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TABLE TOP

by
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PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

TOM AYLMER: At the time the story opens is living in Peru, managing silver mines belonging to his father.
FELICE PARDO: A Peruvian who, although young, has been fifteen years in the service of the Aylmer mining enterprise. He is the most trusted native employee.
MRS. MERCY AYLMER: Tom's mother; egotistical and exacting.
JANE BRADSHAW: Tom Aylmer's fiancée. At the time the story opens, the expectation is that these two will marry on Tom's next leave in England.
ANGUS MAINE: A young Scot on Aylmer's staff, and close companion of Tom.
JACOB FERNANDEZ: A rich, elderly South American whose hobby is the study of bird life. He is a bachelor and is engaged upon a monumental literary work on the subject of bird life.

Synopsis of Previous Chapters

TOM AYLMER and ANGUS MAINE are enjoying a holiday on the hills of Peru when FELICE PARDO rides out to them with a cabled message announcing the death of Tom's father. Tom knows that his father has bequeathed to him the Peruvian silver mines of which he (Tom) is the manager. He decides to sail for England at once and to take Angus for company. Before leaving Lima, Tom buys a parrot, to give to his fiancée, JANE BRADSHAW. The bird, bought from a dealer whom Tom knows and trusts, is, according to the dealer, a very exceptional parrot, and is about seventy years of age—no great age for a parrot.

On the liner, the bird engages the attention of JACOB FERNANDEZ, a rich man, of Lima, who is bound for Panama and whose life hobby is the study of birds. To Fernandez, the parrot talks, but the only words he can detect, in a string of sounds are "Benny Boss." Fernandez says he knew a man of that name, and proceeds to tell Tom and Angus what he knows.

(Now Read On)

CHAPTER II (Continued)
Signor Fernandez ordered refreshment and proceeded to the subject of the bygone adventurer who had brought them together; but the tale of Benny was destined to be again delayed, for Signor Fernandez touched on a side issue, and, finding it of deep interest to his second-hearer, discoursed a little upon it.

"The origin of Benny is hidden in the past. He was ignorant of it himself, and had not the faintest notion as to whom his parents may have been; but he felt sure that his father was a white man and believed his mother an

Indian. I think the male parent predominated. Benny possessed enormous energy, great physical courage, and indomitable will-power—qualities you may seek in vain among the aborigines of Peru. Indeed, I always say that when one meets a particularly dull, apathetic and feeble soul, the betting is that he has the old blood in him."

Young Maine protested. "That's a hard saying!" he cried. "I have studied the natives in my small way, because I reverence their story, and I have found them often wiser than—well, wiser than those we call their betters."

"Good!" said Jacob. "I like young people to be interested in anthropology—or indeed in any 'ology' that will help to develop their wits. Are you attracted by our ancient history, Angus?"

"He lives for it, sir," explained Tom. "He loves the Incas better than anything, and says it was one of the great tragedies of history that a lower civilization conquered a nobler one, when Spain swallowed up Peru."

"A great tragedy indeed repeated," said the old man, "and nothing gives me more pleasure than to reflect that Peru succeeded in regaining her liberty. If I have a hero, it is Bolivar."

"He turned to Maine. "The history of Inca civilization remains still to be written, though rich material awaits the historian. If you are an enthusiast you may know as much about it as I do, however."

"Please go on!" said Angus. "I'm learning Spanish—old Spanish—to read the fine books about it."

Signor Fernandez loved to talk, and found his present audience quite to his taste.

"We will leave Benny Boss waiting for a moment, then," he said. "And that will not trouble him, for he was used to waiting, and knew the time to strike. Patience, combined with his other serpentine qualities, served his purpose well enough."

"Now touching in Incas and those defects of character that I attributed to them, perhaps too harshly, we have got to remember fundamental facts, my friends, for out of them arises their history. To begin with, they never shed innocent blood save in the rarest instances. Their altars were not polluted, and they display the spirit of Abel rather than Cain. They claimed a heavenly origin, and, for their time, behaved in a manner quite worthy of it. The sun, the moon, the evening star, and the spirit that spoke in the thunder were their gods. The people were religious and paid their toll to their deities. They gave willingly all that was most precious to them. With gold and silver and precious stones they adorned their noble temples and brought thither the fruits and harvest of the earth, together with the productions of their own industry—the finest achievements of their craftsmen and husbandmen. And that, surely, is about the most rational form of idolatry it is possible to imagine. Beneficent and all-sufficing nature, was their real deity, and they took their convictions far afield, for where the Incas conquered and extended their domain, all native blood and religious torture, and massacres were suppressed, and the native peoples taught a higher ideal of humanity."

"We must grant that the Government was despotic and created for the nation a sort of superior slavery. Thus superstition and force governed the country and created a supine, phlegmatic spirit destined to make it an easy prey. Those who had set the slogan 'Love one another' upon their banners swiftly went down before the battle cry of Spain, and their dream of good comradeship and universal humanity made

no appeal to the lust of the Latins. Spain, with gunpowder to support her and the love of war at her fingers' ends, swiftly laid Peru battered and bleeding under her heel, for in a few years' time the Jesuits were governing South America precisely on the same old lines of superstition and force that the Incas were used to employ."

"Yet," concluded the old man, "the little company of our ancient Indian people remaining, still cherish their memories and reverence the sorrows of the past. They still mourn the imperial Incas, and their vanished glories and bitter woes are handed down by father to son, by mother to daughter, through the avenues of the years."

"Mr. Fernandez broke off, flung away his cold cigar and lighted another, while Angus asked a question.

"Is it true, do you think, sir, that at the conquest, when Guzco was the Inca capital and perhaps the wealthiest city in the world, that rather than yield their treasures to the coming Spaniards, the rulers conveyed them southwards to Lake Titicaca and flung their golden images and sacred vessels and priceless jewels by the ton into the lake?"

"I should judge there was no question about it, Maine," replied the old man. "The fact is established on massive grounds. Sanguine historians judge there may well be treasures to the value of fifty millions hidden in Titicaca; and they are likely for the most part to remain there, for her waters are in places eight hundred feet deep. One may compute where the treasure arrived from Guzco; but the lake was full of heavy craft in those days and no man can say where these precious things have been submerged. Some, however, were undoubtedly recovered; and that fact brings me back to Benny Boss, whom we have kept waiting long enough."

**CHAPTER III
THE 500,000 RUBY**

"The man was in his prime when we first met," began Jacob, "and as nothing pleased him better than talking about himself I heard a good deal of his history. One could not, however, regard him as a very truthful narrator. He was always the hero of his own story, and, to listen, one had thought that no more honest plain-dealer ever fought fate and circumstance; but an element of romance never lacked from the narrative."

"He was an unconscious artist. In youth he had followed the sea and spent much time also at various Pacific islands in guano's palmy days. The fact had created a keen interest in birds, and I will say for Benny that a sounder naturalist never came to my knowledge."

"Well, Benny, tiring of the sea, found congenial work inland at Puno and presently combined varied interests by operating on the lake in the steamers trading between Bolivia and Peru. I met him upon an excursion in one of these little paddle-boats, and we struck up a friendship over birds. He agreed to serve me and, for a time, worked solely in my employment on the waters and shores of Lake Titicaca. In the capture of birds he was industrious and most ingenious. I look back at Benny as one of the founders of my unique collection."

"I paid Mr. Boss very well," continued the old man, "and we never quarrelled; but presently he appeared to lose interest in the birds and I felt they had ceased to be his first thought. He never let me into his secrets, however, and I was not concerned to learn them. He lived at Puno then, and was married with several children. I remember that, towards the end of our collaboration, he told me that his eldest daughter was going to marry a man called Pardo, and I gave him a wedding present for her."

"That may be regarded as the first act of Benny's story, so far as I know it, but I only saw the man again once. Physically, by the way, he was undersized, but finely put together—immensely strong for a little 'un and as tough as teak. A broad, solid fellow with a big nose and yellowish, pale eyes—rather like your blue parrots. No mind ever moved quicker, and he knew sometimes—in a mysterious way—what you were going to tell him before you opened your mouth."

Mr. Fernandez laughed at his thoughts. "Well, a year or two passed," he proceeded, "and I heard nothing of Benny. Then he called upon me at Lima and invited me to buy—not a bird, but a jewel. I have small interest in jewels and know nothing about them, but he showed me a remarkable, blood-red stone of great lustre set in gold. It was obviously ancient, but as to its quality and market value I could form no opinion. I supposed the stone to be a carbuncle, for it looked to be much larger than any ruby I had ever seen; but Benny swore that it was a true ruby and worth five thousand pounds at the least. He maintained an air of great mystery and declined to give me any particulars. I advised him to take the jewel to an expert, but this he declined to do."

"It struck me, knowing my Benny, that the red stone was probably stolen from some trusting native, and when he finally offered to let me have it for five hundred pounds instead of the sum he had claimed it to be worth, I felt more

Prospecting, Truth, Brokers and Yo-Ho

Also a Word About Inspector Creasy, and Other Matters.

The following is from the daily columns of Thomas Richard Henry, writing in The Toronto Telegram:—

Prospecting
Swedish scientists say they can tell if there are minerals in the ground by examination of tree leaves.

This beats the magnetic needle surveying that used to get a big play.

It even beats the "diving rod" method of finding water.

As a matter of fact, it "beats everything," what scientists say they can do these days.

The theory is that if minerals exist, traces will be found in water solutions that are absorbed through the roots of shrubs and trees.

"Thus, for instance, trees growing near a gold vein reveal certain gold contents in their leaf."

We always wondered where "gold leaf" came from.

True Story
A book seller called at the home of a Cobourg citizen.

Said the book agent—Have you the "Life of —" in this home?

Said the citizen—"No, I haven't the life of a dog."

Brokers and Sheep
Brokers generally have always been something like a bunch of sheep. (We said sheep—not lambs).

When business is good they fall over themselves, and each other, advertising for more business.

They all want to crowd their ads on the same page on the same day.

We have always maintained that the time to advertise is when business is slow—and you get most attention when you are not crowding in with all your competitors.

There have been a faithful few who have bravely advertised through the seven lean years, but it is so long since the rank and file of brokers have advertised that most of us have forgotten our theories.

We notice, however, that Haig, Rennie and Co. are the first to come out of their trance.

They are out looking for business with a big ad.

They deserve to get it.

The Civilized Touch
The Japs say that they will stop the Red Cross from supplying foods to refugees in cities under attack.

This simply emphasizes the rapid advances that have taken place in military thinking.

Before the Great War it was only the men who died horribly on fields of battle, with jagged steel tearing out their entrails.

Women and children wept at home. But military genius has made rapid strides.

Bombing planes can now penetrate behind the battle lines and subject the women and the children to the same terrible death that men must face in battle.

Military genius has even effected more than that.

The wonders of military science not only makes it possible for little girls and little boys to be killed outright. It makes it possible for them to be pitifully starved.

Little children hurt and hungry; women starved and bombed; men disintegrated by the marvels of a machine age.

War is something at which one may well marvel.

Recognition
A passenger on the British liner Strathaird stands accused of throwing overboard two violins, one contra bass, one banjo, one saxophone and all the drums, the property of a swing band.

We think that this man should receive some recognition for relieving short of the highest achievement.

We wish to cite him for meritorious action—and at the same time draw attention to his failure to crown his work with perfection.

He started out well but—he failed to throw the swing band overboard after their instruments of torture.

U.S. Business
When the U.S. business man tells you there must be a Hades because that's where business has gone, he isn't exactly fooling.

than ever suspicious. I had no mind to play fence for Mr. Boss and perhaps lend myself in possession of somebody else's property. So I told him there was nothing doing under such vague circumstances.

"He left me after our conversation, and said the he was going to stop with friends at Lima for a few days and then return to his home beside Lake Titicaca. I never saw him again, but after a couple of years were passed, heard a further instalment of his story. Benny now achieved notoriety, and was wanted by the authorities. Doubtless anticipating this demand, however, he evaded the challenge by making himself scarce. For a considerable while no news of his activities was forthcoming, and neither the members of his family nor anybody else could guess where he might be."

"Meantime, his story and the charges levelled against him saw the light. Two brothers—Emilio and Juan Garcia—had entered a secret partnership with Benny. It appeared that they found the money for this enterprise, while Mr. Boss supplied the brains and needful exertion. The gamble had been undertaken at Benny's inspiration, and he had fired the Garcia brothers with his own enthusiasm. As I have told you, it is historically certain that on the approach of the Spaniards, and before the capital city of the Incas fell to them, immense quantities of their treasures were removed from Guzco, conveyed south, and buried in the waters of Lake Titicaca.

(To be Continued)

NORTH AMERICAN LIFE

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ALL PROFITS FOR POLICYHOLDERS

Business is sort of tough down in the States.

For example, if the country is divided up into 147 trading areas, there isn't a single one that doesn't show business below normal, and the percentage below normal extends from two down to 38.

One year ago, Austin Texas, Houston, Texas, and Mobile, Alabama, reported business two or three per cent. above normal, but even these have slipped below the normal line.

Maybe the morality squads have got on the job.

The Black Prince of Creasey
Florrie Culture calls our attention to the fact that Inspector Frank Creasey will accompany the quints to Toronto.

Florrie knows the family. She says the inspector is the son of Sir Edward Creasey, at one time governor of Ceylon.

And listen, girls! She says he is very handsome.

When the inspector makes his sally into Toronto, he should remember that it isn't only the Mounted Police who always get their man.

Naturally
The other day we commented on the fact that illuminated Vancouver citizen (we mean illuminated and not enlightened) might see the German fleet slipping through the mists of Puget Sound.

A man from Vancouver wants to know how a Vancouver citizen, illuminated or otherwise, could see anything on Puget Sound, because Puget Sound is off Seattle.

The answer is perfectly simple.

The Vancouver citizen could be attending a convention at Seattle and that is why he would be illuminated.

Yo-Yo
Yesterday—an ex-broker we used to know called to see us.

As nearly as we could make out, he was managing a string of yo-yo experts.

He first brought in a chap named Al Gallo, whom he said was champion of Montreal, and later, Joe Young, whom he introduced as world's champion.

We don't know how a world's champion yo-yo player is decided, but these boys put on quite a show, and can really make the little wooden spinners do tricks for them.

The accuracy with which they kept the yo-yo spinning around their heads made us wonder why they didn't stick a safety razor blade on one of them and use it for a fast shave.

Young-Davidson to Pay Dividend in August This Year

Advances Shown in Production, Tonnage, Average Recovery and Operating Profit.

Toronto, May 24.—In little more than three months, about the end of August, shareholders of Young-Davidson Gold Mines can expect an initial dividend, probably of 3 cents a share. President Weldon C. Young intimated at annual meeting in Toronto on Friday that that was but one of the optimistic announcements made at the meeting.

The year 1938 was one of complete success, he stated, ore reserves at the end of the year being as great as on any property in Canada, at between 3,500,000 and 4,000,000 tons above the 650 level. Development of the second level has been completed and work of blocking out and stopping the ore has started on the third level. Mine is being developed systematically under Hollinger's supervision, and work is not being rushed. After third level is developed, prospecting and development will be done between the 650 and 850 horizons.

Pit work will be finished in two or three months. Up till a short time ago, at least 75 per cent of the ore milled was coming from the pit. That position is now reversed, only about 25 per cent coming from pit and balance from underground. Winze will go down to the 1,050 horizon, with the view in mind of establishing the jaw crusher below the 850 level, which would effect a big saving in costs. Plant is capable of operating to 1,500 feet.

April production was \$110,781 from milling of 31,441 tons of ore for average recovery of \$3.52 per ton, while operating expenses were \$78,891, leaving operating profit of \$31,890. Production for the first four months of the year amounted to \$470,879 from 125,279 tons for average of \$3.75. Total expenditures were \$310,654, leaving an operating profit of \$160,225. Mr. Young stated that on May 3, bullion poured brought production for the year to date to \$500,000.

As compared with the first four months of 1938, tons milled increased

9,263, average recovery per ton was up 44 cents, production was \$86,263 higher, expenses were up only \$30,593, so that operating profit increased \$55,670, or more than 53 per cent. Average daily tonnage for the 120 days was 77 tons higher.

From time mill started in September, 1934, to end of April, 1939, mill as handled 1,404,999 tons, from which has been produced \$4,596,322 for an average of \$3.27 a ton. Total expenses were \$3,189,269 for that period, and operating profit \$1,407,053.

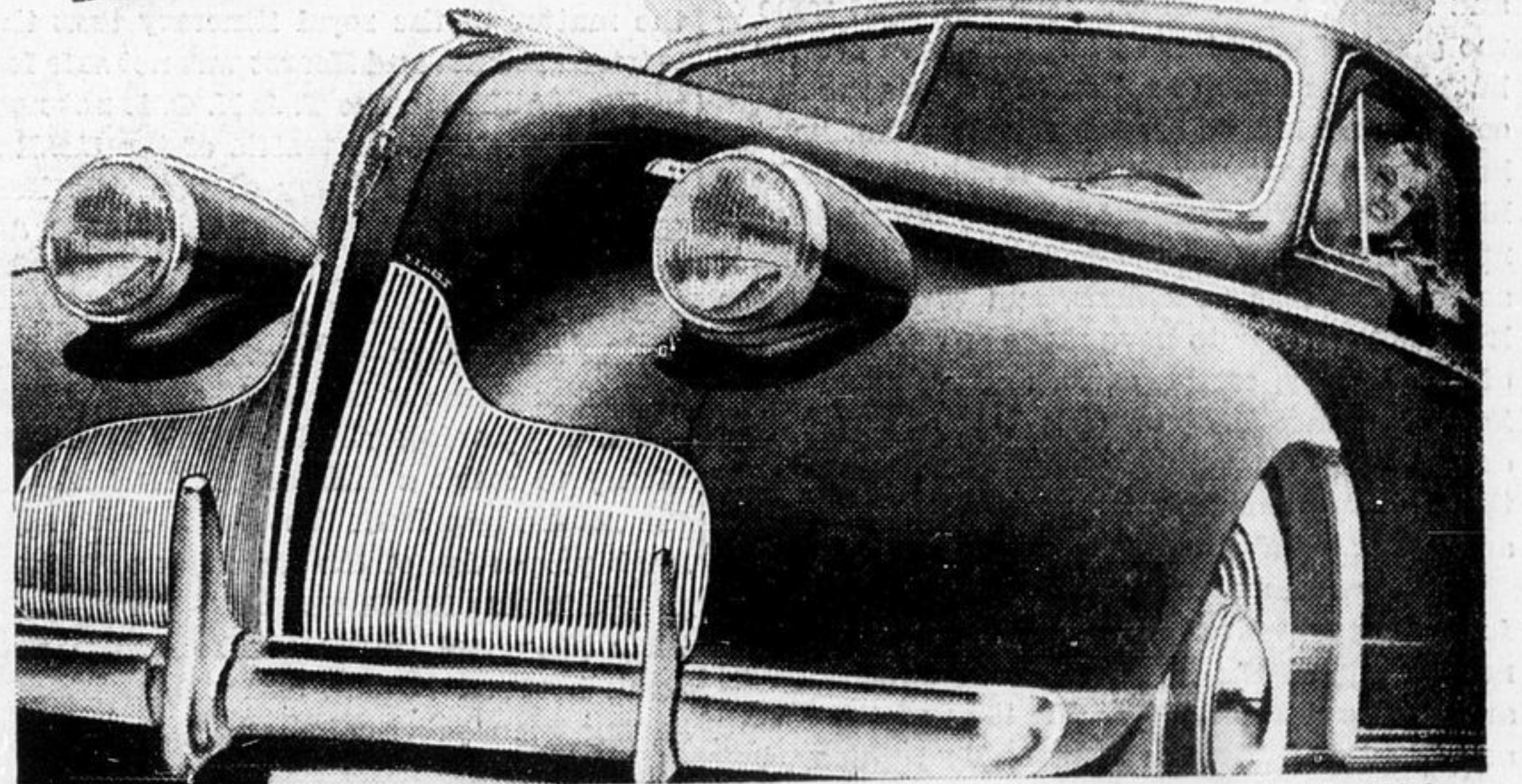
The directorate was re-elected, with the addition of W. T. Davidson.

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