The Birmingham Eccentric

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THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 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.

Do You Want to Pay Double Auto Insurance?

How would you like to pay as much as $285.05 each and every year to insure an automobile worth $600 or less?

This same car, insured in Michigan today, for the same amount of full coverage, costs $114.50—or, if you buy it on a 50-50 payment basis (wherein you pay the extra premium for damages over certain amounts, and thus get the insurance company to pay you), the cost is but $66.50.

The $285.05 premium, we understand, is the amount you would pay if you lived in the city of New York. The other figures are for Detroit.

The reason we make this comparison is simply because, unless Michigan motorists are more careful, they may find their automobile insurance costs soaring on a level near New York's.

Our information comes from an old line insurance company who, together with 55 other large national companies, reports that during 1934 they paid out the amount of $8,955,868 for damages to people alone; while in 1933 they out only $2,576,226. (How much the repeal of prohibition has played in this increase is not revealed as yet.)

The only way to keep insurance costs down to a minimum is for the average motorist to operate his "flying bullet" courteously—and that, generally, means safely.

Unnecessary carelessness with automobiles will result in added cost for insurance (not to mention the injuries and fatalities that will thus visit human beings), and this added cost tends to decrease the sale and use of motor cars—an evil situation for this area that depends so much upon the automobile business for a livelihood.

Says One Thing, Does Another

One of the most saddening things in our political life today is the spectacle of the politician who says one thing, and then promptly does another. It appears that these men lack a certain mental honesty both with themselves and with the voters who put them in their offices that does not argue well for the operation of our government.

Take for example the recent words, and contrasting actions, of Governor Frank D. Fitzgerald.

It was only a few weeks ago that the Governor made quite a commotion about putting all the state officials and workers, except a very few, under civil service rules. The Governor stated not once, but many times, that merit should govern the selection of heads of departments. He decried the spoils system, which puts men into positions of trust and power on account of their political affiliations instead of for what they know about their jobs. The Governor, at that time, was strongly in favor of civil service.

This past week he had a chance to demonstrate that he meant what he said, and he passed up the opportunity.

Rudolph E. Reichert, who for several years has been an excellent state banking commissioner, resigned to take a position with an Ann Arbor Bank. Under Mr. Reichert was a deputy commissioner named M. C. Taylor. Mr. Taylor started in the banking department about ten years ago as an assistant examiner. He became an examiner, and finally the chief examiner. Then he was advanced to the position of deputy commissioner. These promotions came to Mr. Taylor because he knew his job—not for the votes he could deliver. The fact of the matter is that Mr. Taylor never got into politics, because he was too busy doing the job for which he was hired.

During the bank holidays, and the closings which both preceded and followed them, Mr. Taylor did a good job. He worked long hours uncomplainingly, and earned the commendation of Mr. Reichert for his good work. Bankers all over Michigan know Mr. Taylor, and have confidence in his honesty and his judgment.

Under all the circumstances, and in view of the Governor's often expressed theory that the merit system was the proper one, Mr. Taylor would logically have been named to succeed Mr. Reichert. But he was not so named.

The Governor did not follow his own ideas. He appointed to the position Howard Lawrence, former state treasurer and now a receiver for two Saginaw banks. The Governor stressed the idea that Mr. Lawrence knew considerable about banking, and that therefore he would make a good commissioner. But what was not mentioned at any great length by the Governor was the fact that Mr. Lawrence is the chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, and a power in politics. The people of Michigan cannot be blamed if they feel that the Governor appointed Mr. Lawrence as much for his political strength as for his knowledge of the problems of banking.

Mr. Lawrence is a very pleasant and estimable gentleman who does have some knowledge of banking. We have no fault to find with him, unless he continues to hold both his banking department job and his position as head of the Republican state Central committee.

But we do find fault with Governor Fitzgerald, who says one thing and does another, and who passes over an experienced, capable man for a specialized job, in favor of one whose greatest claim to the job is that he can swing more votes.—Tuscola County Advertiser.

Will Our Country Accept A Substitute For NRA?

Will the people of the United States accept another NRA?

According to information we get from Washington, a bill soon may be introduced known as the "O'Mahoney Industry Licensing Bill," which will seek to regulate American industry through a system of political licensing.

What a weapon that would be in the hands of any political group—whether they be Democratic, Republican, or Communistic!

To a great degree, the frenzied activities of Washington bureaucrats to regulate our national economic life reminds us of a bevy of hospital internes who, when an epidemic comes upon the populace, try, simultaneously, every pill and potion, and every surgical operation they can think of. Some of them are honestly trying to cure the ailment, of course; but also some of them are performing postmortems upon the ailing body, as though it were a dead thing!

There can be no doubt about the fact that, economically, our nation and the whole world are far from enjoying complete health; in fact, at no time in the agricultural and industrial progress of mankind has it been without some form of ailment—but most of them have been growing pains, with the recurring malady of depression.

It seems to us that, while man may, and does, vision a Utopian state of economic health, this health cannot be obtained and maintained by any form of socialistic or communistic merging, while the individual remains unacquainted with the laws governing such desired health conditions.

The NRA, we grant, was a theoretical concept of national economic good health but, like prohibition, incapable of adoption and application and application by the present generation of human beings.

The State is no stronger, no wiser, no more characterful than the average of the individuals who constitute it. For that reason, it seems to us, any drift toward State control of all the economic forces of our civilization are doomed to collective failure. After all, there are some things worse than depressions under a democratic form of self-government (one of them is a Soviet effort toward productive control of agriculture or industry by a tyrannical bureaucracy—even though legislated in the name of social justice!

Newspaper Mistakes—

Errors in newspapers are frequent, though it is the goal of one and all who claim to be journalists to eradicate the disease of mistakes. An editorial in the Leigh, Nebraska World, published some time ago, expressed the situation and gives some advice which could be read over with profit every once in a while, both by newspaper folk and subscribers.

"Yes, newspapers make mistakes. There is no concealing the fact, because the errors themselves are spread where all the world may see them. But is there as much inaccuracy as people think? Probably not. Frank R. Kent of the Baltimore Sun, speaking at William and Mary College, makes a striking statement of the case, which may interest readers as well as interest newspermen. 'In no business and in no profession save that of the scientist,' he declares, 'is the premium of accuracy so high, the penalty for inaccuracy so prompt and the proportion of accuracy so great. There isn't a newspaperman anywhere who does not know that, trivial though his error may be, someone will catch it. Even when it escapes the watchful editorial gaze, even when no one in the office picks it up, even when he himself is unaware of it, there are still the old subscribers—thousands of them—vigilant, alert, aggressive, resentful, eager to put their finger on the "break," communicate with the editor and "show up" the writer, and the paper. These old subscribers, in my judgment, are by far the most valuable asset a newspaperman can have. Their militant, microscopic scrutiny is the finest possible corrective influence.'"

Spending $310 Per Second

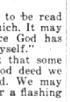
Forty-nine cents of every dollar appropriated for spending by the last Congress will have to be borrowed, and later paid in the form of taxes by the American people. Total funds appropriated during the last session amount to the staggering sum of $9,948,370,000. If all this is spent, it means that Uncle Sam is paying it out at the rate of

$27,256,000 per day;
$ 1,135,000 per hour;
$ 18,900 per minute;
$ 310 per second.

That's a great deal for any New Deal to spend, isn't it?

WE WONDER what form of political pills Democratic leaders will swallow in order to digest the discouraging returns given them by the Literary Digest poll of national sentiment regarding the New Deal.

Practical Paragraphs



By John Edwin Price

"GOD HAS WAITED 6000 YEARS"

In the front of the book Johannes Kepler, German astronomer wrote:

"The die is cast; the book is written, to be read either now or by posterity. I care not which. It may well wait a century for a reader, since God has waited 6000 years for an observer like myself."

How often have we deplored the fact that some strong stand we have taken or some good deed we have done wasn't noticed or appreciated. We may have said so but we felt it if only for a flashing moment.

Doesn't that lend significance to Kepler's statement "God has waited 6000 years?"

I am not insulting you in this, but once in a while I get absolutely disgusted with some people because they won't take a personal interest in this or that local problem which I think of consummate importance. I feel that someone ought to point out to them in no uncertain terms that they are community slackers.

Then something inside says, "Easy now! Were you always conscious of this need? Would you have been won to the cause had someone tried to ram the idea down your throat?" Then I think of the gentle approaches to my mind which were made from time to time by different books, people and situations until I finally came to adopt the principle or cause as my own, yes almost thinking myself a pioneer in it.

Most adults, I believe are *won* to a cause, not drafted. To be sure an occasional jolt will sometimes be very effective in jarring people from some false or lethargic position. But the one who does the jarring seldom sees the desired change come.

John the Baptist was a thundering denouncer. Jesus had a program and used many ways to win people to it. The force of his gentle winsomeness is still changing lives and the social order.

Does it pay to do what we can? Yes, remembering what Kepler said about God waiting 6,000 years.

MARCH CAME IN LIKE A LION, ALL RIGHT

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

By T. H. MILLINGTON

American Standard of Living

What is the American standard of living, anyway?

The word "standard" when used in this connection ought to have some definite meaning, but the "American standard" seems to mean whatever the speaker has in his or her own mind. It seems to be one of those things where you cannot add the highest and lowest figures together, divide by two and make the average the answer. What I mean by it is, that any figures of costs taken from tables of statistics on this subject do not make sense; because no statistician can know the cost of anybody's living but his own, and if he knows that he is luckier than most of us.

T. H. MILLINGTON

Is the American standard just living, or is it "the more abundant life?" And what is the "more abundant" life? Contemptuously one says it is more than just a mere living. But what is meant by "a mere living?" One man's idea of a mere living would seem luxury to another. I have known men who got married on $65.00 a month who raised a fine family and sent the children through high school. I have known families with $200.00 per month who couldn't pay their bills and could not send their children even as far as high school; and again others on the same salary who could do all of that and save some money for investment besides.

Nevertheless, despite this utter lack of information and lack of agreement and consent as to ideas of standard, the political candidate in an election year will fill the air with promises of an "American standard" for everybody. Every listener immediately applauds, because in his own fancy he sees the realization of his own ideas of a standard, and so becomes for that candidate—never realizing that no politician by spending government money can alter any standard of living for anybody, excepting through his ability to distribute jobs and grafts, and that is limited to his intimates.

Now there is something about this "standard" stuff when applied to other things. For example, standard time, or a yardstick, or weights, guage of railway tracks, size of railway cars, etc. Each represents something definite, so established by agreement in order to avoid argument and confusion. But there exists no such agreement in the matter of what is or shall be a standard of living. One family may need only one bedroom but a two-car garage, while another must have five bedrooms and no garage. The same discrepancies exist in food, clothing, entertainment, education, recreation and leisure. **There is no American standard.** Imagine two bushel baskets side by side, one painted some gay color and the other unpossessed human emotion: it would feel superior to the unpainted one, and equally the unpainted basket might have an inferiority complex and feel discriminated against. But they are simply bushel baskets, equally useful for their one purpose—to contain a bushel of something.

Some people have champagne appetites and beer incomes, and that goes for most of us, while others have beer standards on champagne incomes. A man is entitled to a standard he can pay for, but aside from a mere existence, I doubt if we have a right to anything more if we cannot pay for it. A man's style of living not fully paid for by himself is paid for by others, usually without the others' consent. That may be all right for the receiver, but it is tough on the fellow who has to pay.

Now let us suppose the American people would determine that the American standard is what we can pay for and no more, and decide definitely to live within it and not go into debt for anything.

One effect would be greatly to reduce the cost of living; because the enormous cost of credits—debts, borrowed money and losses thereon to our creditors—would make the cost of doing business less.

For example: Recent publications of figures of the cost of credit-buying of automobiles, refrigerators, electric stoves, radios, etc., showed the increase of cost to the buyer to be from 15 to 60%. That percentage of increase, of course, goes to the creditors and is added to the cost of the buyers' living. In other words, the eagerness to get things and conveniences before possessing ability to pay cash for them increases the cost of them, and therefore the total of living, to a considerable degree. For example: Having all cash for building a house would eliminate cost of financing, and would reduce cost of house from 15% to 40% automobiles 10% to 25%. A mortgage, (which is nothing but borrowed money) of $5,000.00 on a house, adds an annual interest of $300.00 besides the fees and commissions for getting. That $300.00 a year about equals the cost of raising a child. If after paying the mortgage interest there is not enough to pay the cost of bringing up a child, then it becomes necessary either to stop increase of population or go into permanent debt.

The same rule applies to every other item of debt incurred in order to "keep up with the Jones" instead of waiting until money would accumulate to pay cash.

But, you say, "if everybody did that it would cause more unemployment." Suppose it would. The present depression and unemployment is the result of unpaid debts—the so-called "debt load" over which politicians shed crocodile tears. It must be true that if everybody paid cash for what they could buy there could be no depression. Or put it this way:

If we, all of us, had paid our debts, there would have been no depression, the banks would not have failed and there would have been no unemployment. Spartan, you say. Well, think it over.

The "**American standard of living**" seems to be to get everything we want whether we can pay for it or not.

If all the population which lives by the interest received from debts had to put their money into productive enterprize instead of chiseling interest from the incomes of the rest of us, cost of goods would come down, more goods would be bought and more labor employed, and merchants would not have to go out of business because their customers do not pay their bills.

"Uneasy lies the head" that lives beyond its means.

If it is impossible to make a living now because of uneven distribution of profits, get serious about politics and put the right men into office!

Voyageur

Visitor—"How far is it to Washington?"

Native—"Wa'al, I don't rightly know, but I'll call Enh. Enh'll know. He's traveled all over. He's got shoes."—Windsor Daily Star.

A LITTLE PAT

Somehow, when all the world goes wrong,
(And worlds so often do just that)
A kindly word, a little pat
Sustains us in the dull dark hour,
Helps us to bear the galling pain
Till the dread hour passes;
And once again
We walk with lifted head
And firm sure tread.
Then, as Life gathers up the broken threads,
Time builds a little bridge between
Now and the hour of care
And we can bear
The march of countless days and nights,
That slowly widen the bridge's span;
But evermore we will remember
that
Tender kindly word and gentle pat.

—Beatrice McDonald.

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.

To the Editor:

There has been a very slight response among people to recent explanations from Washington telling why more taxes will be good for us. The audience understands fully why more taxes are necessary, due to increased governmental expenses.

It is proposed to tax the savings accumulated by the business corporations. Certainly, there would be an end to all savings if expenses are not under control.

There is no end, however, to the proposals for new taxes, if office holders are encouraged to continue spending. Neither is there an end to waste, if office holders are without responsibility.

YOUNG C. SMITH,
460 Pierce Street.

The Other Chap Says-

"JUST THINKS"

Drive carefully and keep an eye on the other fool.

About the only difference between going off the dole and onto the WPA is that those who leaned on lamp posts can lean on shovel handles.

It's funny how many married men are the winners in the Biggest Liars—contests.

If you intend to stop drinking whiskey do it young. It gives you more time to brag about it.

Marry in haste and repent in Reno.

Here's one the government hasn't thought of: Two dollar tax on birthdays.

The only ship that comes to a man who sits down and waits is a receivership.—American Builder.

Writer thinks college should prepare young boys and girls for the problems of marriage. A course in boxing is suggested.

Just sitting here wondering what became of the garters the girls used to wear.

If you don't think women can endure more pain than men ask the shoe salesmen.

The CCC takes care of the young bucks and the Townsend plan ought to make it possible for the old folks to get along. Now if some one will only fix up something for those of us between 20 and 60, we'll let the kindergarten take care of the country.—Bellevue Gazette.—George Shaw in Pigeon Progress.

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.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

E. C. Poppleton is doing the wilds of Missouri on a visit combining business and pleasure.

William Young makes his bow to the public as auctioneer and veterinary surgeon, in which lines he has had many years of experience, and offers his services at reasonable rates. All wishing an auctioneer should see Mr. Young.

On Monday, March 15, Mrs. C. T. Lockwood will repeat her popular play, "Kathleen," at the roller rink in this village. A stage 30 by 40 will be erected, and a really magnificent entertainment may be expected. Everybody invited to come and have a jolly good time.

Here is something too good to keep: The day of the village election one of our gray haired and deeply venerated citizens was accidentally discovered back of J. R. Logan's wood-shop, and on being asked why he was there in such an out-of-the-way place, he said "Well, I'll tell you, there are times when I have to go off alone by myself and swear to my heart's content, and this is the time. Why, my dear Sir, would you believe it, today I've been asked to vote a ticket, that, should it be elected, there wouldn't be enough life in town to make a flea jump out of the sand in July?"

—o—

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Women don't forget to register next Saturday at council rooms, library building, so you can vote on the sewer question next Monday. Be certain that your full name is given, and that it is correctly spelled. Neither men nor women are compelled to give their ages when registering, beyond the statement that they are over 21.

President Daines wants it to be distinctly understood that the sewer to be built for Birmingham, if the vote carries, will take care of all cellars, sings, laundry tubs, and give you every convenience that one can get from a Detroit sewer if they lived there. The surface water, caused by rainfall, is now abundantly cared for by the sewer all ready established.

Don't fail to cast your eye on the financial statement of this village. Under President Daines' regime, he has seen paid off a debt of $2,000 a former board had left behind. On the water works bonded indebtedness, he has paid $5,000, besides $1,500 due for water extensions in the Randall sub-division. Other bills have been paid for repairs and additions to municipal buildings amounting to $1,500 and still have in the treasury over $2,000.

Another thing that causes wild and excitable turmoil around the D. U. R. barn is that new mustache that Tim Callahan is bound to raise.

Every woman should own her hair, even though she has to pay for it.

—o—

FIVE YEARS AGO

Official sanction of the proposed 200 foot width for Wider Woodward avenue through Birmingham over the old Grand Trunk Railroad right-of-way with additional approval of the village's proposed grade separation at East Maple avenue, and the new Wider Woodward was given yesterday afternoon at Lansing at a meeting of State Highway officials with members of the village commission, the planning commission and other village officials.

Birmingham's electorate Monday upset the general political expectations by casting the greatest number of votes for Frank L. Packard, for the Village Commission, and giving Miss Irene Hanley a 166 majority over Mrs. Myrtle E. Carson, for village clerk, in an election that attracted a much larger poll than was anticipated, 1,291 ballots being cast.

Opponents of capital punishment will meet at the home of Mrs. George T. Hendrie, 359 Willits street, at 3:30 p. m. next Monday at the first of a series of organization meetings to fight the Foster Capital Punishment bill, when it is submitted to the voters on April 6.

WASHINGTON LETTER

By SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ADMINISTRATION OF RELIEF FUNDS NOW BECOMES MAIN CAMPAIGN ISSUE

WASHINGTON.—Eight months before election, the biggest issue of the presidential campaign is relief—with its close relation to budget balancing, taxation, continued unemployment, and recovery. The Constitution issue, the dictatorship and regimentation issues, and the "Socialistic" issue have, for the time being at least, begun to fade.

Republicans already are hammering away at the administration of relief. They charge that it is inefficient, extravagant and riddled with politics.

Young Senator Rush Holt of West Virginia (a Democrat, by the way) asserts that the WPA program in his state is being used to build up a personal political machine. Gov. Alf M. Landon of Kansas, G. O. P. presidential candidate, accuses the administration of wrecking the relief program by "confusion, contradiction, delay, and miserable party politics." Senator Arthur Vandenberg says he has proof that relief clients in Pennsylvania are being assessed for political contributions by local Democratic organizations. You will be hearing many more stories like these between now and election.

* * *

The natural tendency of politicians, when their party is in power, to use funds at their command for partisan purposes easily might turn the four billion dollar relief appropriation into a boomerang for the national administration.

Along with the attack on relief waste, Republican leaders are denouncing the unbalanced federal budget. Much is being said about the alleged broken campaign pledges of the 1932 Democratic platform, especially the one promising a 25 per cent reduction in cost of federal government.

Postmaster General Farley has replied to the Hendrie, 359 Willits street, at 3:30 p. m. next Monday at the first of a series of organization meetings to fight the Foster Capital Punishment bill, when it is submitted to the voters on April 6.

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Mr. Roosevelt is making efforts to appear as a budget balancer. He has let expected to try to show that rising federal revenues and a declining relief load, due to business improvement, will wipe out the annual deficit. He also is determined to force Congress to provide additional taxes to pay for any extra appropriations.

The Democratic leadership also will rely heavily on the positive legislative reforms put on the books. The Social Security Act, insurance of bank deposits, regulation of the stock exchange, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, the Wagner Labor Relations Act and the Guffey Coal Act, will be used as bids for a vote of confidence.

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