



## Collecting That Hard Earned Dollar

By **HANK HARVEY, JR.**  
Arborist  
Rutledge, Pennsylvania

AS UNFAIR as it seems, the hardest part of some jobs is not doing the work, it's getting paid for it. Certainly nothing can put a businessman on the defensive like having money overdue to him. This is especially true for the service contractor who has nothing tangible to repossess and thus very little recourse for non-payment.

It should be pointed out that delinquent accounts usually make up only a small number in most service operations. Most people are anxious to pay for services rendered. It is the exceptions about which this article is concerned.

The best advice in these few cases might be to take positive steps which would preclude, or at least reduce, the possibility of your getting into such a situation in the first place.

How?

Well, for starters, you should be careful with whom you deal, especially on a verbal contract. (I've found that many people fear or resent a written contract as such. One way to get past this psychological barrier is to have yours called an

agreement or a work order or some other less offensive name.)

If you must use a verbal contract, at least write up the specifications for the job and make sure your customer has a copy—before you start the job, to refer to later if there is any misunderstanding. Your printed estimate or job order form should have printed on it **Payment Due Upon Completion, Terms: Cash**, or something similar which will protect you from the "slow-pays."

There is no sure way to spot a "No-Pay" or "Slow-Pay in advance, but there are a few good indicators:

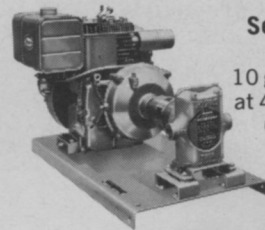
Does the party you are bidding for actually own the property? I have experienced cases where a tenant, fed up with unsatisfactory conditions, decided to contract out work expecting the landlord to pay for it. In such a case, the tenant assumes no risk . . . it's not his place. The landlord won't pay, he didn't contract for the work. Who then is the poor contractor supposed to collect from?

Another area where extreme care is in order is that of doing subcontract work for larger contractors. Often the prime contractor on a large job will intentionally use subcontractors to avoid taking risks  
(continued on page 88)

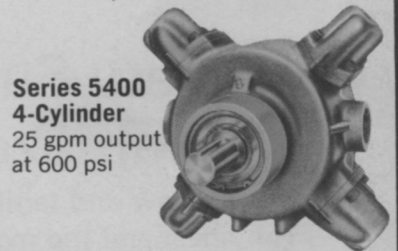
# Hypro sprayer pumps

Choose from a wide range of pump designs and materials to suit your requirements: cast-iron, Ni-Resist and bronze pump housings... even nickel plating on piston pumps.

## PISTON PUMPS



**Series 5200  
Big Twin**  
10 gpm output  
at 400 psi with  
6 hp engine



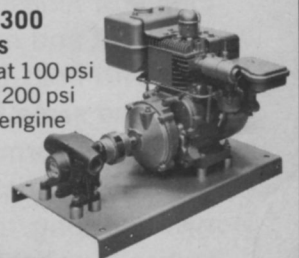
**Series 5400  
4-Cylinder**  
25 gpm output  
at 600 psi

## ROLLER PUMPS

Choice of rubber or nylon rollers

**Series 6300  
6-Rollers**

6.9 gpm at 100 psi  
6 gpm at 200 psi  
4 hp gas engine



**Series 7560C  
8-Rollers**  
10 gpm at 200 psi  
with 4 hp engine



Write for complete pump catalog or request pump recommendation for your need.

**Hypro** /



A division of Lear Siegler, Inc.

347 Fifth Avenue NW, St. Paul, Minnesota 55112

## COLLECTING THAT HARD EARNED DOLLAR

(from page 21)

himself or for leverage when he knows the job will be a slow-pay one. Don't let yourself get pinched! Make sure **your** contract is with the person who will pay **you**.

Also make sure that you will get paid for your work **regardless** of any circumstances. Don't enter into any "you'll - get-paid - when - I - do" deals unless you can afford to lose your shirt if he loses his. Many small landscape and tree service contractors have gone broke by getting in too deep on a big job that went bankrupt.

Even when you do all the precautions possible to avoid payment problems, most everybody in this business will run into some difficulty in collecting the money due them for their work. (Some guys have a hard time just **asking** for their money.)

Even if you are shy, mild-mannered type, there should be nothing embarrassing about asking to get paid. After all it's not like asking for a hand-out.

Don't forget you have earned it, every cent of it!

Of course, no one wants to offend a customer, and there are some tactful, candy-coated ways of saying "I'd like to get paid now."

One way that has always made it easier for me is to have the customer "check out the job" just before we finished. That way I knew he was satisfied before I left, and 90% of the time **he** will bring up the matter of payment.

Another way I found successful (especially if the person who was paying me wasn't home) was to say something like "I'll stop back after dinner to see if everything was satisfactory with Mr. Jones." That

was enough to imply I'd be collecting and believe me if anything wasn't satisfactory I'd hear from "Mr. Jones" before I had a chance to stop back.

Which brings us to the case of the Never-Satisfieds, and they exist.

I once had a case where we did a tree take-down job for about \$225.00 during the winter. We made a short tire rut on the lawn with our brush chipper. I promised to fill the rut with topsoil and re-seed it as soon as the weather permitted. And I was sincere. But this Never-Satisfied was going to withhold the entire \$225.00 till I completed the job to his satisfaction, which meant about a six week wait before I could get my money.

My reply?

"Mr. Jones, my men and I have done \$225.00 worth of work for you and trusted you to pay us when we got done. We didn't ask for a nickle in advance. That sod job is worth, at-the-most \$25.00. If we trusted you for the \$225.00, I think you should trust us for \$25.00 don't you?"

He agreed.

Try that reply next time somebody is giving you a hard time about a small detail which you can't take care of right away. It usually works.

Slow-pay customers can cause much grief and sometimes they are hard to prod without offending. Try giving them a good reason why you need the money soon and a definite time when you want it. Such as: "I'll have a large payroll this week and my funds are pretty short, can I pick up the check for your job this Thursday?" This way they don't feel hounded, also they have time to get the money even if they have got to jiggle some other bills.

The genuine Deadbeat is, fortunately, a rare breed. In the final analysis they'll come out ahead of you almost everytime. Even if you

## — classifieds —

When answering ads where box number only is given, please address as follows: Box number, c/o Weeds Trees and Turf, 9800 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, Ohio 44102.

Rates: "Position Wanted" 10¢ per word, minimum \$3.00. All other classifications 20¢ per word, minimum \$4.00. All classified ads must be received by Publisher the 10th of the month preceding publication date and be accompanied by cash or money order covering full payment. Bold-face rule box: \$25.00 per column inch.

### HELP WANTED

**LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE**, salesman, supervisor. Do you get satisfaction out of seeing an industrial or public property well maintained knowing you estimated the requirements and the price, bought the necessary equipment and supplies, hired, trained and supervised the men and ended up with a good looking property and a well satisfied client? If so and if you have the right educational background and experience and would like an opportunity to take over a well established landscape maintenance department and push it into something really worthwhile, drop us a line. We've been in business in the suburban

take them to Small Claims Court, or a magistrate, at best all you can get out of them is a **promise** that they'll pay. The magistrate may get a few dollars in "costs" but that won't make **you** any richer. In fact, it will **cost** you money to get a summons served.

If you belong to a credit service, you might get their future credit blackballed but if they're real Deadbeats that's probably already happened. Ruining their credit rating still won't pay their overdue bill.

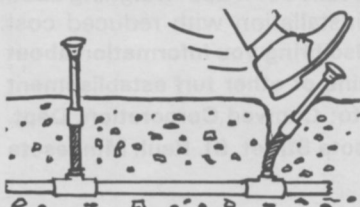
Make sure you have appealed to both mates in the family, (Maybe one is more conscientious than the other).

I once had a situation when the woman told me she didn't know when her husband would pay me . . . and when I called he was never there. I met him one morning on his way to work, and found out he had given his wife my money not once, but three times, and each time she said she had paid me but later told him she bought clothes etc. He gave me \$25.00 on the spot and paid me the rest himself two weeks later.

Most people don't pay on time for one of these three reasons. 1. They are not satisfied. 2. They forgot. 3. They don't have the money. Numbers 1 and 2 you can remedy. As for No. 3, well, you'll have to help them find a solution to their problem before you can solve yours. Happy Collecting.

## FLEX-RISER®

A flexible rubber riser for Sprinkler Systems



**BENDS WITH IMPACT...  
COMES BACK FOR MORE  
ENDS COSTLY REPAIRS**



For information and your local distributor, write:

**KING BROTHERS INDUSTRIES**

Dept. W • 9245 Noble Avenue  
Sepulveda, California 91343 Phone 213 893-3013