The Birmingham Eccentric

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 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.

Can The World Avoid A Drift Towards Communism?

Labor applied to the earth produces wealth; wealth is distributed among people by direct exchange of goods produced or, as in most of the world, by the transfer of the medium of exchange, called money and credit. When a vast portion of people are unable to find employment, government says: "We won't let anybody starve or suffer unto death." So government, through the power of taxation, gets money or credit with which to distribute food, clothing, and shelter to the needy. In the tremendous weapon of taxation, ALL citizens of the United States are assured of at least a few scraps of food, a few tattered clothes, a rude shelter.

Such is the political power in a democracy! Political freedom is the eventual guarantee of economic freedom!

Slowly, but with deadly certainty, the world is drifting toward systems of economic control that offer greater and more continuous distribution of food, clothing, and shelter. Russia has Communism; Italy boasts of Fascism; Germany bows to Nazism; Japan is proud of its imperialistic militarism; many other countries have other forms of despotism, each designed in the basically altruistic endeavor to provide food, clothing, and shelter for human beings.

Great Britain for two decades has had its dole, along with very considerable of permanent unemployment; the United States is in the first stages of the permanent dole—unless our political and economic leaders apply a form of economic truth that allows people to have access to the land—for it is in, on, and from the land that wealth is produced.

Hunger and distress are terrible evils upon which to build any form of civilization. In their wake lie ruin, desolation, barrenness.

Solving Unemployment

The impressive address of James R. Adams, local resident, of MacManus, John & Adams, Inc., Detroit advertising agency, given recently before the Birmingham Rotary club, proves that modern business executives are doing some serious thinking about the causes and cure of economic depressions. Mr. Adams' talk was a masterful presentation of the problem, although disagreement naturally exists among people as to his suggested remedy. It seems to us, however, that when successful business men like Mr. Adams begin to seek remedies for economic mal-adjustment there is great promise that this problem may be overcome, for, after all, it devolves considerably upon the producers of the nation's goods to create more successful methods of distributing them, without the devastating periods of depression and unemployment.

Obtain Life Insurance

One of the saddest situations in life is to find oneself without funds in time of great need. Which causes us to suggest the value of adequate life insurance for everyone who can afford it—and few can afford to go without it if they earn anything regularly. No breadwinner has a right to declare that he is intelligently protecting his loved ones unless he has in his possession the guarantee of a reliable insurance company that his dependents will be given some measure of security upon his death.

Roosevelt Is Sincere

If you think that President Roosevelt's policies threaten the American traditions of Constitutional government, you will probably vote against his re-election this fall. Very few people can honestly question the underlying decency of Mr. Roosevelt's intentions to spread more wealth among more people; they can, and do, however, seriously question his methods of doing so. A person's intentions, therefore, are not to be relied upon so much as his personal ability to accomplish what he sets out to do. Many a fine-spun theory has crashed to earth because the theorist knew nothing about the practical realities of life. You would not risk your neck in a fine-looking motor car that had not been put to practical road tests; it takes more than streamlines and nice radiator caps to insure safety in an automobile, doesn't it?

Sea Travel Is Safe

In spite of the fact that to most people the sea holds for them a certain terror, it is safer to travel on Neptune's bosom than on the highways or in airplanes. Statistics compiled over eight and one-half years, from January 1, 1927, to July 1, 1935, reveal that the world's highways took 240,746 lives, airplanes claimed 3,169, and Davey Jones' locker received only 1,561 human beings.

A SLIGHT DECREASE in the number of books read in the United States has been noticed during 1935 by the American Library Association. The reason: improvement in business, resulting in people doing things other than reading; also public libraries, due to budget curtailments, have been unable to buy new books to maintain public's interest.

"Room At Top" For Ambitious Youth Is Smaller Says Pitkin

There's still "room at the top" for ambitious youth—but, declares Walter B. Pitkin, famed author of "Life Begins at Forty," it is a smaller room than it used to be. And instead of being in a city skyscraper, it may be on main street of the old home town.

Able young men and women today, Dr. Pitkin notes in the current Rotarian Magazine, should take a realistic view of the change, and recognize the fact that it may be necessary for them to work longer than did able youth of another generation at jobs requiring less than their full abilities. Progress up what he describes as "the battered old ladder of success," is apt to be slower than formerly, and wise youth will cultivate local acquaintances and a knowledge of local affairs.

A 10-point list of qualifications necessary for high-grade young men and women who would reach the room-at-the-top is offered by Dr. Pitkin:

1. Health
2. High energy
3. Persistence
4. Thoroughness
5. High technical training
6. Social sense—the ability to get along well with people
7. Self-knowledge, and self-understanding
8. Adaptability
9. Willingness to work for a long time at jobs requiring less than one's best abilities
10. A knowledge of local affairs and wide acquaintanceship with local people.

All of which, he adds, is based on the patent fact, "Today there is no room anywhere for millions who are able and willing to work. It's important, even though not pleasant, to know that, in terms of mere numbers alone, every young worker who has arrived at working age since 1920 would be superfluous in our existing economic system if everybody were to use the latest and best inventions and improvements.

"We have heard much of the youth problem—and it is a big problem, one that reaches around the world. Gratifying, however, is the intelligent interest business and professional men are taking not only in counselling youth but in actively helping them make adjustments."—From THE ROTARIAN Magazine.

Up . . Up!—Then Down . . Down!

Stock market prices are up an average of 228 per cent over the low level of 1932. They'll keep on going higher, and higher, and still higher; then'll come another crash (make no mistake about this, folks) and they'll go lower, lower, and still lower. When they reach their next lowest, perhaps the 1932 low level will look high by comparison. For you safely do recall that "what goes up must come down," and this is tremendously true in the speculative realms.

Royal Flushes

Over in Chicago four chaps were playing poker, and one deal resulted in three of them getting royal flushes. They boosted the "pot" until the two-cent limit gave developed into a stake of $11.70. One of the players "called." They finally divided the "pot" three ways. Question: with the rules as they are in the national game of cards, just who is to win the "pot" when the New Deal is asked to show its hand?

A Modern "Boston Tea Party"

Early Americans became incensed because a foreign government sought to levy taxes against them, so they held a Boston Tea Party. Today, Americans pay more taxes than old England ever tried to take from them, but don't seem to get very excited about it. We suggest to those who would decrease taxes that they arrange for, let us say, some chap like Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin, or the Emperor of Ethiopia ('twould be better if England's King Edward would do it), to be the official federal tax collector of America. Then, oh boy! how our dear countrymen would rise up and defend their God-given right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

HATS OFF to Miss Isbbel MacDonald, daughter of Britain's former Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald. She has opened an Inn near London, and when business is brisk, dons an apron and waits on table. Her dad was once a hard-working miner, and she inherits her innate love for work—be it ever so humble. What a splendid philosophy must be hers!

It's GREAT to have complete and uninterrupted compatability within a household. Here's how one chap has attained it: 20 years ago he agreed with his wife that he would decide all major matters that came up, while she could handle all the minor ones. And, so far, only minor matters have come up for settlement.

AMERICANISM: the nation sets up a Food & Drug bureau to eliminate quack medicines from public sale. The same nation allows quack economic nostrums to be handed out by anybody and everybody—even electing some of the quacks to high public office.

Practical Paragraphs

By John Edwin Price

UNLOCK THE WEALTH OF ALASKA

Rex Beach says there is still gold in Alaska and that it can be discovered as gold was discovered in Canada—by photographic surveys. In the January Cosmopolitan he presents a workable plan for finding ore in Alaska and providing jobs. "With a little help," he says, "Alaska could put to work at once an army of men. She could offer them permanent employment with a chance of large profits later on.

"I revisited the country last summer and made a survey of conditions. I talked with old-timers and cheechakos, mining men, business and professional men. All agree that the country is rich in mineral resources—placer and quartz mines as yet undiscovered—and that it needs and can support several times its present population. Much of it has barely been explored and some of it isn't even mapped. It is a land of opportunity which, owing to peculiar circumstances, is lying fallow."

Canada, the author recalls, faced a similar state of affairs, but used intelligence, increased her mineral output and today is the third largest gold producer in the world.

"Instead of waiting for prospectors to penetrate the wilds by canoe or dog team, the Canadians mapper their wilderness from the air. They concentrated their attention upon regions where they beheld indications of mineralization. Ore veins were actually discovered from those airplane photographs. Miners were then flown directly into these areas, established in camps and their work was intelligently directed."

"Obviously, to unlock Alaska, the thing to do is to copy the Canadian technique and apply it where conditions are favorable."

People's Column

The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications for this column. All communications must be signed, but signatures will be kept confidential upon request. Letters must be limited to 500 words, and must be in the office by Tuesday noon for publication the following Thursday.

SPENDING PRIZE MONEY

Jan. 13, 1936

Birmingham Eccentric
Birmingham, Michigan

Dear Sirs:

A member of our homeroom, Wallace McLay, won second prize in the War Essay contest.

At a homeroom meeting we decided to give the writer of the essay half of the money and keep the other half for ourselves.

We bought a book for the room, called "The Modern Encyclopedia," edited by A. H. McDannald and published by Wm. H. Wise and company.

We thank you very much for allowing us to enter the contest. Even those who did not win a prize benefited by the discussion of how to keep the United States out of war.

Very truly yours,
Room 202, Adams School
By Ruth Shippey, Secretary.

1330 W. No. 38th Place
Los Angeles, California
January 9, 1936

Editor, The Birmingham Eccentric
Birmingham, Michigan

Dear Sir:

The issue of December 30, 1935, Birmingham Eccentric, prints an article by Dr. Emmerson F. Schmidt, economist at the University of Minnesota, in regards the analysis of the Townsend Plan.

He begins by saying, "Few people doubt the desirability and the necessity of an old age pension and that the majority of the people are objects of charity after the age of 65." He says that half the states have old age pensions, but to be eligible, one must be in a state of virtual poverty. How true! The Townsend Plan, he says, will provide $200 a month for everyone over 60 years of age. Not quite, Doctor, they must be citizens of the United States, have no criminal record, and have an income of less than $2400 a year. Also, he said, the pension payments would be financed by a "sales tax." Wrong again, Doctor, it is a transaction tax—just a minor error on your part, but quite important.

He says "admirable as it may be, students of finance and economists are unanimously agreed that the plan can not work."

Not unanimously, Doctor, as there are two economists I have heard about, and read their articles, who are quite important, who say it is workable. They are H. H. Sl. Miller of San Francisco, and Dr. Robert D. Doane, director of research of American Business Surveys of New York City.

It is not tragic at all, Doctor Schmidt, that millions of old folks are flocking to Townsend meetings with great faith and hope that the plan will be adopted. If the first place, they aren't all old; second place, hope and faith have made many of them years younger and with a will to live to put this plan into operation. And as to the certainty of their disappointment, we will see.

And now one more supposedly intelligent person has to be told that the transaction tax will not be levied on the national income, but on the turnover of the dollar by purchases and transactions. This in answer to the statement that "8,000,000 people eligible to the Townsend Plan would receive half the national income while the other 115,000,000 would have to divide the other half between them." Why, oh why, do they make such misstatements? Then, Dr. Schmidt says in order to raise the pension money, a tax amounting to $160 for every man, woman and child in the U. S. would have to be levied. How does any one come to that conclusion when we know a transaction tax is levied on purchases and transactions made and it will amount to each individual only in their capacity to spend or according to their income or salary. The rich people will pay more individually than the poor people, because they spend more and that is only just.

And Dr. Schmidt did not mention any of the savings the Townsend Plan would effect. For instance: all charitable organizations, federal, state, county, city, fraternal and private would be cut down to almost nothing. Just think of all the county poor farms all over the U. S. And the wiping out of the curse of such institutions where honest men and women must lose their citizenship when admitted would be a happy day. The saving in crime, and the burden lifted from the young people now supporting their parents. And the tax is not taken from the young people to pay the old peoples' pension at all. The younger men and women are simply paying an annuity insurance for their own old age. The pensioners will be paying out of their $200 a month also on all purchases. We are paying more right now in taxes than we will pay under the Townsend Plan and the aged are not getting it. The savings made by its operation will pay the whole cost. Not one cent will be taken from the treasury of the U. S.

The leaders of the Townsend movement have never contended that the eight million pensioners would leave eight million vacancies to younger people. We know there are not that many older people employed at the present time. Perhaps half of them are and even that will take up a big slack in unemployment; then the increased buying will start industry to such an extent that the rest will be taken care of. No, Dr. Schmidt, Townsend does not say he expects less work done because he would retire people over 60. There would be more work done. The younger people would be doing it at better wages because of more purchasing power and a demand for labor. We do not expect business or professional men and women in the higher brackets to take advantage of the Townsend pension, so their services will still be available.

As for saving an accumulation, we think the ambitions of most people are above and beyond the $2400 a year mark and they will still strive to be independent, but, as the first of your article states, so few acquire.

The beautiful part of the Townsend Plan is that when all the illusions of youth have faded, and we see we cannot attain the goal of our youthful ambitions, we will have, at least, a comfortable and honorable old age. We can pursue, perhaps, some of our secret ambitions, such as writing, music, art and the sciences, and last but not least can give more thought to the running of our government and help clean up the graft and patronage in politics.

Now please print this so your readers can hear a few facts from the other side of the question. We have friends in your town who are waiting to see this in print.

Thanking you kindly I am very truly yours,
A Townsendite who is not 60 years old,
Mrs. Mabel C. Dernbach.

Jots 'n Jest

Skunks are a favorite food among many Canadian Indian tribes, which practically proves that there is a little good in the worst of us.

* * *

The root of the Ethiopian n'gabrobwe bush, mixed with tobacco, will kill the smoker who takes more that three puffs, but even that can't compare to political handouts.

* * *

Each policeman in Chungking, China, must sign a bond by which he forfeits his life if caught accepting a bribe. Clever, these Chinese.

* * *

Great fires sometimes create clouds and enough rain to extinguish the blaze. With senators it's high winds which sometimes get them in a whirl.

Chop Talk

Housewife to tramp: Wouldn't you like a nice chop?

Tramp: What kind, ma'am, pork or wood?

YEAR OF THE BIG RAINBOW

THE "PONY ADDICT"

By DAVID R. INNES

He daily reads the racing sheet,
And pencils ponies thought to pay.
He thinks the races can be beat,
And lays it on the line each day.
He plays and plays the fickle nags,
Although he walks around in rags.
With hole-y shoes and trouser-bags—
It figures out that way!

He had a scheme to make it quick,
He knew the ropes to win the dough,
A "system" made to make a hick,
Of "books"—and knock 'em for a row!
A simple system, use your head,
And double back and forth, he said.
Thus many hungry nags are fed;
And so goes on the show!

He calls each pony by its name,
He knows their pedigrees—you bet!
But those he picks are always lame,
Or "mudders"—when the track ain't wet.
He calls them names of "dogs" and "goats,"
And swears, in time, to cut their throats,
But still contributes, "pony oats"—
Today I saw him bet!

(Copyright, 1936)

Happenings of Long Ago

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

FFTY YEARS AGO

Progressive euchre parties are all the rage.

Great revival of religious feeling in this village.

Fine oil paintings, 24 x 30, framed, for $1.25 at Corson & Co's. bazaar.

A nice fall of snow Monday night gave us a promise of a run of sleighing.

We will try and give a full report of the masquerade in next week's issue.

Our farmers and citizens are making preparations for securing the ice harvest.

Wonder why the new telegraph poles are not wired. Has the company become defunct.

Business is so good that Francis Roche is kept busy at the telephone looking for a cooper to make pork barrels.

Under the requirements of the new State law regarding druggists, Whitehead & Mitchell have their certificates as registered pharmacists neatly bound and publicly displayed according to law.

A great many of our citizens find fault because the regular proceedings of the common council are not published; that there is too much secrecy about the meetings, and as our sister villages all publish their proceedings, why not Birmingham?

—o—

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Burglars visited the old Birmingham Handle Co's plant last week and carried off some valuable tools. No clue.

It will soon be time to get busy in regard to the annual village election, which occurs the second Tuesday in March. The question of candidates is already being talked over, and a number of names have been mentioned, but it is a little bit early to make a slate.

Notwithstanding the bad weather, the K. P. dancing party last week was equal to the high place that these boys hold. Fifty two couples gathered together for a good time, and they had it, as only those who enjoy dancing know. The next event the K. P.'s feature will be a grand bal masque to be given sometime in February.

Oh you Fveddie! Mr. Fred Cressman, manager of the Oxford telephone exchange, with a lady friend, visited his old friends in town Sunday last. This certainly does look suspicious.

We are growing old and forgetful, is the only way we can explain why in our last issue we did not mention the farewell party given by Mrs. Trumbull of the Campbell subdivision in honor of Mrs. Augusta Denison, who is soon to leave Birmingham for a home in Albuquerque, N. M. A dozen ladies were entertained in a fine manner, and all present enjoyed a dainty supper served by the genial hostess, Mrs. Fred Trumbull.

—o—

FIVE YEARS AGO

President Harry Allen is preparing a reply to a communication from Melvin H. Lee, representative in the State Legislature from this district, in which he will outline the village's policy as to desired legislation during the present session at Lansing. Mr. Allen will advocate curtailment of state expenditures and oppose any new forms of taxation or any change that will increase the state taxes this year, it is expected.

Nominating petitions for an increasing number of candidates for the various offices to be contested at the primary election in Bloomfield, Troy and Southfield Townships are being circulated today, and the interest in the campaigns is consequently heightened.

Announcement is made today by Clarence Vliet superintendent of schools of the program arranged for the appreciation dinner to be given at the Community House at 6:30 p. m. today in honor of one of Birmingham's most worthy and respected citizens — Mr. John Bradshaw Howarth. The reception will precede the dinner, which is rescheduled for 7:30, with Charles J. Shain presiding.

My Country, 'Tis of Thee

By THEODORE H. MILLINGTON

Roosevelt Hesitates

President Roosevelt said in his recent speech that this time he would defer comment on the Supreme Court's devastating Knock-out blow to his New Deal schemes until he has "read every word of the language" of the decision. That is commendable restraint. However, the nation suffered no catastrophy following the court's adverse N. R. A. decision. On the contrary, the positive upswing in business dates from that happy event.

So, is the nation now supposed to suspend activities and with bated breath await the revelation of the President's oracular wisdom as he again may constitute himself the Super-Supreme Court? No! The nation is too busy trying to earn enough money to pay the taxes created by Mr. Roosevelt in his role of Super-Economic Idealist and world's greatest spender to care much what he thinks about the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court cannot be intimidated. The people know that another year of flying his economic kite won't wreck the nation. If the string to his kite is broken and his kite lost, the "Horse and Buggy" Constitution will take him back home.

Hope For Next November

Seven being a lucky number gives hope that Mr. Roosevelt and his Brain Trust would-be legislators may be on the road to oblivion by November 1936. So industry will not stop the time-clock. There are too many old shoes, old clothes, old machines, old automobiles, old buildings to be replaced to permit up take time off.

A friend mailed me the anonymous verse printed below which is so much to the point that the reader will enjoy it:

Tired

I'm tired, oh, so tired, of the whole new deal,
Of the juggler's smile and the barker's spiel,
Of the mushy speech and the loud bassoon,
Tiredest of all of our leader's croon,
I'm tired of the tax on my ham 'and eggs,
I'm tired of paying toll to political yeggs,
Tired of Jim Farley's stamps on my mail,
Tired of my shirt with it's tax shortened tail,
I'm tired of farmers goose stepping to laws,
Of million dollars of itching job-holders' paws,
Of fireside talks on commandeered mikes,
Of passing more laws to stimulate strikes,
I'm tired of the daily increasing debt,
I'm tired of promises not to be met,
Of eating and sleeping by government plan,
I'm tired of forgetting the forgotten man,
I'm tired of every new brain trust thought,
Of the ship of state turned into a yacht,
I'm tired of beating the courts by stealth,
And terribly tired of sharing the wealth.
I'm tired and bored with the whole new deal,
With its juggler's smile and its barker's spiel,
Oh, Lord, out of all thy available men,
Please grant us a Cleveland or a Coolidge again.

—Anonymous

IN JANUARY

This is the New Year.
Heedfully I tread
Its sparkling way
Lest I defile
Or mar its spotlessness.
Yet in a little while
If I should wage
A losing fight
And spoil this perfect page
I shall not sorrow overmuch
(Knowing that human impotence is such).
Remorse is futile—grieving all in vain.
I'll just begin again.

—Beatrice McDonald

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