

## MAN BEHIND THE NEWS



**WILLIAM C. NORRIS:** President and chairman of the board of Control Data Corp., directs one of the nation's most successful computer firms, using knowledge he learned during the firm's early days of adversity. He points out Control Data does not plan to compete across the board with the industry giants.

MINNEAPOLIS. — William C. Norris at 51 keep himself lean and alert these days on bright new challenges since there hardly seems enough adversity to go around.

Challenges are plentiful to Control Data Corp. but adversity has been rather scarce for the money-making, six-year-old computer firm which stepped out of the "Golden Boy" classification to become a contender in the heavy-weight division when it achieved listing on the New York Stock Exchange. About the same time, it surprised the industry by acquiring the Computer division of Bendix Corp.

This might have seemed presumptuous to some people except for the fact that Control Data — under guidance of Mr. Norris as chairman and president — also has the peculiar ability to make money in the toughly competitive computer business.

Its sales for fiscal 1962, for example, were \$41,034,000, up 107.4 per cent over 1961 and its 1962 profits were \$1,542,622, up 83.1 per cent. It not only has survived in an area where many new electronic firms have failed but it has thrived in the process.

As for the future, Mr. Norris says Control Data is planning for more "profitable growth."

To mention adversity then in connection with Control Data may seem out of place but it is Mr. Norris who brings up the subject.

Adversity for him carries with it a valuable lesson.

"Sometimes you don't really know people until you hit adversity," he recalls. He believes adversity can expose an incompetence that might otherwise be hidden in smooth-sailing times.

What he has learned from adversity in struggles of Control Data has become a part of the present character and judgment of the laconic and unpretentious executive who recalls early days of Control Data when employees had "their pay cut in half and some of them didn't like it much." But it was better to do this, he says, than to lay off people.

"You want to keep your assets," he says, "Keep your group together. He discovered, however, that some did not "fit in the boat."

A graying, unruffled, ex-Navy commander with a Nebraska prairie background, Mr. Norris runs a tight ship at Control Data and he needs incompetence like he needs a hole in his boat.

What Mr. Norris wants and needs is "intelligence — there's no substitute for brains in employees." Furthermore, from this intelligence he demands more than theories; he wants — and gets — "ideas that work."

His philosophy to succeed is "Plan and plan well," a simple enough thesis but one which obviously entails exacting and meticulous research, investigation and foresight — as well as the ability to apply what has been learned in hungrier times.

This planning means utilizing all brainpower at Control Data, obviously an exacting situation from which Mr. Norris does not exclude himself. His work day is filled with conferences, meetings, talks, inspections and decisions; at night and on weekends he takes home the reports and material he didn't have time to read during the day.

How he "relaxes" is a question that Mr. Norris seems to consider unimportant. He hesitates at the answer, then says he likes to fish in Minnesota lakes, likes to read paperback editions of the classics, preferably Charles Dickens, but he also points out that he "enjoys" his work.

A founder of Control Data July 8, 1957, Mr. Norris looked for business from old naval associates as Control Data decided to specialize in the "scientific part of the computer market," and not compete directly with the "giants."

Now, six years, several million dollars and many acquisitions later, Mr. Norris says Control Data plans to "do some things in business data processing," an area in which it already has a wedge through the former Bendix computer division.

While feeling its oats, Control Data also is taking a very careful step in this direction. "We'll take a specific market area and concentrate on it," he says, "We don't intend to compete across the board with IBM."

— Dick Brown