

The Birmingham Eccentric

Published every Thursday at Birmingham, Mich. In The Eccentric Building, 200 North ... Telephone 11, 12, 13, and 14

Subscription Rates (In Oklahoma County) One Year \$2.50 Six Months \$1.50 Three Months \$1.00

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

THURSDAY, MAY 28, 1946

NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have news value and which are of interest to the community...

To Whom It May Concern—

By G. E. SPARKS ... Father of Forest Springs who died in St. John Friday, May 17th. The fifth boy to die as a result of car driving while under the influence of alcohol...

"I wish every boy and girl who drives recklessly could suffer as Forest is suffering—for JUST ONE HOUR. Forest will suffer for days, weeks and months. If he lives he will be crippled for life."

"No, I am not bitter at young folks. I don't want you to think I'm cruel—but, if they could suffer the HOUR Forest is going through for JUST ONE HOUR, never again would they endanger their own lives and the lives of others."

"For nineteen years his mother and I have looked after him, hoped for him—did everything we could to help him prepare himself for manhood."

"Now look. There he lies with both legs broken and splintered. One ankle is literally crushed. There's a great cut on his head. The nurse says he is deaf in one ear—probably due to concussion."

"We stepped to room No. 312. The boy in his fourth day seemed to be muddled. A nurse was at his side. His face was discolored and a bandage covered part of his head. The father clenched his teeth and swallowed hard. We stepped out."

"Four of the boys who were in that car are dead—DEAD, I tell you. They are gone. They can't think what happened. They can't know it all—they know their folks are terrible."

"One of the two boys who were not hurt told me that Forest kept warning the driver to stop racing. Forest has never been reckless. He told his grandmother that morning that he did not want to make that trip to East Lansing. He seemed to have a dread that something might happen."

"You can tell the fathers and mothers who read your newspaper for me that they have a responsibility in letting their boys and girls drive cars recklessly."

"Yes, and another thing—when the faculty of a school starts a bunch of young boys out on the highway in a car together to attend some school project, they HAVE A SHARE IN THE RESPONSIBILITY."

"I don't believe they have a RIGHT to take that chance."

"I don't want to be unfair. I want to think sanely about this thing, but I tell you when I see MY boy lying there all broken and crushed, I cannot help but think, THINK—AND PRAY."

Legislative Progress

While Michigan does face many difficult problems, one of them relating to taxation, it is refreshing to learn that—even during Legislative sessions—men are going about the business of trying to solve some of them.

In fact, you recall that there now exists what is known as a Legislative Committee on the part of members of both the Michigan Senate and House. This body's job, between sessions, is to investigate and suggest solutions for problems that may be troubling the Commonwealth. Chief among current problems is the one of delinquent taxes.

Recently, an important member of the Council talked here in Birmingham on the subject of tax delinquency. One of the interesting statements he made was this: "Michigan must create laws that will govern the plating of new subdivisions, to the end that such land must prove its right to be placed upon the market, and thus assist in controlling future special and general tax assessment burdens."

This suggestion is, in the light of past uncontrolled speculation in subdivision lands, a tremendous step forward by government in the conservation of the whole people's investments. Indeed, the correct control of subdivision lands is just as necessary to investors, and to the whole taxpaying public, as the regulation of any stock or bond issue.

Birmingham and Oakland County, as well as many other sections of Michigan, offer real estate today of the need for such land control, in Birmingham, alone, 70 per cent of our area is vacant, and it makes up 23 per cent of our local tax delinquency. The same approximate ratio of unimproved to improved land exists in other tax delinquent areas, and in many of them even worse off. Mr. Brown pointed out, in his talk here, that many areas have a public debt in excess of the present assessed valuation available for tax revenue purposes.

When one really stops to think about it, one must almost shudder at the recollection of the speculative orgy in land that swept over the entire nation during the late Twenties. Such speculation is like war—the whole community suffers when the toll is reckoned up in the cold, gray dawn of "the morning after."

Let us hope that the next session of Michigan's Legislature really passes a law governing the future subdividing of vacant property.

"Help Real Estate," Is Cry

There was a time when real estate was a reasonable measure of a person's obligation to the government and his ability to pay taxes. That has passed. Indeed, since 1929 the constant cry has been to relieve real estate of some of its great burden.

So, in Michigan and some other states, we slipped on the sales tax. It seemed pretty fair, but everybody who thinks about it a minute realizes that it soaks the poor man too hard. Since it is easy to figure and easy to collect we keep it.

We are still trying to ease the load on real estate. Yet how can we pretend to think about real estate when we don't know what it is. We have lumped into the sloppy term "real estate" two things that are entirely distinct. Each requires different treatment.

One is the land and the natural resources God gave us. The other include the buildings and other products of labor, which man has added. To group these two together under the same head is stupid and confusing.

When a man builds a house, he has put forth some definite effort and is entitled to enjoy the fruits of it. If, in modern life, he works at other jobs and expects the same thing for his real estate, that is all right, that is the same thing. Ownership of homes and of the necessary business and industrial structures should be encouraged.

But when it comes to taxation, we should distinguish clearly between the land and the buildings that each pays \$100 for the land, a fair price. In 10 years one city boom, the other languishes. One man's lot has become worth \$10,000. The other's is still worth \$300.

What has the owner of the \$10,000 lot done to increase the value of his property? Not a thing; simply held on. This great increase in value has come because other men have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in buildings in that vicinity. The efforts of others have increased the value of the vacant lot. The community has created the added value. Isn't the community entitled to it?

Under the system we have followed, it has been considered the right, honest, or an individual to take this value which the community has created, for he can have no criticism of those who have done this, for it has been strictly according to the rules. There was enough land so that everybody could get some, at least enough to live on. If others were forgotten, entering and thriving enough to buy other land ahead of the development of the community, it was all right.

Perhaps the time has now come to exchange our thinking about this matter. Especially when we see ourselves deluged with taxes from all sides. It has been our theory that taxes should be assessed (a) according to the benefits received, and (b) according to the ability to pay. Let us see if we can find a way that somebody is thinking.

In printing the letter I have given to your committee and to the more important points, and I have answered this comment categorically. Following the correspondent's letter.

Dear Mr. Millington: May 18, 1946. Permit me to congratulate you on your series of articles appearing in the Eccentric of May 17th. I like them because of their honesty and thought. If I never agree wholly with each article, I will agree with you.

In your article of April 23rd you allow me to express objection to some of your conclusions and to my own philosophy of political economy. (1) To begin with, whether with what Pres. Roosevelt wants or doesn't want. That which he says he wants, most likely is what he doesn't want. And vice versa.

(2) I don't believe in the political fight and take your quotations from industry's spokesmen, coming correct when they say that they are employed by 22-25 million. Then when they say that they are unemployed, come from and of there is no larger number who are supposed to be unemployed.

(3) I'll agree that the so-called billions of dollars being thrown in water by the government are not being put to use. How much I'll agree that many adults, who take their world and everything that is fine and good in it as a matter of fact, as though it was quite natural that God should give them everything.

Unappreciative of the countless blessings that are ours, failing to give daily thanks for the loveliness and the abundance of the world about us, is it any wonder that a world of adults should get into deep trouble? Is it any wonder that, from the womb of adult selfishness and self-interest, we should give birth to a great many varieties of human problems?

Seems to me that grown-ups will never "come into the Kingdom of Heaven" on earth until they learn to appreciate the heaven that exists so much abundantly in the outside world of nature, but in the many fine acts that many, many human beings are making every day to one another.

You'll Get Yours

The above title is in a tone of vindictiveness. People generally hold that a man reaps as he sows in the sense that wrong doing yields, sometimes—suffering. The late John Burroughs emphasized the truth. In two of his stanzas under the title of "Waiting," he says: "I care not for my hands and wait, Nor care I for my feet, nor of, or tide, or sea; I have no more gainst Time or Fate, For, lo! my own shall come to me."

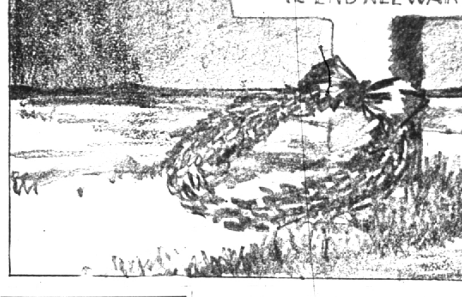
The stars come nightly to the sky; The tidal wave, nor the sea; Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high, Can keep my own away from me. The rewards, the prizes that are due some men are, in this particular chunk or segment of eternity, never received by them. But in millions of cases they do reap when they have sown and in proportion to their faith and works.

CLOUDY MEMORIAL DAY

THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE OF BENEVOLENCE IS UNDENIABLY RESPONSIBLE



THOSE WHO DIED TO END ALL WARS



My Country, 'Tis of Thee

By THEODORE H. MILLINGTON A letter of friendly criticism on my April 20th column is printed below. It is very gratifying to receive comment, even if unfavorable, because it is an evidence that somebody is thinking.

In printing the letter I have given to your committee and to the more important points, and I have answered this comment categorically. Following the correspondent's letter.

Dear Mr. Millington: May 18, 1946. Permit me to congratulate you on your series of articles appearing in the Eccentric of May 17th. I like them because of their honesty and thought. If I never agree wholly with each article, I will agree with you.

In your article of April 23rd you allow me to express objection to some of your conclusions and to my own philosophy of political economy. (1) To begin with, whether with what Pres. Roosevelt wants or doesn't want. That which he says he wants, most likely is what he doesn't want. And vice versa.

(2) I don't believe in the political fight and take your quotations from industry's spokesmen, coming correct when they say that they are employed by 22-25 million. Then when they say that they are unemployed, come from and of there is no larger number who are supposed to be unemployed.

(3) I'll agree that the so-called billions of dollars being thrown in water by the government are not being put to use. How much I'll agree that many adults, who take their world and everything that is fine and good in it as a matter of fact, as though it was quite natural that God should give them everything.

Unappreciative of the countless blessings that are ours, failing to give daily thanks for the loveliness and the abundance of the world about us, is it any wonder that a world of adults should get into deep trouble? Is it any wonder that, from the womb of adult selfishness and self-interest, we should give birth to a great many varieties of human problems?

Seems to me that grown-ups will never "come into the Kingdom of Heaven" on earth until they learn to appreciate the heaven that exists so much abundantly in the outside world of nature, but in the many fine acts that many, many human beings are making every day to one another.

People's Column

The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications for this column, but contributors will be asked to keep their letters brief. Letters must be typed, double-spaced, and must be accompanied by a return address. The Editor reserves the right to edit for clarity and brevity. The following are the letters received for this column.

Having witnessed the accident on the corner of Hennetta and Martin streets, Tuesday, May 25, I feel the need of appealing to the citizens and commissioners of Birmingham to have either the north and south or the east and west streets in the section north of Brown, east of Southfield and west of Woodbury, marked stop lines and the ordinance rigidly enforced.

The Other Chap Says ---

FOR A FREE PRESS Those who complain the supreme court is dictatorial will find the Louisiana newspaper cases Unanimously, the court held a tax imposed by the late Senator Long was "unconstitutional" in form and "deliberate and calculated device" to restrict the "circulation of information."

An attack on the newspapers is the first step of one who deems himself a dictator. One who would build a dictatorship. No one-man government can operate without a controlled press. The Louisiana cases are no exception. The newspapers exposed too much of Long's inner machinery. His answer was logical for his position. It was an attempt to end the freedom of the newspapers to discuss public affairs.

"A free press stands as one of the great interchanges between government and the people. To allow it to be fettered is to fetter ourselves."—Irons River Reporter. "Friend—Why? Father—He's too big and strong. I'd hate to have him run his physics by working."

WASHINGTON LETTER

'Boondoggling' Gets Debunking From a Statistics-laden Hopkins

WASHINGTON—Hostile members of the House appropriations committee came out strongly in their word battles with Harry Hopkins when the Works Progress Administration head appeared before the group as it considered the administration request for \$1,500,000 more for WPA. Reason for this was that Hopkins came armed with enough facts, figures, tables, and charts to slant his criticism thoroughly. The man the Republicans call "Chief Spender" had a large research and statistical staff to prepare answers for him. Anyone who wanted to check these answers would have needed similar facilities. Anti-New Dealers and opponents of Hopkins lacked such help.

Having witnessed the accident on the corner of Hennetta and Martin streets, Tuesday, May 25, I feel the need of appealing to the citizens and commissioners of Birmingham to have either the north and south or the east and west streets in the section north of Brown, east of Southfield and west of Woodbury, marked stop lines and the ordinance rigidly enforced.

I have had the privilege of living in Birmingham for many years and wish to see the streets made safe for our men, women and children. May some action be taken at once. Sincerely, An Interested Mother.

Under \$100,000 you misquote me. I did not write "or else," simply said "or," which makes the paragraph highly ambiguous. My substituting "and" for "or" in meaning becomes clear. I apologize for this piece of carelessness.

Yes, as to my use of the terms "Alpha" and "Omega," I really mean that. The idealists in Washington propose to bring about a "more abundant life," which I interpret to be an economic condition where everybody can meet his payroll and all other obligations.

I believe it is a great error not to enlist the aid of the practical business interests of the country, instead of making it appear as if crime that industrialists and not doubt nor politicians have ruined the country the richest in the world.

Identifying the causes of war and depressions by name and if naming them would establish a cure, I would let you name them anything you please. But it takes more than that to stop wars.

Yes, you are right. The Administration is trying its best, but at the end of three years of unprecedented governmental expenditures, the government's own statistics claim an increase of unemployment. Its aim was to create jobs, but the government's own figures it has been a complete failure. The Administration should let those who know how to do it, and leave them alone. Any fool can spend money—it takes ability to create jobs, to know how to do it, and money making to repay the billions so foolishly wasted by the Administration.

No, I do not understand Roosevelt's technique, neither does he himself, nor anybody else. I have not been trained in reputation for in paying for my own money. The government has the money. That training the American people will only accept at the price of unemployment.

And finally, in modern economic conditions, an indispensable adjunct to production is the consumer. The consumer is the one who pays for the goods produced. The consumer is the one who creates the demand for the goods produced. The consumer is the one who provides the incentive for the producer to produce more goods.

Love and Kinest. He'll always see the things on your lips, because I know that your lips have touched them. I mean the stamp on Fido's nose. It's always wet.

W. M. CORNELIUS FRANK COUZENS JAMES COUZENS

Random Remarks

William E. Borah, United States Senator from Idaho: "We now know that 25,000 families at the dizzy top of the economic ladder, enjoyed a greater income than 12,000,000 families at the foot of the ladder."

Charles Evans Hughes, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court: "The history of scholarship is a record of disagreements."

David Lloyd George, War Premier of Great Britain: "Private manufacture of armaments completely broke down in Japan."

William J. Cameron, Spokesman for Henry Ford: "The coming election presents fewer uncertainties than the last one did."

Harry Emerson Fackler, preacher: "It is hard to believe in God but it is far harder to believe in Him."

Edvard Beneš, President of Czechoslovakia: "We are no longer trying to build a new world. We are struggling desperately to save this one."

Harry F. Byrd, United States Senator from Virginia: "We must guard carefully against giving large corporations a greater advantage and perhaps a strange hand over their present smaller competitors."

AH M. Landon, Governor of Kansas: "The election will be decided by the people with moderate minds." Harold L. Davis, writer of Pulitzer Prize novel for 1935: "Writing is agony for me." Mrs. James Richard Smith, of California: "War is a dishonor to mothers because it hides cheaply the sons who are their fruit."

WABECK STATE BANK WABECK, BLDG. BIRMINGHAM, MICH. COMPLETE BANKING FACILITIES