The Birmingham Eccentric

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GEORGE R. AVERILL — Editor and Publisher
EDWIN G. WHITNEY — Managing Editor
PAUL NEAL AVERILL — Business Manager
ARTHUR N. WINGERDEN — Advertising Manager
CLAUDE E. WALKER — Production Manager

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 1936

NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have news value and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be presented before noon on Wednesdays. The right is reserved, however, to make such superficial changes in the work submitted as are necessary to the style of the paper and as are required by laws of the state. Because of a mechanical situation in the composing room, headlines written by those other than members of the staff cannot be used. Any erroneous reflection upon the character, standing or reputation of any person, firm or corporation which may appear in the columns of The Eccentric will be gladly corrected upon being brought to the attention of the publisher.

Spending 12 Cents For Peace; Spending $11.00 For War!

Do you want your country to pursue, with all the vigor it possesses, a policy of peace? Do you—those of you who are parents of boys—want your nation to do everything in its power to maintain international relations of a type that guarantee that your boy will not be endangered upon a field of battle?

Then read this carefully: during 1937, according to present budget statistics, the United States Dept. of State will spend 12 cents for every person in the country; during that same time the War and Navy Depts. will spend $11.00 per person.

What does this mean?

Since the Dept. of State is really our only "Dept. of Peace," the Congress of the United States sees fit to spent but 12 cents per inhabitant for the machinery of peace, and $11.00 per person for the machinery of WAR!

Isn't this a sad commentary upon the intelligence and the natural desire for peace that our great country boasts of?

If you, who are interested in maintaining peace, want to do a most patriotic act for your country, why not write your Senators, Couzens and Vandenberg, and your Congressman, George A. Dondero, letters, asking them why we spend 12 cents for peace and $11.00 for WAR.

They'll probably write you equally interesting answers.

In time of war, people fight for . . . for what? . . . well, in the final analysis, people fight for PEACE! By the same token then, in time of peace why don't people at least WRITE TO SUSTAIN IT?

WRITE! . . . or FIGHT!

Civil Service Not Needed In Smaller Communities

Is "civil service" a good plan for the smaller units of government, such as communities like Birmingham, to adopt?

This question, occasionally heard because of State and federal agitation for its universal acceptance, is discussed from time to time by people who feel that every public official should be under civil service.

Personally, The Eccentric favors the State and federal adoption of the idea, simply because, in these two larger units of government, the public loses when faithful and able employees are turned out when an opposition political party gets into office. In such cases, as you probably know, the old and outmoded political slogan, "To the victors belong the spoils," is used by the incoming administration; this results in less efficiency in government, and consequently greater cost to the taxpayers.

Civil service, when honestly carried out, keeps a majority of public servants from having to pay, in both money and personal effort, for their jobs. There is no logical reason under the sun that can prove a person's honesty and ability to perform some task, merely on the basis of his political affiliation with any particular party.

In communities like Birmingham, with the smaller number of public employees, with the absence of professional political manipulation of jobs, it seems to us that civil service is unnecessary—even unsound.

The intimacy with which citizens are related to a local unit of government, together with the general non-partisan attitude in elections, eliminates the need for civil service in municipal or township government. Indeed, we can see where, because of the very neighborliness of the atmosphere in which employees in small units of government live, that civil service might even prove a substantial barrier to economical and efficient administration of the public's business.

Are You A Wisher Or A Willer?

We wish that every person, once each year, were required to write the following sentence one thousand times: "I live in a free democracy, where the will of the people shall rule; I pray that I may remember that the only way I can hold this freedom is to accept the call of informed citizenship that goes with it; I hope that I will not forget that the surest way to lose this freedom is to neglect the intelligent us of it in matters relating to government, local, State, and federal."

You cannot maintain a muscular body unless you apply this body to the performance of manual labor, or other vigorous exercise. Citizenship in a free democracy exists only when it is used by an alert and thinking majority of citizens. When the right of citizenship is not used, it atrophies, gets tired and flabby, and, when an emergency arises, is unable to throw off the aggression of dictatorship.

All in all, we agree with those who argue that a nation generally gets the type of government that it *deserves*—not always what it merely *wants*. There is a vast difference between *wishing* for a thing and *willing* for a thing!

Are you a *wisher*, or a *willer*?

THE BRIEF TALKS over the General Motors Sunday evening hour, relative to better and safer driving, are fine. We hope that they are kept up indefinitely. As long as General Motors makes good cars, good information on safe driving is good for both buyer and seller.

Why Do Big Newspapers Print News Of Irish Sweepstakes?

Every time one or more persons in the United States wins money on the Irish Sweepstakes, nearly every daily newspaper in the land broadcasts the information. That merely whets the gambling appetite of thousands of other people, and thus is maintained in human minds a truant hope that "betting pays."

The newspapers fail to publish the fact that, for every person who wins, thousands lose. And so, without interruption, the American people are caused to maintain a gambling state of mind—a condition that permeates so many of their other activities that they depend too much upon "luck" for their daily bread.

We claim sufficient sophistication toward worldly things to be outside the class known as "strictly puritanical," but for the life of us we cannot see why the "great moral engines" of daily journalism give their space toward the perpetuation of such a speculative game as the Irish Sweepstakes.

To be consistent, why not broadcast the "winnings" made by burglars, swindlers, "blue-sky salesmen," for, surely, while many of these gentry are eventually arrested and jailed, some of them live in physical comfort and luxury much of their lives.

Some day Uncle Sam may become consistent enough to prevent the use of the mails for all forms of gambling activity—just as he now refuses a newspaper the privilege of publishing details of a local merchandising campaign where awards are given to coupon holders.

In the meantime, our own advice is for people who like a bit of gambling to stick to penny ante—at least you can sit where you can see your friends take a few nickels and dimes from you.

Exploration And Adventure Are Right In Our Midst

In 1908 a huge meteorite fell in Central Siberia, creating such a violent atmospheric disturbance that forests of trees were uprooted for miles around and closer trees were burned in the terrific heat that accompanied the visitor from the outside world.

Now comes news from Soviet Russia that an eminent scientist, travelling by airplane to the remote spot to the north of outer Mongolia, will attempt to visit the place and, if possible, will try to dig up fragments of the substance that came to the earth.

The curiosity of men and women in the strange and unnatural events of life is easily understood. We would not discourage men of science from undertaking the exploration of new areas in the search for new truth but there are countless opportunities for service available to citizens of Birmingham that involve exploration and discovery just as thrilling as the journey to be taken by the Soviet meteorologist.

Just in case somebody might be interested in knowing what we are talking about, we hasten to point out that the problems of life in this area have not been solved. There are social, economic and cultural fields open for development here that offer big dividends in wholesome community life.

Would you like to learn about some of them? Then ask local school officials how you can help them; preachers how you can help the church; city officials how you may do something for good government here; Boy and Girl Scout leaders how youth can be inspired; there are many "Siberias" worthy of exploration right in one's midst. Wherever human beings are, there are opportunities for service.

Settling Tax Delinquency

Settlement of the delinquent tax problem in Michigan probably will discriminate between investment and speculative property. The former, including homes and legitimate residential areas where individuals—not speculative syndicates—have invested their own money, are entitled to every decent consideration, all are agreed. But the speculative syndicates cannot hope for State treatment of their delinquent tax problems other, perhaps, than forfeiture of their holdings. Any other action on the part of the State would be discrimination against those who already have paid their taxes.

After all, government must carry on, and to do so requires the payment of property taxes. In times of a depression real estate, along with everything else of any value, suffers in earning power; those who own their own homes are also pinched for funds—and then there is a popular cry for wholesale relief from the burden of taxation.

This newspaper extends its sympathy to all who are crying for tax relief; but we do hold, and soundly, too, that any State settlement of the delinquent tax problem must discriminate between investment, homesteads, and purely speculative property. Otherwise the State will invite future tax strikes.

Practical Paragraphs

By John Edwin Price

ACT THE PART UNTIL YOU ACQUIRE THE ART

There wouldn't need to be so much acting connected with the art of living if people knew some of the simple satisfying ways of living artistically, naturally.

There are restless people who make believe they are at ease but are not.

There are morbid people who make a heroic effort to appear mentally healthy.

Some folks are like El Greco the Spanish artist who lived from about 1545 to 1614 and who "seemed sorry to be alive at all, and tried to explain all about it in his pictures."

"They are the work of a man whom some inward sorrow kept from seeing the lovely and the fair either in men and women or angels."

There are unhappy people who would appear, in public at least, wholesomely adjusted to life and life to them.

Fear of disapproval and pride in appearing normal make them act the parts they would like to live.

Acting that's the work is good. It is better if they are acted not from fear or in defense of pride—but *willfully* as a means of attaining the state of mind they are feigning.

One of my college mates had a weak, high pitched voice. Since he was intending to be a public speaker he realied that this would be a handicap. So in his room and jokingly when he met his friend on the campus he would fake a deep guttural tone. He kept this up for four years and found that he had developed the muscles, which originally produced the deep tones with difficulty, to the point where he could speak more easily with them than with the muscles which had produced the original light thin voice.

He willfully assumed voice tones which weren't predominant until they became predominant.

If you are restless, worried, morbid or unhappy you can help yourself to attain your desired attitude toward life by acting the part until you acquire the art.

THE "NEW DEAL"

WASHINGTON LETTER

Large AAA Payments Reveal New Angles of Farm Problem

BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON. — Revelation of large benefit checks paid for AAA to a few big farm owners has, in addition to furnishing the Republicans with political propaganda, called attention to new angles of the farm problem, such as the extent of growth of corporate and large-scale farming.

News that a Florida sugar company received more than $1,000,000 in AAA benefits, that a Puerto Rican sugar producer got $961,000, and a single cotton planter $199,700 in 1934 and 1935, would seem to indicate that "bigness" in agriculture soon might compare with "bigness" in industry.

The records, however, don't bear out this impression. Number and total amount of large payments were small in comparison with number and total amount of all payments.

For example, 1,031,549 cotton growers were paid $112,794,039. Of these 42 at the payments exceeded $10,000, and only 227 were between $5000 and $10,000. Thus 99.98 per cent of the cotton growers receiving benefits got less than $5000 each.

• • •

THIS checks rather closely with census figures, which show that 96.7 per cent of the 6,500,000 farmers cultivate fewer than 499 acres each, and that this group cultivates 83 per cent of all improved farm land.

The average American farm remains a family-sized unit—about 148 acres.

There is a trend, however, toward greater concentration of farm holdings. Figures as to extent are limited. A survey of a northeastern area of 22 states, reaching as far west and south as Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kentucky, and Virginia, showed that from 1930 to 1935 the number of farms operated by full owners had increased 12 per cent, while those operated by tenants increased 20 per cent.

Manager-operated farms were fewer and their number was less than 1 per cent of all farms, but their average acreage increased 12.5 per cent while the average acreage of all farms was declining 6.6 per cent.

• • •

LARGE-SCALE farms operated under corporate control by wage workers are as yet relatively insignificant in number as compared with tenant or sharecropper-operated farms. Most of them are limited to the growing of a single crop, usually rice or sugar.

Publication of the size of benefit payments, particularly in the south, also has aroused new interest in the proportion of the payment received by the tenant or sharecropper.

The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union has charged that the R. E. Lea Wilson plantation in Arkansas, receiver of the largest cotton payments, changed from a sharecropping system to avoid sharing benefits, threw hundreds on relief, and then rehired them at 75 cents a day.

This practice has been widespread, it is said, and many tenants and croppers are reported to have been deprived of any share in the benefits.

Under the new soil program, owners are supposed to pay sharecroppers about 25 per cent of the federal payments. No one in Washington is prepared to say how many evictions or evasions may be expected.

The Other Chap Says - - -

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

Give me the man who believes in persistent effort. He has an objective in all that he does, and he keeps the light of it constantly before him.

No trumpets announce his successive steps from one vantage point to another. He cares not for praise nor does he need continuous urging. His urge comes from within, and directs his course from day to day. The seeming flare of spasmodic achievement disturbs him not. But when the months have rolled by he has gained ground steadily, and as the years succeed each other, he becomes what the world is pleased to call an "outstanding success."

Some gain success quickly, apparently without effort, and we are prone to call them "lucky." Too often the results of such success are lost just as quickly and just as easily. Persistent effort goes on to the end. It does not rest on laurels gained, for the persistent worker finds joy only in continued achievement, no matter how much may already have been gained.—Daily Tribune, Royal Oak, Mich.

PAYING HIGH FOR WAR

The administration at Washington estimates that the American government, to date, has spent $7,800,000,000 on its World War veterans. The new bonus will add substantially more than $2,000,000,000 to that. And if pensions ever come, the figures will become astronomical.

But it is too late for us to start weeping about it now. The time to have worried about all this expense was in the spring of 1917, when our participation in the World War was still ahead of us.

The lads who went to fight the Germans for us in 1917 and 1918 didn't invent the pensions-and-bonus system; neither, it should be added, were they the ones who thought up the idea of drawing cards in the World War.

In other words, this colossal expense that goes dragging on and on long after wars' dead bones have been laid to rest—it just comes with the bicycle. Declare war, and this is what you get.

And if we don't like it, there is no foolproof way to avoid it; by staying out of war.—Bruce Catton in Belleville, Ill., Daily Advocate.

PATTERN OF LIFE
(To Toyohika Kagawa)

(Who is known as Japan's most significant Christian, also called one of the world's great Christian leaders of today.)

He teaches a bountiful measure of life,
Healing of mind and of body and soul;
Calm out of chaos and peace out of strife.
This is his mission, his work and his goal.

This is the substance and core of his creed—
Striving and serving and loving and giving.
Helping the world in its impotent need—
Showing the world a new pattern of living.

—BEATRICE McDONALD

Jots 'n Jest

A SURVEY reveals that United States consumes less cheese than any other country, but nothing was said about baloney.

• • •

The average woman is said to be most comfortable when working at a bench or table 37 inches high. The average man is most comfortable when not working.

• • •

A New York scientist has developed a new and superior race of bees. Boston baseball fans hope theirs are of this variety.

• • •

News item: "Sixteen killed in Guanajuato school teachers' demonstration." A warning to Johnny that teachers sometimes lose their self-control.

• • •

It would seem that the only thing farmers in the flood area would have much success in raising this year would be navy beans.

Random Remarks

Bertrand H. Snell, Republican leader in the House:

"The Democrats themselves do not like the tax bill any better than we Republicans."

Edouard Herriott, former French Premier and advocate of paying the war debt:

"Who knows that we will not see some day in the White House some German American."

Charles Taft, son of former President:

"I can't and won't damn F. D. R. and all his works, and some of the Republican orators and candidates who do, give me an acute pain in the neck."

Sally Rand, fan dancer:

"People don't go to expect me to get educated. They go to see things they don't see at home."

P. L. Gassaway, member of Congress from Oklahoma:

"I am not making any money up here in Washington. It costs all you make. If I wasn't a pretty fair poker player, I couldn't stay here."

Maury Maverick, member of Congress from Texas:

"The cherry blossoms are pretty but they lack something. You might say they don't have sex appeal."

Plutarco Elias Calles, exiled former President of Mexico:

"I do not consider myself responsible for the conditions through which Mexico is passing."

Massachusetts Supreme Court:

"Burlesque is a place to display good-looking girls in unappropriate dress, sometimes in nudeness."

E. H. Scott, radio engineer:

"The solution for good will among nations is an intelligently spread international language."

Myron C. Taylor, steel official:

"There is a competitive condition in getting good men."

Charles Evans Hughes, Chief Justice, on his 74th birthday:

"I am not interested in my birthday. I don't want to talk about it."

Herbert Hoover, former President:

"With the radio, speech-making is hard. A speech is good only once because the public is quick to detect repetition."

Simms—There are times when benefit may be derived from the advice of a fool.

Mrs. Simms—You certainly shouldn't complain. Haven't I always listened to yours?

'My Country, 'Tis of Thee'...

By T. H. MILLINGTON

T. H. MILLINGTON

What and where to begin to write in this bedlam of political and economic confusion is a problem increasing in difficulty as the bedlam increases in intensity.

Not only do great men, or men who we thought were great, turn established thought upside down, but also do they impart meanings to words never before thought of, and often make them meaningless.

For instance: A speaker may blame the "machine age" for unemployment and its resultant evils. Still he probably has traveled to the meeting place in an automobile, he certainly is speaking in a room lighted by electricity produced by machinery. At his table every day he has food much of which has come by boat, train or truck not only from distant places in our own country but from across the ocean. He may be lighting his cigar or cigarette from South America, his wine from France, his strongest drink from Scotland or his chocolate from the East Indies. He would daily be much annoyed and delayed without telephone and telegraph or without his newspaper printed by machinery on paper made from pulp from Canada or Finland. His radio brings him news instantaneously from the ends of the earth. His very existence is dependent upon the machinery which he condemns. He may even be well paid by an ignorant and credulous audience, sometimes called suckers, for condemning modern machinery, the invention of which has made our country great, and making machines the goat for all our troubles. The speaker knows man wants a goat to blame for his own folly, and so he profits by the cowardice which prevents man from acknowledging his own shortcomings.

Another speaker tells us that unemployment is increasing—now 24 millions, one in every five—also that the birthrate is decreasing, slowing the increase of population so that by 1945 our increase will cease and the population become stationary. He condemns growing unemployment and despairs of a remedy for it, why in the same breath deplore decrease in birth rate?

Constitutional Freedom

But that little inconsistency is overlooked by the listeners and conveniently unmentioned by the speaker or writer who only wants to appeal to the emotions and credulities of his audience, and who knows the danger to his income if they should stop and think.

To a person who believes that the American Revolution gave the colonies political, religious, social and economic freedom, it seems strange to hear a learned speaker say that "the Constitution gave us political freedom but not economical." It is rather disconcerting to find that idealism is fast becoming impossible to sustain.

The writer always believed that the Constitution was the creation of the free sovereign states, who by the people of their respective States were permited, on their behalf and in their interest, to sign the Constitution in order to protect and perpetuate the political, religious, social and economic freedom won in their successful revolution.

The Constitution gives the people nothing. On the contrary, the People gave the Constitution all the powers it possess. But those powers were intentionally limited in order to prevent the government, to be created under the Constitution, from encroaching upon or interfering with the personal freedom of the people in their pursuit of the liberties so dearly won. The Constitution has no power to change the people, but the people can change the Constitution.

If those who criticize the Constitution would formulate written proposals of change, then we might decide for or against, but the New Dealers prefer to do that through bureaucratic orders, like sneaking up on you in the dark.

Consider the Old Age Pensi
Is there anything new about
being old people? Is it not eq
able and a social bond that as
ents take care of the young
young in their turn take care
the parents? Has it not alw
been done? Is family solidarity
the greatest social blessing
the want of it our greatest so
curse?

Is not this country famous
world over for its profligate ge
osity? Has this country a rep
tion for letting its aged die
want and misery? I think not.
course the social worker can
cases aplenty of suffering,
they are the exception and not
rule.

The so-called Townsend
Age-Pension Plan has been a h
success in enriching its promot
who have collected, from the su
ers, a million dollars into t
formerly quite empty pockets,
the $200 per month pension is
a pipe-dream:

The impossibility of it is ob
ous. Our present local, state
National government expense
about 15 billion dollars per y
about the burden of which we
pair. Yet the Townsend Plan,
tisticians inform us, would
about 12 billions a year m
Where will the money come fro
Like all individual expenses wh
can only be met out of income,
government expenses can only
met out of its income.

The idea that the forced mon
ly spending of that money wo
increase prosperity is idiotic.
people, out of whose earnings
money would flow to the Gove
ment with which to pay the p
sions, would have as much less
to spend for themselves as th
would pay in the Government.
same amount would be spent,
only difference being that
spending would be done, not
those who earn the money b
by those who do not. Work
earning $100 to $150 a mo
would help contribute the mo
for the $200 a month pensions
people would not work.

Social Workers

It seems to me that the gr
cause of confusion is that we h
too many professional social wo
ers in government, as well
many others running loose ab
the country. Their training is
discover sufferings and soc
wrongs and to draw upon wea
for the means with which to re
edy them. They are not trained
the production of wealth. Th
become emotional because of th
contact with conditions that
peal to their emotions; and so fr
President Roosevelt, Harry H
kins (the former N. Y. soc
worker) and others only wants
the whole army of New Deale
we have men and women with t
social worker complex whose ide
are honesty demands forthw
the application of social remed
regardless of cost.

In fact, Congress and a lar
portion of the population is
gaining this comfortable feeli
tively speaking, are weeping qua
over the under privileged, wh
forgetting that the burden plac
on the taxpayers for such idi
idealism is fast becoming impo
sible to sustain.

New laws, new schemes, n
taxes for carrying out these
jects, have created a mess
jitters so that their money
mains idle. Take this reform-co
plex out of Washington, reste
confidence in capital and the
and the unemployment th
weep over will soon disappear.

The building neglected duri
the speculation years from '24
'29, and still neglected up to no
could employ 15 to 20 million pe
ple; but the New Dealers cann
see this obvious cure for most
our economic ills because of th
social-worker complex tears.

What about the fellow who h
to earn the money to pay for th
super-idealism? Who is weepi
for him?

Considerate

Sailor—"Don't bother me.
am writing to my girl."

Marine—"But why are y
writing slowly?"

Sailor—"She can't read ve
fast." — The Job Order (U. S.
Melville).

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