

'Buy in Bronx' Drive Spurred By UNO Site

Campaign Backed by Board of Trade and Leading Retail Merchants

By EDWARD VOLZ
FURNISHINGS 3/25/36

Coupled with the feeling that the establishment of the United Nations Organization's headquarters at Hunter College will greatly enhance the prestige of the Bronx and the fact that for years merchants have felt that too much retail business is being diverted to other sections of the city, a concerted "Buy in the Bronx" drive will soon be made.

Backed by the Bronx Board of Trade and leading retail merchants of the borough, plans for the drive are still in the formative stage and the entire program has received the sanction of all concerned. The thinking behind the move might well be summed up in the statement from William E. Matthews, executive secretary of the Board of Trade who stated that "the purpose of this campaign is to promote business in the Bronx by proving to the retail shopper from not only the Bronx but from surrounding communities, that this borough has everything he or she would require in the field of retail merchandise, at a fair price, that quality is not sacrificed and that the retailer will stand behind his products."

In just what manner the campaign will attempt to reach that goal has not been worked out but a committee of retailers has been formed which will meet with the Board of Trade and other promi-

Continued on Page 42—Section 1

'Buy in Bronx' Drive Spurred By UNO Selection of Hunter

Continued from Page 1—Section 1

nent retailers on Wednesday. The committee is composed of M. J. Markowitz, of Alexander's, Irving Zwern, store manager of Hearn's, Bronx, Philip Michaels, store manager, Sachs Quality Stores, Inc., and George Hemmel of Fennel's Furniture store.

Customers Must Be Sold

While stating that customers must be sold on the many advantages of shopping in the Bronx, Mr. Matthews asserted that all the usual promotional approaches will be considered. This, in all probability, will include announcements and advertisements in the Bronx Home News, which has pledged its support to the drive, and in other community newspapers in the surrounding areas. The campaign, he said, will get the active cooperation of from 50 to 60 large retailers with the many other outlets cashing in on their combined efforts.

Fully cognizant of the possibility of such a drive greatly increasing the dollar value of retail business done in the Bronx, leading retailers are planning to plant themselves solidly behind the drive. An interesting observation came from Philip Michaels of the Sachs chain who stated, after a meeting with various women's organizations and clubs, that "it is surprising to find out how many Bronxites are accustomed to shopping downtown because of the erroneous impression that those stores are more glamorous and have bigger and better selections." He said that many are not sold on the idea that they can get anything they want in the Bronx stores and think that only inexpensive merchandise is available. This feeling must be destroyed by the combined efforts of all retailers, Mr. Michaels stated.

Dress Up Store Fronts

Mr. Michaels said that some possibilities for the campaign were the "dressing up" of store fronts and windows, the re-education of proprietors and retail salesmen alike in the proper treatment of customers and, if possible, a daily shopping column in the newspapers which would point out the "daily specials" available in certain stores. He also stated

that there is a need for good restaurants in the shopping areas so that people would be encouraged to do their "all day shopping" in the Bronx. He maintained that some of his customers had suggested that the store open a restaurant right in the store.

Still another large retailer stated that the population of the Bronx runs around the 1,500,000 mark but that the customer potential must run close to 3 million. There is no reason at all, he said, why customers from Long Island and Westchester cannot be induced to shop in the Bronx rather than take the long trip downtown. He said that travel facilities to the Bronx stores from these areas are convenient and fast with plenty of parking facilities available around the stores. With a population large enough to take care of some of the best retail establishments in the city, he added, and also house a major league baseball park, the Yankee Stadium, the Bronx would certainly rate high in comparison with some of the largest cities in the country.

He said that the largest retail outlets in the city must realize that suburban customers are getting tired of shopping in the congested areas downtown because they themselves are opening or are planning to open branches in the other parts of the city and in the small towns on the outskirts.

Plan Better Transportation

Aiding greatly in this "Buy in the Bronx" program will be the elaborate and ambitious plans that the borough has for the improvement of transportation facilities. In addition to subway and surface car improvements, the plans call for express highways that will bring suburban customers within easy reach of the Bronx stores. The board of trade is advocating the development of the New England thruway and the extension of a major highway in Westchester county and Connecticut as a relief artery for the Boston Post Road. Also to be advocated will be the completion of existing projects, such as the partially finished Bruckner boulevard; traffic link to give easy access between the Triborough Bridge, the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge and the George Washington Bridge; and the building of a Bronx-Manhat-

tan express highway. Still another idea is the erection of escalator connections in the subway stations at 155th street and Eighth avenue and at 149th street and Third avenue.

Another project of considerable interest which was made known by James J. Lyons, borough president, is the erection of a railroad and bus terminal at 138th street and Park avenue. This terminal will discharge passengers from the New York Central and New York, New Haven & Hartford trains and plans call for the erection of stores in that vicinity. Termed an important step in increasing transportation facilities of the Bronx, Mr. Lyons pointed out that this terminal is immediately adjacent to the Deegan highway which connects directly with express routes to, and in, Westchester and parts north. Connection direct to Queens, Brooklyn, Long Island by express routes across the Triborough and Whitestone bridges, and to upper Manhattan and New Jersey express arteries is also possible.

An indication of the size of retail business now being taken care of in the Bronx outlets may be gleaned from the 1939 census figures which, one source stated, have increased tremendously during the past several years. One spokesman estimated that the amount of retail business has almost doubled since the 1939 figure was compiled. The 1939 tabulation shows a total of 17,088 retailers doing a \$3,483,700 annual business in the Bronx. The number of personnel employed in these stores totaled 42,805. This latter figure does not include 16,462 proprietors.

W. Lantz Named