The Birmingham Eccentric

(Founded in 1878)

Published every Thursday, at Birmingham, Mich., in The Eccentric Building, 220-222 North Woodward Avenue
Telephones 11, 12, and 13

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

Entered as Second Class Matter in the U. S. Postoffice at Birmingham, Michigan

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

(In Oakland County)		(Outside Oakland County)	
One Year	$2.00	One Year	$2.50
Six Months	1.00	Six Months	1.50
Three Months	.50	Three Months	1.00

All newspaper and advertising copy must be in the Eccentric office by Tuesday noon to obtain insertion for that week.

The Eccentric is a member of: National Editorial Association, Michigan Press Association, University Press Club, and Oakland County Weekly Press Association

THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 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.

Birmingham's New Commission Faces Financial Problems

Perhaps never in the history of Birmingham's civic affairs has this community been faced with the financial problems that now confront its city officials.

In debt over a million and a quarter of dollars of bonds, acquired during the late 'Twenties, with a judgment against it now for nearly a hundred thousand dollars on defaulted bonds and interest, with an increasing burden of current governmental cost piling up, our City Commission has plenty on its hands to solve.

Last Monday, at its annual election, Birmingham selected two new men to represent it on the Commission. They are Wilmer E. Moody and Ray A. Palmer. These men, together with Commissioners Luther Heacock, Lawrence Hulbert, Frank Packard, Arthur Kane, and John Martz, hold within their hands the instrumentalities for shaping Birmingham's immediate and future financial status.

These men are fond of their city; they are loyal to its best interests, interpreted in their own individual manners; they are capable of working out solutions for its many problems.

For many years to come, Birmingham faces the annual payment of its great burden of bonded debt; annual budgets must provide acceptable payments from current taxes to decrease this burden; while in the meantime current expenses must be carried on, of course.

It seems to us, and to others acquainted with the problems, that Birmingham has but two ways out of its financial dilemma; one is to levy more taxes, the other is to live more economically within the realm of its controllable expenses.

It will be interesting to observe the policies formed by the newly organized City Commission. Birmingham taxpayers are willing to dig deep for their taxes, providing they see reasonable headway made in decreasing the inescapable burden of debt that now requires annual payments.

The Farmer Talks To The Businessman About Surpluses

"I've got to save my surplus
For a rainy day, you see,"
Said a Businessman one morning,
As he stopped to talk with me.
"When the drouth of a depression
Stalks its way across our land
I must have reserves to keep away
The sheriff and his band
Of court attaches, should they come
To close me up—for then
I would not have the cash on hand
To employ deserving men."
I listened sympathetically,
Agreed that Businessmen
Should be allowed to keep on hand
The cash to start again
When Old Depression visits us—
Else how can jobs be found
To pay the city folks who eat
Produce we raise from ground.
It seems to me, if Businessmen
Their surplus are to lose,
A plan must be provided them
So they can work or choose
To be supported from the tills
That pay A.A.A. "jack".
Because we farmers join the scheme
To make "abundant lack."
If farmers are rewarded 'cause
They plow their crops right under,
Then why not pay the Businessmen
And let 'em have some plunder?
Oh, I'm an average son of soil,
I claim no braintrust mention,
But for the life of me and mine
It goes against convention
To all I've learned in three-score-ten
Of years of storm and strife
Just how a man—in town, on farm—
Wins livelihood from life—
Can earn an honest living
If Uncle Sam has planned a scheme
That beats the Socialistic dream
To "get" without some "giving".

—G. R. A.

A Messiah Falls

Last August, Mr. William Aberhart was elected premier of Alberta province, Canada, on a promise to pay a "social dividend" of $25 a month to everybody in Alberta. He told the voters not to worry about where the money was coming from; just leave that to him.

Now the Alberta legislature is in session. It finds that no $25 dividends have been paid; none are in sight. The provincial government already has boosted its taxes to the limit and its credit is so bad it can't borrow. So Mr. Aberhart is on a sizzling political platter.

Is it possible that some would-be American Messiahs would be in the same frying pan if they were confronted with the hard reality of having to make good rather than just promising so as to be elected?

Mountain Peaks Of Finance

By VERNON J. BROWN

(Editor Ingham County News and Chairman Michigan Legislative Council.)

This writer was taken up on the high mountains of finance during the past week and given a glimpse of how the boys who are really clever can turn tricks. The word "dynamic" was frequently employed in reference to what was once possible in the so-called metropolitan area of Michigan in the good old days between 1920 and 1929. That word has thrilled others as it has the writer—it must have else what was done would have been impossible. It must have thrilled even those engaged in the build-up for certainly many involved both in promotion and on the "sucker list" are well-intentioned and honest folk.

One thing stands out clearly when the picture of despair is finally complete. To bring about the conditions that exist in southeastern Michigan at this moment many forces must have worked together. There must be industries and big business to form the lure. There must be realtors, architects, structural contractors and supply concerns and there must be land speculators—those who buy for quick profit and those who buy for actual investment and home ownership. Then, too, there must be those who buy bonds—real estate mortgage bonds and municipal bonds. There must also be some manipulation to force legislative action to open up savings bank deposits for this type of securities. In fact, this artful structure is so complex, so tortured with interlocking interests, so overwhelmed with debts and charges of every conceivable character that it not only baffles, it actually astounds one that such conditions can be found, created in a great state and among an intelligent and progressive people.

Suppose we take a single example, worse than the average but not alone by any means. The name of the town will not be given here for that would serve no purpose except to give needless worry to those who still cling to hope that something will be recovered from the wreckage.

The city taken for example has a population of about 6000 people. It is laid out and developed for three times that number at least. It was just in its growing pains when the depression hit with full force. A few years before this some real estate promoters bought up a large tract of land, others joined in with smaller tracts and the boom was on. Real estate mortgage bonds were sold to buy the land and grade streets and to build a few business bolcks. Other mortgage money came in to supply cash for dwellings. Then the necessity for paving, sewers, schoolhouses, municipal buildings, park and other essentials of urban life became apparent, the result being a series of elections at which municipal bonds were authorized and later sold.

Today the bonded debts of this city exceeded by 20 per cent the present assessed value of all the lands within the city. In addition to this, of the taxes levied to pay off these bonds and their accruing interest, so little has been paid in by property owners that the accrued tax delinquency approaches 80 per cent of the present assessed value of all the property within the city. But if the debts are to be counted, then there must be added in the unpaid mortgage bond issues outstanding and that known straight mortgages held by individuals, banks, and loaning associations. When these are added they are found to just about equal the present assessed value again. The aggregate of private loans, real estate mortgage bonds, municipal bonds, and accumulated delinquent taxes, exceeds the present total assessed value of the city by three times, not to mention the equities held by or claimed by the fee owners of the properties.

Today the city officials are demanding the taxes be paid; the holders of the bonds against the city and the school district and the several special assessment districts are strenuously demanding their money; the holders of real estate bonds and mortgages are just as insistent that they must be paid. Meanwhile those who promoted the whole mess and who still claim some equities in unsold lots are demanding that the state cancel all taxes in order that they may resume the selling of the unsold and repossessed properties, failing to mention what would happen to the buyer who puts his money into land at the moment of sale indebted for more than twice the amount it can be sold for on today's market.

Salvation in his be it days never had so perplexing a problem as the state of Michigan has in unraveling the tangle into which realtors and speculators have plunged a section of the state once its pride. Going outside the immediate city described, a single 40-acre farm, never platted but for years tilled by a market gardener, is found with delinquent, special and general taxes piled up until the total amounts to more than $17,000. These two examples are extreme but by no means are they isolated or the exception. The entire southern tier of townships across two counties are involved in this general picture. Some means must be found to extricate the thousands of home owners of this locality from the mess they are in. In doing this guards must be set against others less deserving lest they profit again by reason of concessions or adjustments granted to innocent victims. Then, too, some means must be discovered to prevent a recurrence of the same problems in the future.

It is a big job and one that the people of Michigan as a whole must take into account. Five hundred millions of the savings of the thirfty of Michigan are invested in real estate bonds alone involved in this district. Other millions held by banks and trust companies, indeed some of them held by the state itself, are involved in municipal bonds issued against these cities and districts and bought for investment. The issue certainly is one greater than can be encompassed by the geographic boundaries of Wayne, Macomb and Oakland counties.

Pay Governor More

We agree with those who hold that Michigan should pay its Governor a higher salary, one more in keeping with the importance of the job he occupies. At present, $5,000 per year is paid the Governor, plus an expense account of an equal amount. Most other States pay their Chief Executive far more, and many of them even furnish him with a decent house to live in. While we still believe in increasing frugality in government, we do feel that the Governor of Michigan, whether he be Democrat or Republican, is entitled to a remuneration that will maintain the dignity and respect for the high office involved.

NOW THAT HANK GREENBERG has signed up with the Tigers, we suppose the world will turn to less important matters, such as economic security and World Peace.

"WHAT IS ACADEMIC FREEDOM?" asks a learned pedagogue. Well, there are many times when we feel that it borders on intellectual irresponsibility.

SURPLUSES

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

By T. H. MILLINGTON

IS LIBERTY FOR SALE?

It is a common saying, well understood by everybody, that a government exists only by the consent of the governed. This is true whether a government be democratic or despotic.

History is largely made up of the records of the overturning of governments by the governed and the establishment of new governments. It follows therefore that a government is what the people make it, or, by indifference permit the government to make of itself. Therefore the character of a government of any people, at anytime, represents a cross section of its peoples conception of government.

In other words, if a people does not like its government and does not bestir itself to change it, that people does not deserve and better government than it has.

We deplore the condition of government in China and its territorial encroachment by Japan. The answer is that the people of China are so completely enervated that they are incapable of the establishment of stable government able to maintain peace within and resist invasion of its territory from without.

The reason for communism in Russia is the same. To begin with the Communists were a small minority who, by a trick of fate, got possession of the government. It is said they numbered less than 100,000 yet they intimidated that vast country with its teaming millions by promising division of wealth and lands, by promising division of the great estates among the farmers. In other words promising something for nothing just as is being done in this country today.

Neither the Chinese government, such as it is; the Japanese invasion nor Stalin's so called communism, could endure thirty days if the people of those countries had the will, and the moral courage to arise in the might of their hundreds of millions. But those peoples possess only emasculated self respect and will. They are like dumb driven cattle and neither understand nor care.

The same is true of Germany and Italy. From our standpoint these governments violate all sense of the rights and liberties of the individual but if their people are satisfied or cowed into submission their governments are what they want or permit and it is none of our business. No doubt, at the inception of what these governments now are, the people were too dumb to realize what they led but, because of promises of gain and relief from responsible thinking, they gave support.

But what of our own government? A large portion of our people are living off the governments lavish expenditures. Many business concerns are profiting by the business transactions with the government and they, like the individuals have their mouths stopped by profits.

Patrick Henry's famous saying "Give me liberty or give me death" has become a joke and today we say "it might hurt my business or I might lose my job". In other words: "take my liberty but, feed me". Our government is what we make it and, if it is not what we want, we deserve no better. If we are unwilling to make the effort and sacrifice to change it, the Juggernaut of government encroachment upon privacy of communication and private and State rights will increase.

But read the following and know the reason for the power of the "New Steal" from the people.

Making his first move to comply with Senator Vandenberg's reiterated demands for publicity on large AAA benefit payments, Secretary Wallace published today a report showing they ranged up to $1,067,665, the sum paid to one Florida sugar corporation.

In making his partial report, Wallace withheld the names of all recipients, with three exceptions. He disclosed that the largest cotton rental benefit, $125,747 for 1934, went to a mississippi company headed by Oscar Johnston, an AAA official. Among the largest cotton payment recipients in 1933 were the Mississippi State penitentiary, which received $14,200 for controlling production on its cotton acreage and $25,000 to the Arkansas State prison.

Connection Public

Johnston, the report said, is manager of the federal cotton pool and has been with AAA since June, 1933.

Among other large payments reported under various crop control programs were:

Sugar—$961,064 to a Puerto Rican corporation; $862,000 to a Hawaiian producer; $822,237 to a California beet sugar producer; $63,505 to a Colorado beet sugar grower.

Corn, hog—$150,000 to the largest hog farm in the world, located in California; $19,154 to a farming company in New Jersey; $19,008 to a Massachusetts producer.

Wheat—$29,308 to a California farming concern for the second 1934 and first 1935 periods; $26,022 to the "operator of a number of farms" in Washington State; $23,845 to a California bank, owner of a large wheat acreage; $22,325 to a "large Montana farmer."

Cotton Payments Made

Cotton—$115,400 in 1934 to an Arkansas concern; $80,000 the same year to another Arkansas company.

Tobacco—$41,454 to a Florida concern; $20,400 to Connecticut producer; $16,843 to a South Carolina grower; $13,450 to a Kentucky grower.

In by-gone days of virile patriotism such administration management would generate impeachment.

Below are others of our governmental efficient means of voluntary intimidation and emasculation. The government borrows money for its extravagances instead of levying taxes to pay as we go. That brings the benefit of government expenditures without the burden of taxes at present. Next generation will pay. Probably a majority of the population pay neither income nor property taxes anyway. That makes the fools think the rich are being soaked for their benefit. They represent however enough votes so that their thinking, or lack of thinking shapes our governmental policy.

Constitutional hindrances to further government extravagances and domination, blamed upon the Supreme Court, instead of upon the President's willful encroachments and consequent illegal waste of tax paying money is a real danger to our form of government. The excuse offered, that the President did not know certain laws were unconstitutional until the Supreme Court said so is not complimentary to his intelligence nor consistant with the facts. This blaming of the Supreme Court for annulling the N. R. A. AAA and others of his measures and so stopping money distribution has made, to the mind of the ever while recipients, enemies of the Supreme Court. Yet Mr. Roosevelt poses as the friend of the people and, unthinkingly they applaud and approve, for, is he not taking from the rich and giving to the poor?

What till bread is 15 cents a loaf and butter fifty cents a pound as it will be in order for business to earn enough to pay the taxes made necessary by Mr. Roosevelt's second-hand generosity.

But the direct beneficiaries of the government largesses are not the only unthinking ones. There seems to be abroad in the Nation, a lack-a-daisical attitude—"it cannot happen here" feeling which though inactive, tips the scales in favor of the government. Not only can it happen here—destruction of our constitutional form of government; it has already partly happened day by day. Is the United States of America, the last strong-hold of complete individual liberty and of government by the people, at the end of its glorious achievement? It is already slipping under the dictator heal. The coming election may determine the completion of the obliteration of the most glorious pages of the record of man's achievements in government in the world's history.

All the real progress of science, philosophy, government and invention has taken place since man's emancipation from Church and State domination. Would those who blame the machine for the ills of the Middle Ages? Hardly! Our trouble is the desire for easy money, something for nothing; using our money for gambling instead of in legitimate enterprise where it will employ labor; squandering money in extravagant living instead of the old-fashioned way of providing for the rainy day that comes to everybody.

Would-be reformers, who pose as friends of the people, champions of justice, benefactors of humanity and who gain fortunes for themselves for their efforts, are only trading in peoples credulity but for their own benefit.

There are, I believe only three ways of gaining wealth and they are: work, gifts and theft. Take your choice. A government cannot create wealth for the people. It can only tax wealth and spend it. The people only can create it. When people expect a government to support them they are expecting the government to rob Peter to pay Paul and the end is slavery. The end is government domination and national enslavement. If we do not like the trend of our government it is up to the people to change it. No government ever voluntarily receded from powers once assumed.

Munificence

The dimes and quarters that I give away,
The outgrown toys, the books I never read,
The stockings that would win a basc-ball game
(If runs were counted),
The sofa pillows almost worn in holes,
The shoes with scanty soles
And down trod heels
That look like chewed-up liver,
Out-moded hats that make me shiver,
The jam we have grown tired of,
Jouse-ladder drapes and shabby clothes;
To ease the woes
Of other folks and help them live
Are trivialities for me to give.
If I should let my cold heart bleed
For those in need
If I gave gifts of love away
For which I ever yearn and pray.

—Beatrice McDonald

Like a Champ

Proud Father—What do you think of my son as a pugilist?

Trainer—Well, he can shake hands the best of any fighter I ever saw.

WASHINGTON LETTER

Uncertain Future of Townsend Movement Worries Candidates

BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON.—Will the Townsend movement survive the current dissension among its leaders and the outcome of the searching congressional investigation? A good many politicians besides congressmen worrying about re-election would like to know.

At present the movement's future seems troubled. Robert E. Clements, co-founder and organizing genius of the plan, has resigned, ostensibly as a result of a disagreement with Dr. Townsend over the "third party" question. Representative McGroarty, the plan's congressional sponsor, is at outs with the doctor, who accuses him of trying to use the movement to advance his private political fortunes.

McGroarty, in return, claims that the doctor has abandoned the transaction tax method of financing the pension fund for a tax-exempt bond issue.

The investigating committee is trying to show the movement as a scheme operated by promoters at the expense of trusting old people, whose dime-a-month dues have gone to pay huge commissions and expense accounts.

• • •

POORLY prepared, the committee rushed into the investigation ahead of schedule because so many congressmen were anxious to get ammunition against the Townsendites in time for their primary fights, and got itself rather badly balled up. Principal revelations of the first few days were:

That the income of the Townsend Plan from dues and other sources since its formation totaled about a million dollars, not including profits from the Townsend Weekly, owned personally by Dr. Townsend and Clements.

That Clements' own income from the plan in 1935 was $13,535, and that his wife received a $1475 salary as secretary.

That Townsend Plan funds had paid for a $215 apartment in Washington for Dr. Townsend and Clements, along with maid service, groceries, and other expenses.

That Edward H. Margett, state area manager in San Francisco, had drawn as high as $2600 a month in commissions. Margett said he paid organizational and office expenses out of this sum.

• • •

TOWNSEND leaders contend that there is nothing scandalous in this. Clements earned his money, they say, by building up the organization to its present strength; and, anyway, it isn't very much pay for a big-time Washington lobbyist.

Washington observers are guessing both ways as to the outcome of all the excitement. At present Dr. Townsend stands as a rather lonely figure in his efforts to save his plan from disintegration.

His original leadership is broken up. Those leaders who remain are unknown quantities. His revenues are reported to be falling. Politicians who once were badly scared by success of his movement are out to get him.

But survival of the movement in some form is probable, because social security experts generally are convinced that the present old age pension set-up simply isn't worth anything. And you can find many economists who think that the purchasing power theory on which the Townsend Plan is based isn't so bad. Pensions on reasonable terms, not of $200 a month, but $50 or $60, would tend to keep money in circulation and make for increased stability of our economic system, they contend.

Random Remarks

William E. Borah, U. S. Senator from Idaho:

"Our government is sufficient to conquer every evil and every problem."

Alexis Carrell, medical scientist:

"Intelligence and morality do not appear to have markedly increased in spite of the amount spent on education."

James A. Emery, Attorney, National Association of Manufacturers:

"Organized labor seeks and has obtained a privilege in the law, and would expand that privilege."

Austen Charberlain, British statesman:

"You cannot have European civilization on a system in which treaties bind the parties as long as it suits their convenience."

Mrs. James J. Walker, wife of ex-Mayor of New York, on adopting a baby girl:

"I am thrilled."

William Allen White, Kansas editor:

"Nowadays most colleges are turning out pretty poor stuff."

Donald Richberg, former NRA Administrator:

"There is no conflict between the New Deal and the Constitution."

Robert H. Jackson, Assistant Attorney General:

"For many years our tax laws have encouraged the concentration of capital and stimulated monopolies."

Millard Tydings, U. S. Senator from Maryland:

"Small business is being crushed to the wall in a deliberate campaign."

Frank Knox, Chicago publisher:

"Reform should come as a result of careful and deliberate study by competent non-partisan authorities."

Daniel C. Roper, Secretary Commerce:

"Government costs must be slashed in all directions."

Laura Knight, portrait painter:

"At least as good an average of intelligence goes with beauty as with ugliness."

Jots 'n Jest

THAT Northwestern professor who says we eventually will have no legs from lack of exercise should consider overdevelopment of ears from listening to such stuff.

• • •

Pittsburgh and other points looked forward to spring after a hard winter, but when it did come, it proved to be a washout.

• • •

Music and dancing are said to be very beneficial to mental patients; but why must nitwits who live in top floor apartments try to cure themselves overnight?

• • •

That Canadian scientist who advocates grass for salads doesn't realize that he's making it increasingly difficult to hit little Willie to push a lawnmower.

• • •

The Concord, N. H., man who is having troubles with floods and his mother-in-law might combine the two for a happy ending.

• • •

Different Kind of Fighting

Teacher—What does the word "reverie" mean, Willie?

Willie (excitedly)—A reverie is like a baseball umpire, only has to do with prize fights.

WABEEK STATE BANK

WABEEK, BLDG.

BIRMINGHAM, MICH.

Directors

W. M. CORNELIUS — HENRY T. EWALD
FRANK COUZENS — GEO. B. JUDSON
JAMES COUZENS — LEONARD L. HEALY

"Your Bank in Birmingham"

COMPLETE BANKING FACILITIES