

Fortune

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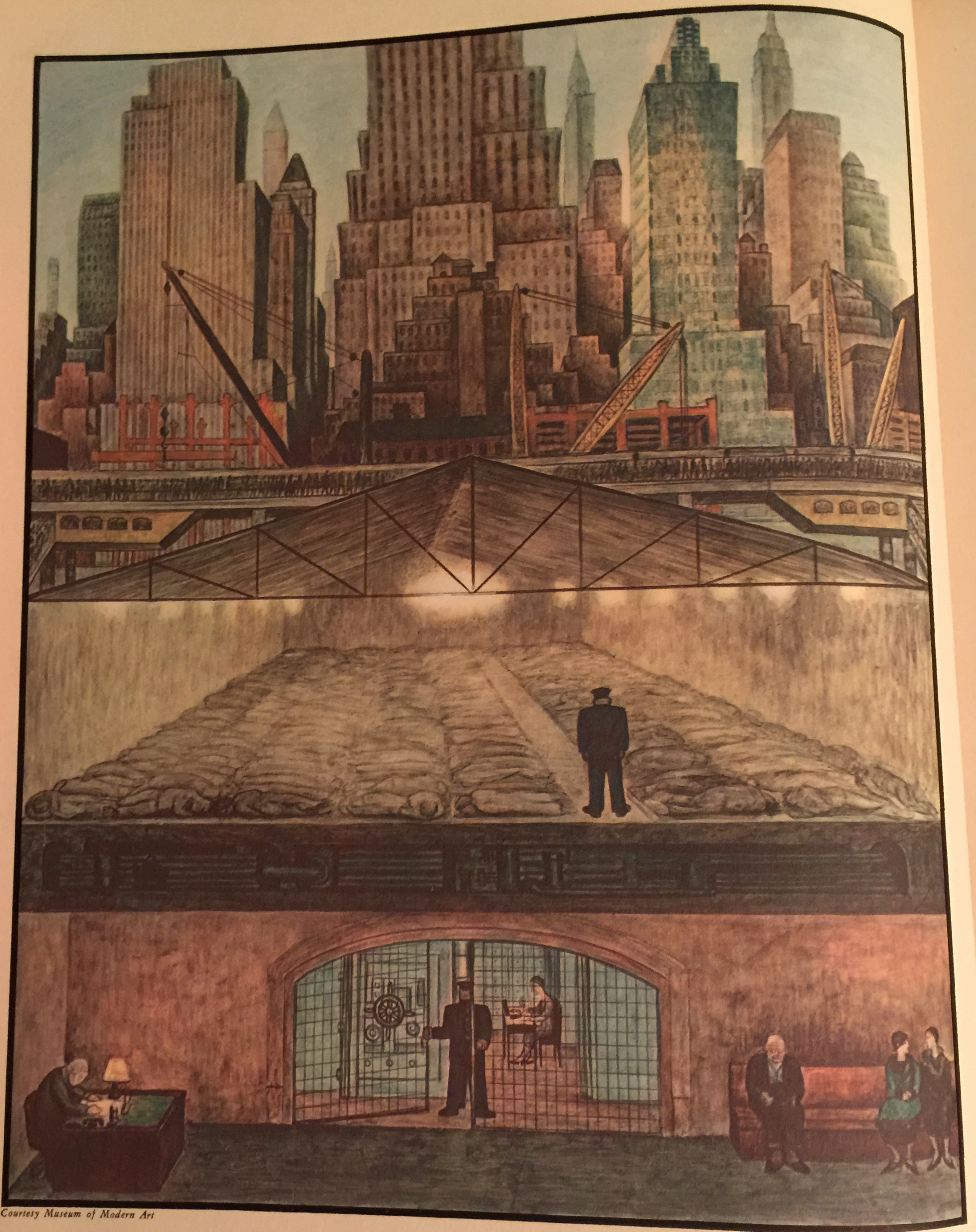
FEBRUARY 1932

Ten Dollars a Year



*Harland Greenfield
W.E. Burch Jr.*

GAR-
RETTO
31



Courtesy Museum of Modern Art

IN OUR TIME

The industrial civilization of New York seen in the cross section of a Rivera fresco.

DIEGO RIVERA is, as everyone knows, the leading painter of frescoes of his time and perhaps the first great painter of the modern American continent. His name, long famous in Mexico, has recently come to general attention in this country through his frescoes in San Francisco and his one-man show in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. His first impression of the city of New York, painted for the New York exposition on a portable plaster frame supported by steel, is here reproduced in color for the first time. It represents the city in three strata: a composite skyline and waterfront; the interior of the Municipal Pier at East Twenty-fifth Street with its sleeping men; the vault entrance of a great bank. As a fresco it has all the lucidity and weight and vitality of the famous frescoes at Cuernavaca and Mexico City and Chapingo. As a document it reflects Diego's two principal preoccupations—the visible contemporary world and that world's social meaning. His earliest murals in the amphitheatre of the Preparatory School and in the Ministry of Education were devoted to the social and economic and political problems of his native country, and the Mexican Revolution is the emotional wellspring of the supreme frescoes of Chapingo. But when in 1928 he was offered the choice between ideology and art which Communism sooner or later imposes upon all its painters, he chose art. There remained, however, and there still remains in his work the fundamental human loyalty which he had originally believed Communism to express. That loyalty is manifested as well in the sleeping figures of the Municipal Pier as in the peons of his Mexican scenes. It is the pole of Diego's life and the condition of his existence as an artist.

What is here reproduced is not a sermon on the city of New York, nor an Essay on Man. Diego's work is not symbolic. It is legible. And its speech is a speech equally comprehensible to the Indians of Morelos and the industrialists of New York. In a Mexican, part Spanish, part Indian, part Jew, and part Russian, the Western Continent finds an unhesitating, sure, and confident voice.

*A new interpretation
of the*
"STANDARD OF THE WORLD"

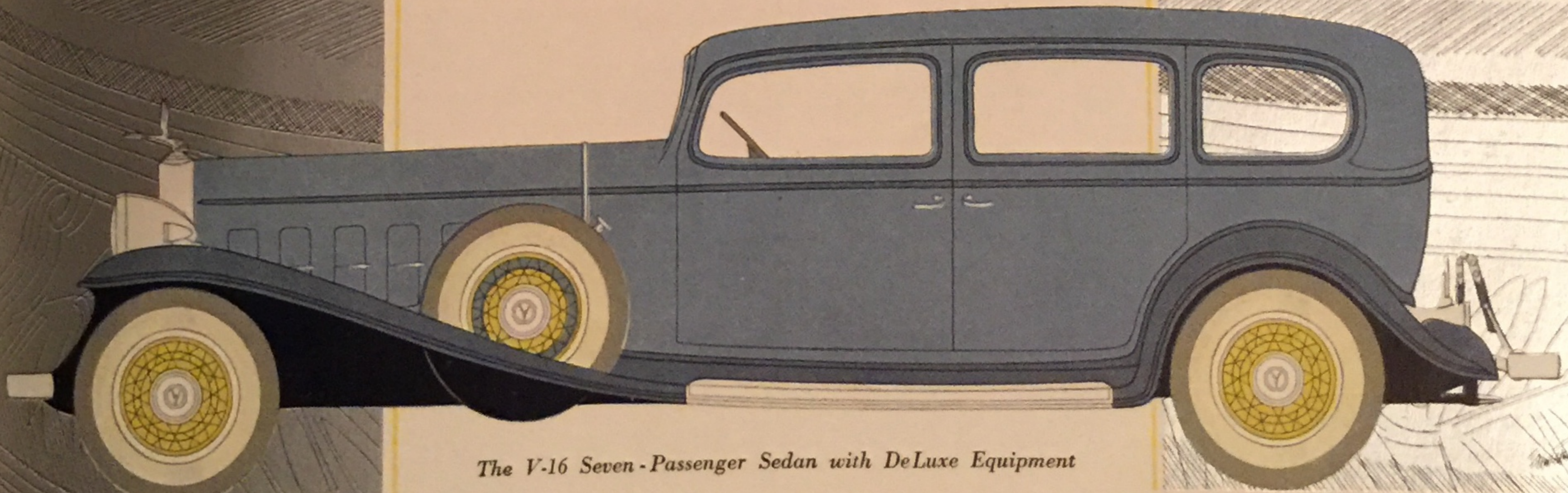
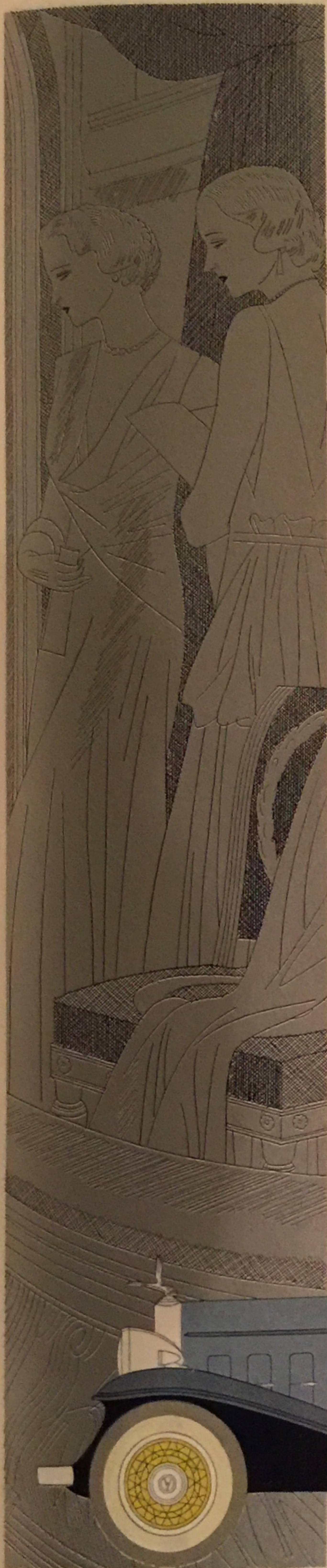
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The William Taylor Hotel, San Francisco, tallest hotel in the West, on which Lead-Coated Copper Spandrels were used for the decorative motif. Architect, Louis P. Hobart. Sheet metal work by the Forderer Cornice Works. General contractors, Cahill Brothers.

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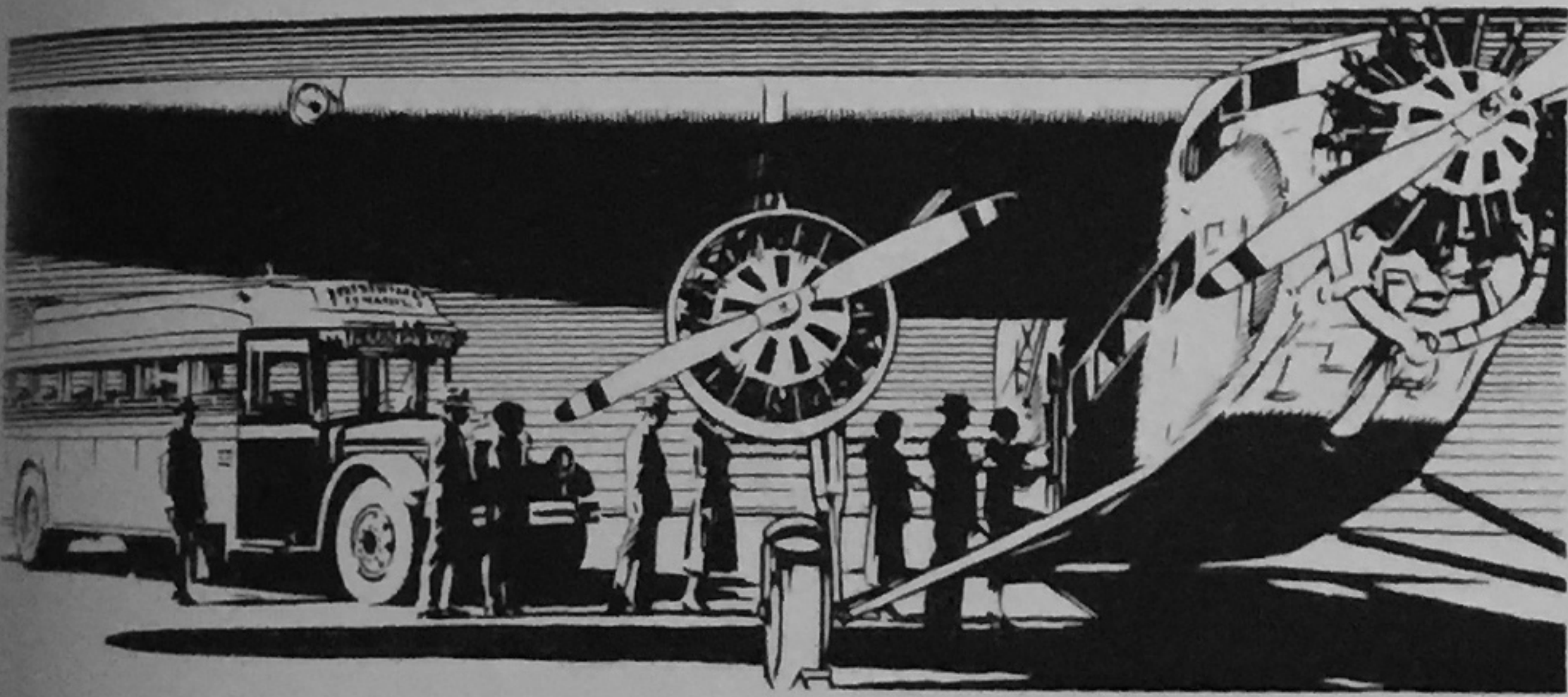
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