

3 *Smart* BENCHES

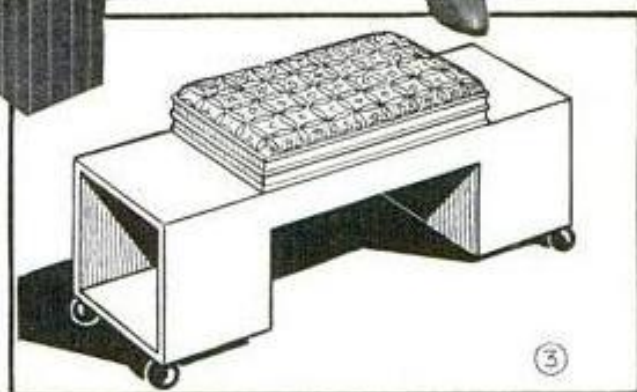


Finished in bone-white and black, and neatly upholstered, these distinctive benches for the home consist almost entirely of plywood. Magazine baskets and book racks are incorporated in two designs



By WAYNE C. LECKEY

SIMPLE upholstery makes any one of these benches easy to construct in your home workshop. The one shown in Fig. 2, is, perhaps, the least difficult of the three since the construction centers around a simple, box-like framework of plywood. Fig. 6, gives full dimensions for this and assembly is made with plain, butt joints glued and nailed. The corners may be glued-blocked also, although the top when nailed in place provides great rigidity. Support through the center is made with a cross-piece of scrap stock. After the glue has dried, a rabbet is cut around the entire top edge as shown in the detail. This can be cut easily with a dado head either before or after the top is fitted. Putty all exposed nail heads at the corners and sand the end grain smoothly prior to the application of three successive coats of bone-white enamel, rubbed lightly between coats with fine steel wool.



While this is drying you can cut the legs to size. These were made of walnut stock to contrast with the white finish but if you wish, they can be made of cheaper wood and stained to give a very close imitation. Note that the legs must be made in pairs when laying out the stock. Inverting the pattern will minimize waste. When cut, respective pieces are glued and nailed together to form a right angle, using clamps, if available, to draw the joints tight. The nail heads are sunk well beneath the surface so as not to interfere with fluting. The top and bottom edges are then chamfered



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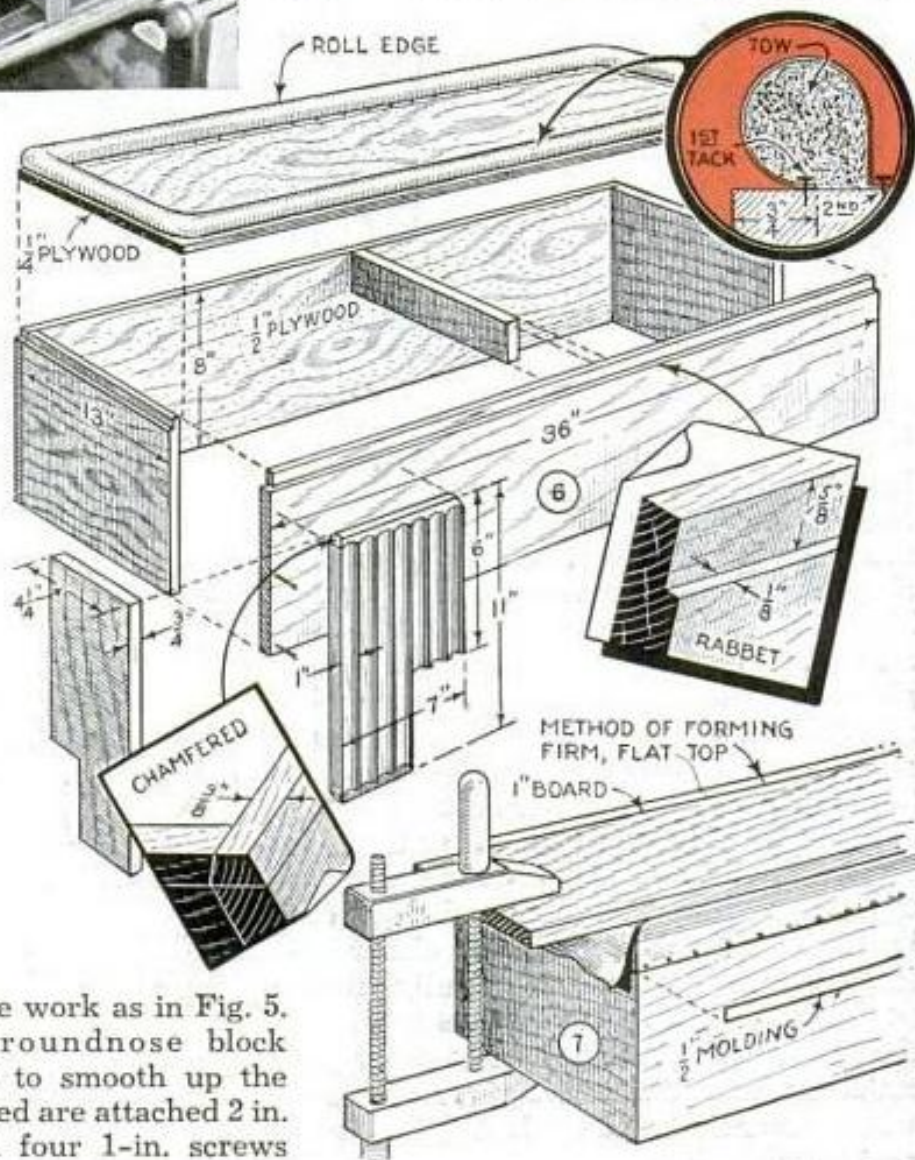


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45 degrees as shown. If a molding head to make a cove cut is available, you can flute the legs quickly on the circular saw as shown in Fig. 4. Here the cuts are made on the face, working each way from the corner of the work. If it is necessary to cut these by hand, with straight-grain stock you can easily guide a 1-in. gouge along a straightedge clamped in position on the work as in Fig. 5. Use a large dowel or roundnose block wrapped with sandpaper to smooth up the cuts. The legs when finished are attached 2 in. down from the top with four 1-in. screws driven from the back.

To upholster the top, it is necessary to first form a roll edge around the top to retain the filling. For this you will need a long strip of burlap cut $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide. With a pencil line drawn around the top $\frac{3}{4}$ in. in from the edge, begin tacking one edge of the strip along this line, using No. 2 tacks. Next add sufficient tow to form a $1\frac{1}{4}$ -in. diameter roll and

tack as in the detail, Fig. 6. Firmness of the roll can be had by stuffing with additional tow, using a long, slender screwdriver as a regulator. Use plenty of tow to fill the top within the roll edge, over which place several thick layers of cotton. As no welt is used on this bench, the cover is applied evenly by first tacking one edge



METHOD OF FORMING FIRM, FLAT TOP

1" BOARD

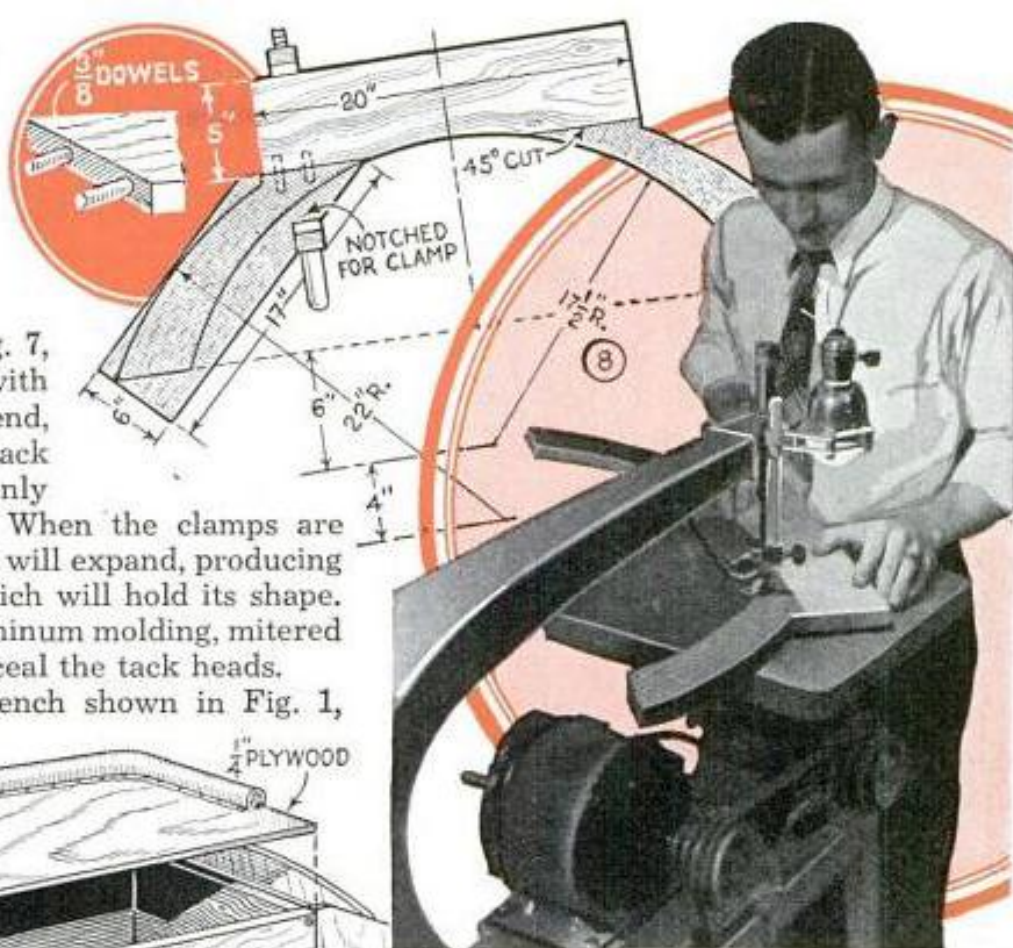
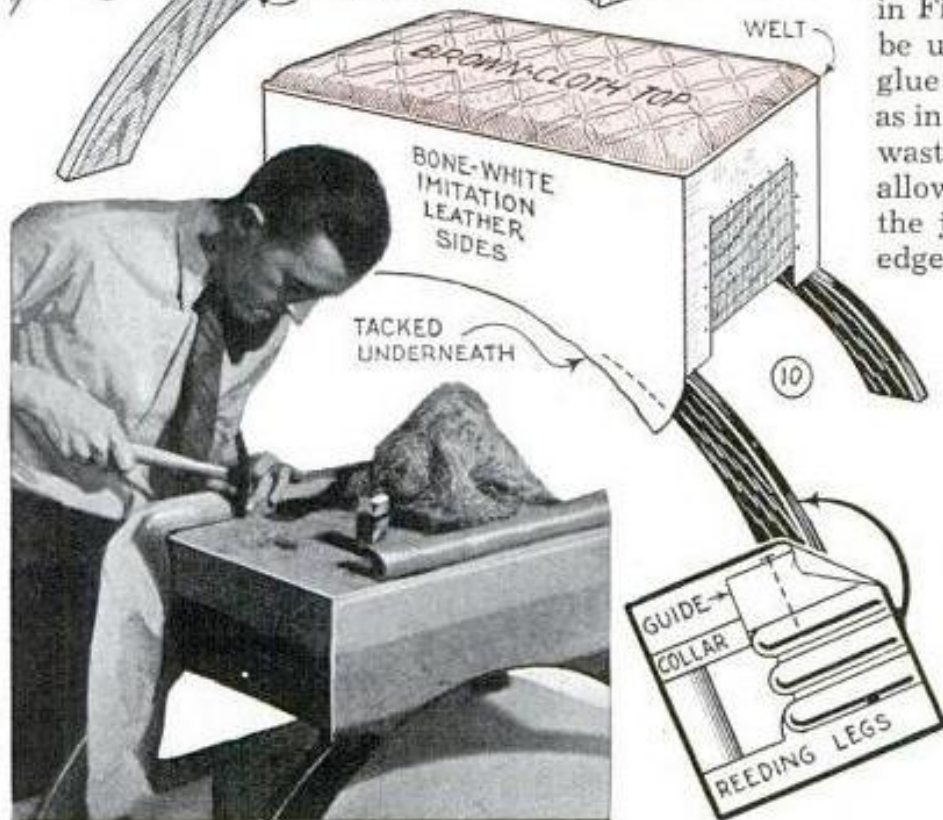
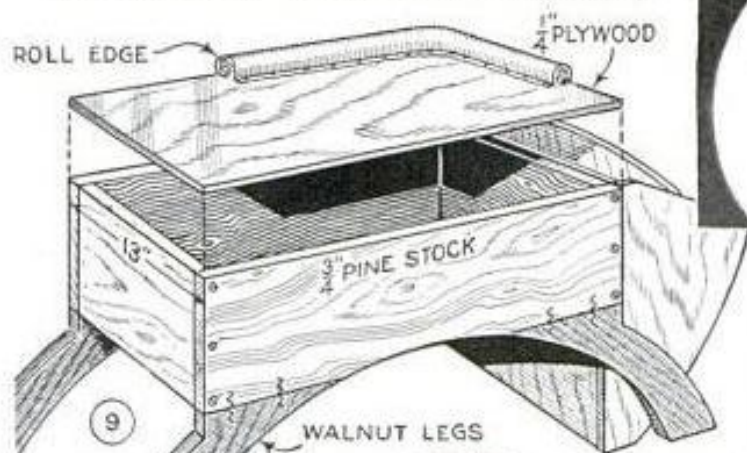
1/2" MOLDING

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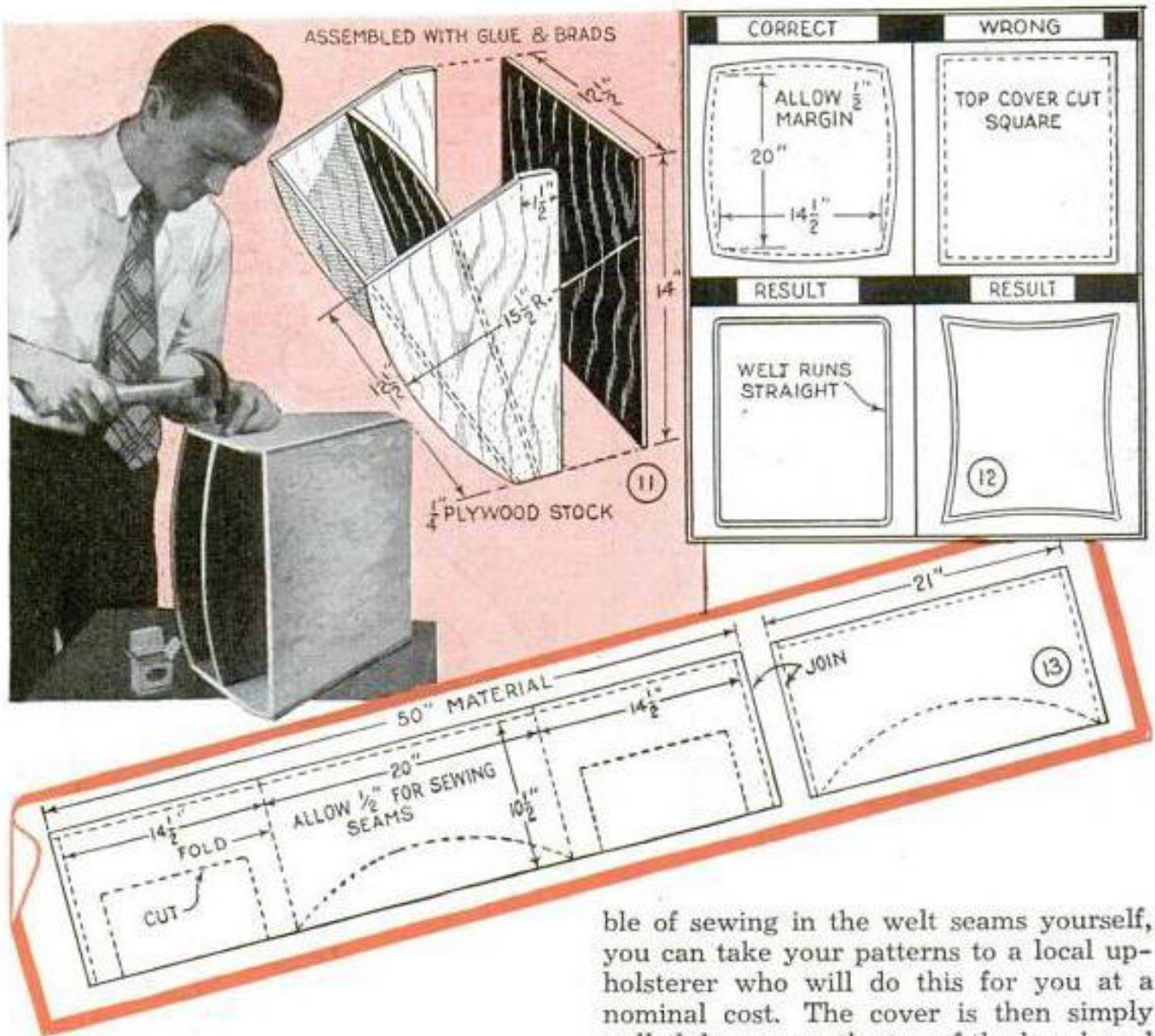
straight along the rabbet cut, after which the opposite edge is drawn fairly taut and tacked temporarily in place. A wide board placed on top of the cover as in Fig. 7, and pulled down with a clamp at each end, will allow you to tack the loose edge evenly and permanently. When the clamps are removed, the filling will expand, producing a firm, flat seat which will hold its shape. Strips of $\frac{1}{2}$ -in. aluminum molding, mitered at the corners, conceal the tack heads.

The attractive bench shown in Fig. 1,



provides extra utility by having magazine containers at each end. The arched legs which continue into the frame are of walnut, joined at 45 degrees to a 5-in. pine board as shown in Figs. 8 and 9. Dowels may be used here as in Fig. 8, or glue and corrugated fasteners as in Fig. 9. A notch cut in the waste portion of the legs will allow a hand screw to draw the joint up tightly. The top edges of the legs may be left plain or if a shaper is available, you can reed the outer radius with three $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. beads as shown in the insert in Fig. 10. In this case a template of scrap wood, identical in contour, must be tacked temporarily to the face of the legs against which the spindle collar of the shaper can ride. Therefore, cut the outer radius first so that you will have

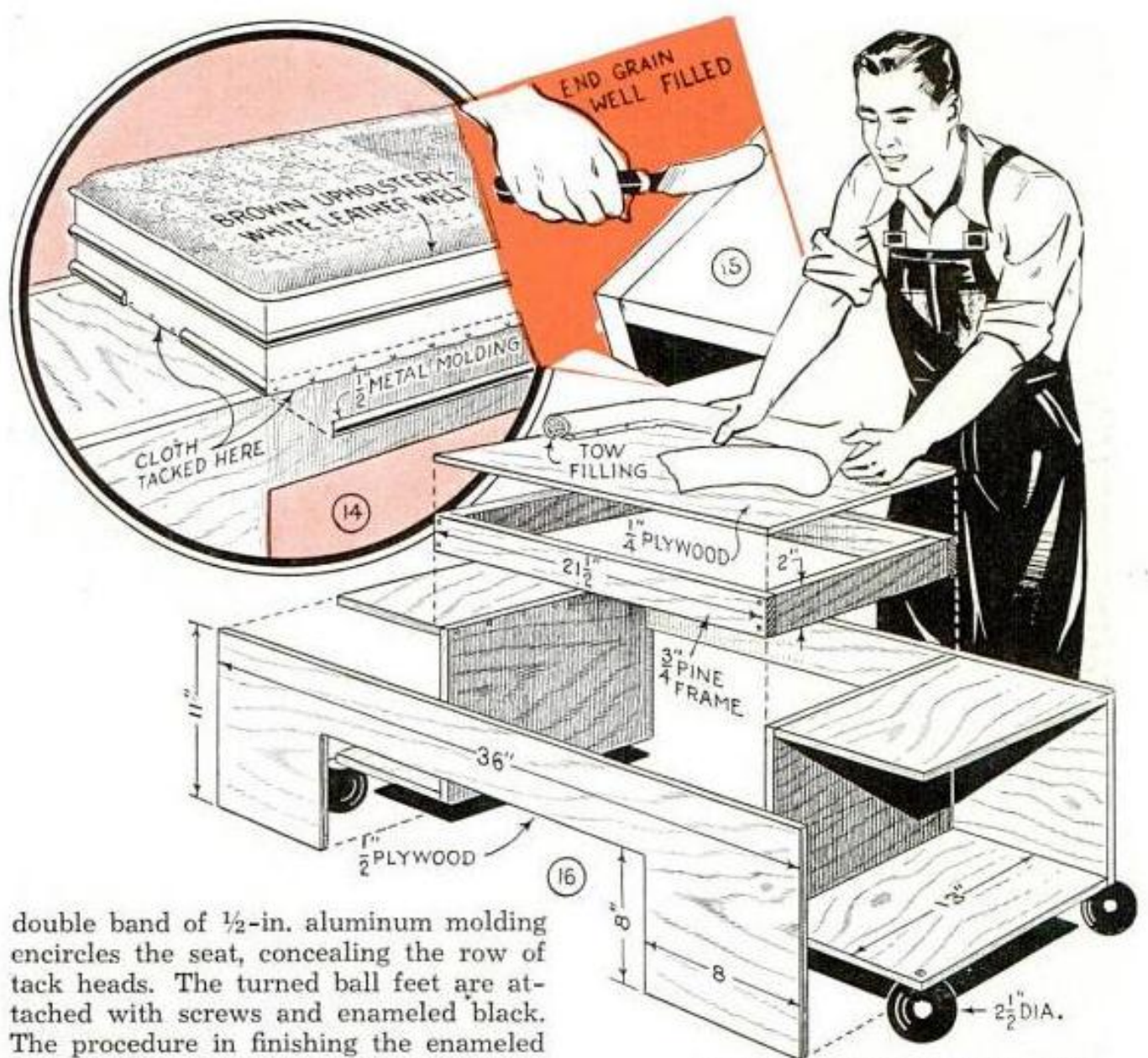
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waste in which to tack the template. The sides are then joined together with pieces butted, glued and screwed at the ends, Fig. 9, after which, a plywood panel is nailed to the top. For a pleasing contrast, select a dark brown modern cloth for the top of the cover and imitation, bone-white leather for the sides. A roll edge is formed as previously described and filled with tow and cotton. From here on the procedure varies somewhat in that a muslin cover is tacked smoothly over the filling to allow the final cover to be slipped on without disturbing the padding. Fig. 12 gives the correct size and method for cutting the top cover, allowing $\frac{1}{2}$ in. additional for sewing in the welt. Cut the edge slightly curved rather than straight. Fig. 13 shows how the side cover can be laid out on just about the minimum of material. This necessitates joining one side cover which will bring a seam at two corners. If you are not capa-

ble of sewing in the welt seams yourself, you can take your patterns to a local upholsterer who will do this for you at a nominal cost. The cover is then simply pulled down over the top of the bench and tacked as in Fig. 10. The magazine pockets which fit between the legs are constructed of $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. plywood and assembled with $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. brads and glue, Fig. 11. Since the bench depends almost entirely upon these pockets for support, attach them solidly in place with screws. To avoid marring the paint while inserting them between the legs, spread the lower ends of the legs with a stretcher.

Also serving a two-fold purpose is the bench shown in Fig. 3, and fully dimensioned in Figs. 14, 15 and 16. As you will note, the construction is entirely of plywood, employing simple butt joints glued and nailed. Waste from the side pieces can be utilized for inner members. A rectangular frame of $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. pine surmounts the center of the bench to which is nailed a top panel of $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. plywood. Upholstery procedure is the same as before, tacking the sides of the cover as shown in Fig. 14. A



double band of $\frac{1}{2}$ -in. aluminum molding encircles the seat, concealing the row of tack heads. The turned ball feet are attached with screws and enameled black. The procedure in finishing the enameled parts of all three benches begins with carefully filling all exposed end grain of the plywood. White-lead paste is excellent for this but it is necessary to give it plenty of time to dry. Wood putty will do, but it must be carefully sanded flush with the surface. It is important to sand all parts smooth with progressively finer grade of

sandpaper before applying the enamel undercoater. Be sure to allow the undercoater to dry thoroughly. Follow this with three coats of good quality bone-white enamel, sanding lightly after the first and second coats with very fine sandpaper.

BALL FEET ATTACHED WITH SCREWS