

The Birmingham Eccentric

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1934

NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events
 which have a bearing on the general welfare of the community
 connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must
 be received, however, to make the editorial changes in the
 and as are necessary to the style of the paper.
 The Eccentric is not responsible for the return of unsolicited
 material. The names of the contributors to the paper will be
 printed unless otherwise stated. The names of contributors who
 are not in the columns of the Eccentric will be gladly
 omitted upon being brought to the attention of the publisher.

Regulating Selfishness

Do the business and industrial worlds exist for monetary profit, or do they exist for the benefit of human beings? If they exist for profit only, then should this profit be distributed according to one's ability to earn it in a very competitive world, or should profits be so routed that they reach a greater number of people—even to the extent of practically redistributing wealth through governmental channels?

In the days of real scarcity caused by inability to produce, the social responsibility of the State to look after everybody was a minimum consideration. In case of famine, flood, or great disasters, food and clothing and shelter were given very largely by voluntary agencies. Indeed, most of the so-called charitable relief problems were administered by agencies outside of government. But in these latter days of abundance, when man is able to produce more than he can use, the State has adopted a new and more vigorous attitude of social responsibility, and so today we see GOVERNMENT in the act of distributing billions of dollars to persons who, because of a lapse in our economic order, are unable to earn livelihoods.

During the month of October Michigan, through funds received from Washington, Lansing, and the various county agencies, cared for 217,000 families, or nearly 800,000 persons. The cost of doing this amounted to nearly six millions of dollars! And November and December will require greater funds with which to carry on.

Money to carry on this huge burden throughout the United States comes from taxes; just as in the case of war, the nation is mobilizing its wealth to keep people from being in calamitous want. And this is as it should be, of course.

Funny, isn't it, how human beings get everything they want up like lightning, thirty miles an hour, in the case of a huge lake, and then seeing them remain thirsty because they have no cup with which to dip the precious fluid from the abundance of palatable liquid.

We are living in a sort of "New Deal Day," when GOVERNMENT seems determined to set in motion a greater spirit of man's obligations towards man. In England and Utah there have pooled their mental resources, their spiritual courageness, in a national drive to make the business and industrial worlds obey more fully the Golden Rule. It is a tremendous undertaking, not capable of being achieved in a few short years.

And herein lies the success or the failure of President Roosevelt's "New Deal"; will he inventory the abilities of human nature to understand, accept, and apply his reform measures, and then unleash a chastened (and not quite so selfish a world), to go forward under a better supervised individual initiative, or will he try to force human nature to change its very nature and essence, and attempt to press forward under remote bureaucratic control?

Future months alone will answer these questions. In the meantime, the relief burdens of the nation continue to increase, and taxation is destined to carry the load.

Women Do Make Good

We observe the persistence and ability of numerous women as they function on various civic and other organization committees. They accomplish things, gain praise and honor, and they get along in the business or professional worlds—and we somehow feel that many of them would succeed. Women, more and more these days, are learning to skirt the limitations of "the good old days", and, while they may now and again ruffle their brethren, they eventually are destined to attain considerable worldly achievement.

Two Kinds of Honesty

People tolerate types of dishonesty from their politicians that they do not from ordinary business. The average business that advertises certain prices and qualities of merchandise must, generally, deliver what it advertises. But the average politician who advertises to "cut taxes and bring greater efficiency into government", so easily forgets to deliver when he is elected.

Honesty in Merchandising

"More trust in advertising" is a goal that every reputable merchandiser, every honest advertising agency, every sincere periodical, seeks to reach. That there remains considerable room for improvement along this line is observable to all who read, listen to the radio, or wait upon a sales telescopist.

That is why your alert government in Washington, under the crusading zeal of Under-Secretary of Agriculture Dr. Rexford Guy Twigg, seeks to take a hand in the contemporary merchandising and advertising worlds, and wants to regulate them with a bureaucracy.

With Dr. Twigg, with the Bureau of Standards, and with the Pure Food and Drug Departments that the American consumer is "gypped" by means of his purchases; trick brand names are created; deceptive sizes of canned and bottled goods are placed on the market; and many other commodities are sold through the subtle art of sales deception. But the placing of every farm and industrial product in the hands

of a Washington bureaucracy is not going to solve the consumers' problem.

The Eccentric joins with many others who are unalterably opposed to the microscopic control of human activity from a central bureaucracy. Such a plan as Dr. Twigg would like to develop is unworkable, even though much of it may be commendable from a theoretical viewpoint.

Dr. Twigg's complete regulation and standardizing of American farm and industrial outputs would stifle the American system of commodity exchange. Under a complete Sovietization of this country, in which the profit motive would give way to the production and distribution motives only, (a worthy economic human objective, but still decays away) Dr. Twigg might find his plan acceptable to a majority of the people. But, like prohibition, and some of NRA, he would find under present limitations of human nature that the elimination of all present "economic waste" is far less unsatisfactory than the temporary enhancement of an unworkable regulation for American agriculture and industry.

In the meantime, of course, it is up to the entire merchandising world to work out its own destiny—if it wishes to remain free from bureaucratic domination.

Farley vs. Roosevelt

It seems a tragic joke that so literate a nation as the United States is unable to do what human desires, urges, and impulses into a coherent recovery pattern. To us, it seems that the two interferences in the operation of the loom of recovery are greed in both major political parties, and politics in one especially, the Democratic. President Roosevelt cannot be commended for trying to fashion plans for the perpetuation of himself and other Democrats in public office; such tendency is, after all, only human. But what we would like to see in operation is the genius of Roosevelt without the handicap of Farleyism. There is, somewhere in this complex dilemma, a common truth about recovery that ought to be applied. But, when predatory politics enter upon scenes purely of purpose lies. And only purity of action ever ushers in the Truth.

Schools Or Jobs

"The trouble with youth," a man who knows boys recently commented, "is its youthfulness." If the aphorism needs explanation, he added, let it be said that a prime characteristic of youth is an urge for activity. If opportunity for its expression is not given through schools, and jobs are unavailable, it is to be wondered that unadjusted boys and girls experiment in fields that lead to conflict with law and order?

The dangerous age for a youth is the period when he is bridging adolescence and early maturity. Statistics prove this. In England and Wales, forty-two percent of all persons found guilty of industrial crimes, blind, maimed, or mangled, were in the United States, according to Department of Justice reports, two-thirds of all arrests for crime involve persons between fifteen and twenty-four, and those nineteen years old lead any other age group.

No grand social scheme can solve the problem of the unadjusted youth as a whole. Boys and girls, like their elders, are not cut to one pattern. But any adult does a real service who makes it possible for a youngster to remain in school, which is the best agency for life training that society has yet evolved. And when school days are over helps him get suitable employment.—The Rotarian Magazine.

Stamps Of Approval

Postmaster-General Farley, chief of the Democratic Party, too, dedicated 100 poststamps last year, and the president's approval stamp in 1915. At each he makes a speech, said to have been written by his expansive publicity staff. "Jim" likes stamps;—has issued many new ones since he went into office, and apparently feels that he must also place his own personal and political stamp of approval on each post-office built with other people's money.

All of Us

—By Marshall Maslin

"Poem by a Man Named Oppenheim" Nearly all that I know about him is that he is a poet, and that he wrote one poem that I like to read. . . . It means much to me, it may mean as much to others. . . . Whenever I open a certain anthology I find myself turning to page 2977 and reading this poem. . . . I think he had fun writing it, and I think that all good poems were fun for them. . . . And this poem, which Oppenheim called "Immoral," has fun in it as well as being fun for the man who wrote it.

"I kept walking around myself, mouth open with amazement: For by all the ethical rules of life, I ought to be solemn and sad. . . . But, look you, I am bursting with joy."

Marshall Maslin

"I scold myself: I say: Boy, your work has gone to pot; You have carelessly enough money to last out the week; And think of your responsibilities! . . . I puff on my pipe, and think how solemnly the world goes by my window. . . . And how childish people are, wrinking their foreheads over groceries and rent."

"For here jets life fresh and stinging in the vivid air; The winds laugh to the jovial Earth: The day is keen with Autumn's fine flavor of change done the year's work; Earth, in her festival, calls her children to the crimson revels. The trees are a drunken riot; the sunshine is dazzling."

"Yes, I ought, I suppose, to be saddened and tragic; But joy drops from me like ripe apples."
 James Oppenheim, you knew yourself well, O most immortal man! Didn't you know that life is a quince, a bitter fruit, a wrinkled apple, didn't you know that the wise man today is sad and apprehensive, didn't you know that you were out of style and that the poets of the 20th century were all dead, didn't you know that you were a most deplorable, most reprehensible, most dangerous fellow to be around? . . . You were the one who puffed through your pipe and joy dropped from you like ripe apples—when you might have been improving your shining hours with a distillation of pessimism—and James Oppenheim, outrageous fellow, I wish I had known you well enough to shake you by the hand!

Birmingham Business Leaders

No. 47



Arthur F. Ritter

ART HAD SOME EXPERIENCE RUNNING A RESTAURANT

Cleaners, he took a "flyer" at the restaurant business or a short time in Detroit.

Art likes to play golf in the summer time, but when the autumn rolls around he has a hard time keeping his mind off football. He used to play varsity halfback in high school and at St. Michael's, and he's always been a confirmed gridiron fan. Several games he saw played by the Detroit Lions this fall have convinced him the professional brand of the sport is supreme.

Art is a member of the American Legion, is married and has four sons—five, six, seven and nine years old.

Art was born in Flint 35 years ago, but was brought to Pleasant Ridge when he was still a child, and has lived in the Detroit area most of the time since. He attended Northern High School in Detroit, and St. Michael's in Toronto, Ont., from where he came back to the University of Detroit to study business administration. During the War, he spent six months in the S. A. T. C. at Oak

FROM THE ECCENTRIC COLUMNS —of Long Ago

Bits Of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric—The Items That Make Up The Historical Background Of The Birmingham O' Today.

FIFTY YEARS AGO A nice snowman arrived Tuesday morning, but not enough for sleighing.

Mr. C. H. Gibbs beats the world on corn raising, for from 2 1/2 acres of land, he raised 285 bushels of good sound corn. This is a good record, and hard to beat.

The startling spectacle of two middle aged married men looking all over town for a sedate widow at the holy bonds of matrimony, the events of last week. Owing to the importance of the parties, we forget the mention of names this time.

On Wednesday evening last, Dec. 3, at the residence of the bride's parents on Saginaw street, Mr. Albert Donaldson and Miss Maud Nye were joined together in the holy bonds of matrimony. Rev. J. A. Sherrard officiating. Mr. and Mrs. J. O. Beattie, the parents of the bride, had left nothing undone to make the wedding complete in all its appointments, and the guests, composed of the relatives and particular friends of the high contracting parties were made to feel welcome at the very outset. After the ceremony a most successful supper was duly discussed and generally accepted, and the presents, which were numerous and costly, were inspected, after which the jolly crowd dispersed, wishing the newly married couple the smoothest of life's voyages.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO The electric lights went out and stayed out for two hours Sunday night, and caused many curse words both in the village and in the big homes in Bloomfield Hills. The removal of the fence along the front of the Blakely residence makes a great improvement for Maple avenue and one that is admired by all observers. A man who has kept count of the number of kisses exchanged with his wife since their marriage consents to its publication as follows: First year, 35,000; second year, 16,000; third year, 8,600; fourth year, 120; fifth year, 2. He then left off keeping record.

How the chairs and table for the children came to the library. Mr. Stinchfield offered \$5 for a certain old book, "The Life and Rev. Woolley," a Universalist minister who preached here long ago. A. Baldwin had the book, and said she would use the \$5 for the purchase of the library room. So the little table and chairs were a gift from Mr. Stinchfield.

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PEOPLE'S COLUMN

The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications for the column, but signatures will be kept confidential unless otherwise stated. Communications should be limited to 250 words, and must be received by Wednesday noon of the week before the following Thursday.

To the Editor:
 When any group of people have a mutual interest which is jeopardized, they get together and form a protective committee. These are possibly three or five of their number to represent them. These three or five are really trustees. They usually choose one of their number to act actively as secretary for them.

Can it be possible that the interests of the depositors of the closed First National Bank are in danger of being squandered? It is perfectly possible, just as long as the depositors, whose property they are handling, pay little or no interest, and call nearly as much help as though the funds were open, together with a legal fee for every move that is made.

Second, the court will usually approve any act of the receiver, such as the sale of property. As the receiver is responsible only to the court (and not to the depositors), the depositors should show enough interest to elect a trustee, such sale, through their own representative.

If we take our political parties, as an example, the one in power might go to unlimited extremes, were it not being constantly watched by the opposing party.

Here are the main jobs that a protective committee should set out for itself to do:
 First, make an appraisal of the properties and values owned, so that they may have a fair idea of what deposit claims are worth. This would make possible a market for such claims, so that those who badly need funds could sell their claims or possibly use them as security for a loan. I am sure this can be done without great expense. What is the advantage of secrecy on this vital point?

Second, a depositors committee would demand a greater degree of economy than now exists. The natural tendency of any governmental agency to build up a personnel to do a necessary job; then to retain employees when the amount of work is measurably less.

Third, the committee could call to its assistance any of the depositors it represents, so as to hasten liquidation. There is a plan which could be worked out and would be fair to all, and which would do a lot to speed up the sale of the assets held. But to do anything, a conservative appraisal, mentioned above, would have to be made first.

Fourth, would a notice like this one make every depositor's claim worth a known saleable value: "The . . . will pay . . . cents on the dollar for claims, not larger than for . . . dollars, as long as funds on hand will allow." You might say, offhand, that this would take money which should be spread to all depositors, and would use it for the benefit of a few smaller depositors. But, for the small amount so put out, it would set up an actual quotable basis for the whole balance, and instead of getting a few cents on the dollar, all holders might be able to use their

claims for their full value, or nearly that. In fact, the receiver's office might easily become clearing houses for those who wanted to buy or sell.

But, you say, the depositors who hold out for full liquidation must not expect the real value to be claim than the holder needing it sell quickly, particularly as an appraisal will be on a very conservative basis.

That is true. It is also true if you are holding real estate today, for if you are forced to sell it, in order to get what you can you cannot possibly expect to receive what you think the real value may be worth in a year or two.

This plan gives the man who wants to cash a chance to do it, and do it on a fair basis. It gives the man who does not need the cash a chance to make money by holding on.

If depositors want to protect their own interests and work to ward the government set here, they must not only go into it for themselves, but they must take a real interest in rounding up a very high percentage of all depositors' money.
 E. W. SILTTUCK,
 Birmingham, Mich.

THE OTHER CHAP

AN HONEST DEMOCRAT WRITES ABOUT G. O. P.

We wonder if we shall jar some of our political affiliates if we suggest that in their political prognostics concerning the early demise of the G. O. P. elephant, as recent elections seem to portend, they look back into political history more and recall the many, many times that the Democratic donkey political oblivion. To be sure no major party, since the elimination of the old Whig Party, predecessor of the Republican Party, has lost so many seats as the Democrats in such devastating defeats in succession as has the latter party, beginning with 1922. Outside of a half-dozen states—including Michigan—which continue three years' of half-voting, the long-entrenched major party is surely a lowebb. Yet, remembering the tenacity with which the Democratic Party has clung to life, I am inclined to doubt the early passing of the Republican Party.

Having been a conscious and conscientious partisan of the Democratic organization since the campaign of 1874, when Fred L. Shirts, Theron Uphouse and I "went 'sk", standing up, from an overwhelming majority of bell-troop school mates, I am not altogether convinced that the elephant has breathed his last; and I am frank to say that, in my opinion, the Republican Party—even in its present condition—offers a more wholesome opposition than some others imbued with a more objectionable economic school of thought, might do. The members of that party, or the voters as a whole, have pretty well taken care of the reactionaries and standstills of the Fess, Robinson and Reed type, who have "been retired to the innocuous deserts to which they belong"—paraphrasing a remark of Grover Cleveland. And the leadership of the party, as James Couzens, George Nye, Arthur Vandenberg and Henry Johnson, or that of Huey Long and Upton Sinclair, my choosing would be easy.—Harry Roy and Upton County Herald.

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