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Life Saver

Edward John Noble has managed to run his new Civil Aeronautics Authority without calling press conferences. Washington newsmen, therefore, were startled and puzzled when shy Chairman Noble last week had them in for a chat about airline safety.

They shortly learned why. Secretary of Commerce Harry Hopkins had advised Mr. Noble to find an excuse to show himself to the Press. Reason: Mr. Noble was about to become not only big news but a big figure in Hopkins' appeasement of U. S. Business. Ed Noble next day resigned from his \$12,000-a-year job at CAA to take a \$1-a-year job as executive assistant to the Secretary. With Ed Noble in mind, Franklin Roosevelt simultaneously asked Congress to create a new title: Under-Secretary of Commerce. Explained Harry Hopkins, greeting his Republican No. 2 man: "To Mr. Noble, public service transcends political partisanship."

Mr. Noble's service will be to supply qualifications which his new boss lacks. Social Worker Hopkins, sick though he is, has done a fair job of smoothing out his own relations with U. S. businessmen since he became Secretary last January. But Ed Noble, in addition to being a competent smoothie, is a businessman himself. Other businessmen think he is a very good one. Fresh out of Yale, he and another pushy youngster named J. Roy Allen bumped into a Cleveland candymaker who, for a sideline, manufactured hard little mints shaped like and labeled Life Savers. Pushy Roy Allen and canny Ed Noble bought the idea and name in 1913 with money partly borrowed from Partner Allen's mother. They transferred operations to a loft in Manhattan, promoted Life Savers into a \$4,000,000-per-year enterprise, which Ed Noble now calls "a happy, whimsical little business."

Rich, happy, occasionally whimsical, Ed Noble in recent years has left active management of the business to his associates, while he went in for yachting, flying (with a hired pilot), investment (aviation, banking).

No man to run from an honest dollar, he has made a huge estate in New York's Thousand Islands not only a luxurious nook for himself, his wife and two subdeb daughters, but a profitable attraction for summer tourists, who pay 35¢ a head to view its splendors. When Franklin Roosevelt last year picked him to get CAA off to a good start, Ed Noble sold his aviation holdings, soon made a record as a better-than-average public administrator.

Business last week had an inkling of what to expect from the new team of Hopkins & Noble. A current Noblism: "The way to do business is to do business—the more the better. As a businessman I have long known that volume is the cure for most business ills."

In choosing Ed Noble, Mr. Hopkins pained two ambitious Assistant Secretaries. But the change brought promotions to two of Ed Noble's former CAA associates. Up to the vacated chairmanship moved Robert Hinckley of Utah, 48. Into the Hinckley seat moved Edward Pearson Warner, a professor of aeronautics at M. I. T., onetime (1926-29) Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air, lately a technical adviser to Ed Noble.

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