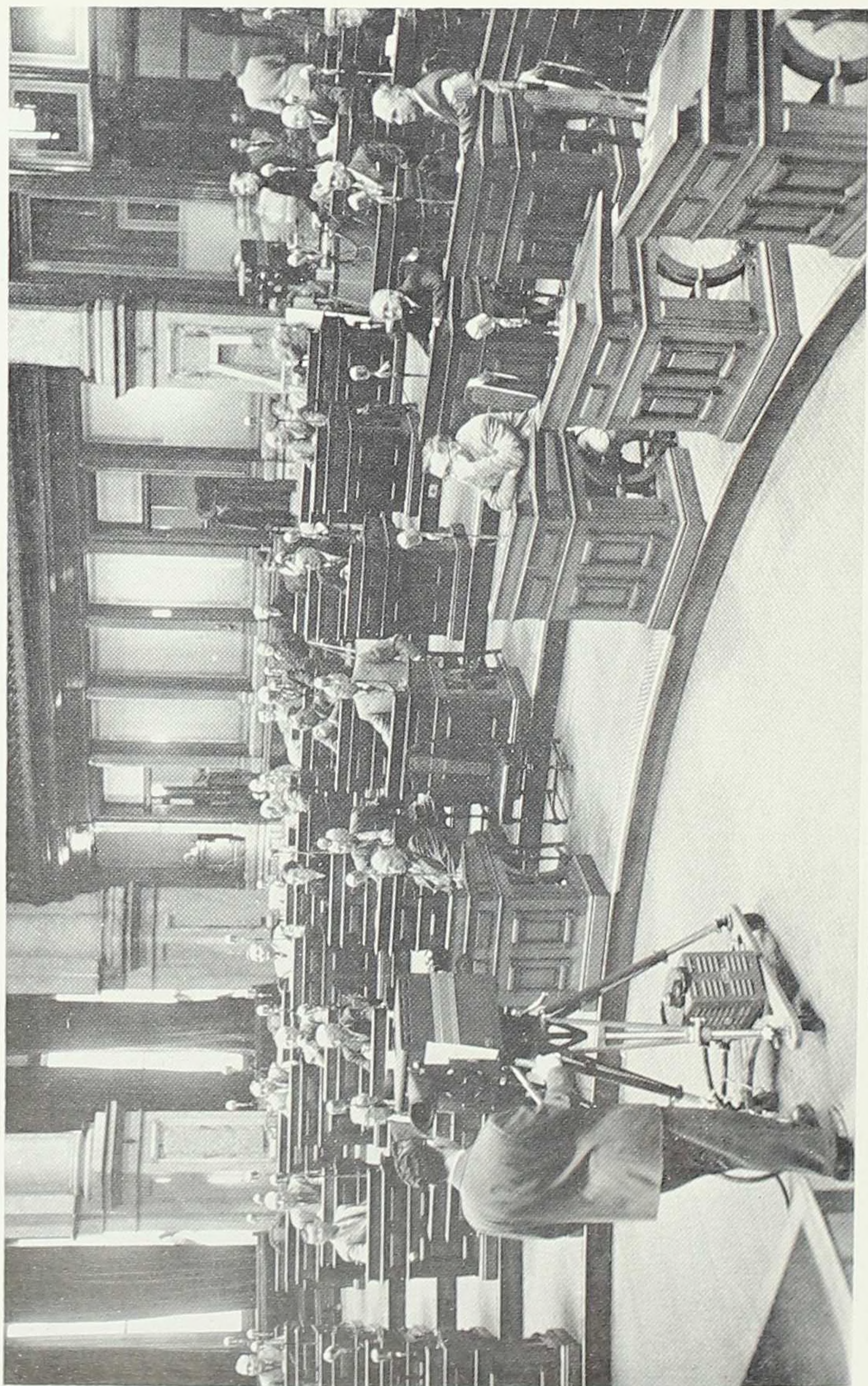
Top — Fighting the Missouri with Sandbags Near Council Bluffs  
Bottom — Emergency Station in Council Bluffs Gymnasium

# FLOODS OF 1952



*Top* — Blencoe in Monona County Surrounded by Missouri  
*Bottom* — Earthen Dikes Around Grain Storage Bins Failed at Blencoe





TELEVISION MOVED INTO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Retail sales totaled more than \$3,000,000,000 in Iowa. The value of Iowa factory products also reached \$3,000,000,000, but there was no direct relation between the figures. Farm machinery accounted for a large share of the factory sales, with much of it sent to surrounding states and even abroad. Other signs that 1952 was a bumper business year included the \$179,216,378 state tax income. State Treasurer M. L. Abrahamson reported the total was four million dollars more than the 1951 income, and came from thirteen special taxes and the state liquor store profits. Demand deposits in banks were almost unchanged over the 1951 figure, but time deposits increased 7.3 per cent. Department store sales declined 2.8 per cent, but appliance stores did a booming business with a 10.1 per cent increase, doubtless aided by the sale of new television sets for thousands of Iowa homes.

One price Iowa paid for her growing industrial strength was a number of labor-management difficulties. The Davenport *Times* managed to publish a small afternoon edition, when printers in the Quad Cities area went on strike, by pooling resources with Rock Island and Moline newspapers. The dispute centered around the use of teletypesetter machines which would set type automatically. A walkout at Morrell's packing plant in Ottumwa ended after the company announced that it would not bargain with union officials for

a settlement until the plant was back in operation. A federal court jury awarded \$66,722.53 in damages to the Oliver Corporation from the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers for work stoppages at the firm's farm machinery plant at Charles City.

Iowa's farmers demonstrated their willingness to cooperate with each other and help a neighbor in need again in 1952. Thus, when W. F. Stefel lost his farm home in a \$5,000 blaze, the day after it had been remodeled, 150 friends and members of the Grimes Lion's Club rebuilt the place. Again, Winnebago County celebrated the start of its new telephone cooperative that took over 44 mutual companies in that area, established a uniform \$24 per year rate, and rebuilt 540 miles of lines. "The Telephone and the Farmer," a new government-produced color motion picture with Winnebago countians in the cast, helped spark the celebration. In Adair County a 4-H Community Center was erected in one week by volunteer laborers, ranging from a seventy-nine-year-old grandfather to grade school youngsters.

Old products and ways of doing business got a boost before 1952 departed. Sorghum syrup, which Iowa farmers used experimentally during the Civil War, was returning to prairie farmsteads. Iowa led the nation in 1952 production with 380,000 gallons. Popcorn, which has come into its own right as an asset to American movie

theaters, attracted Iowa planters, and the 1952 crop of 38,250,000 pounds almost doubled the previous year's total. And freight hauling on the Mississippi was bustling. After the upstream tows locked through Davenport on March 5, one of the earliest dates on record, Colonel G. A. Finley of the army engineers predicted  $5\frac{1}{2}$  million tons would pass through Dam No. 15 before the ice returned.

For all the cares of 1952, and they were many, Iowa farmers, industrial captains, and businessmen found no great cause for complaint with their fortunes during the year. Strangely enough, although farm income had dropped, the federal Bureau of Agricultural Economics reported that Iowa's farm standard of living had increased to 177 on the index, 55 points above the national average. This meant—in tangible terms—more new farm homes, electricity and modern plumbing, new automobiles, appliances, and more leisure for the family generally. Industrial wages were up to an average of \$66.39 a week, which also meant better living for the city dweller. Loans were harder to make, and installment buying seemed unusually high, but the corn cribs were full and the back orders in factories offset the few economic blemishes on an otherwise encouraging picture.

ROBERT RUTLAND