The Birmingham Eccentric

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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 Know What Your "Crime Bill" Is?

One fine morning you may find in your mail a billet-doux from the state marked in bold red letters:

CRIME TAX

Notice to Citizens

The enclosed bill is for your share of this year's cost of crime, including the following items:

(1) The cost of maintaining all police activities.

(2) The cost of operating the criminal courts.

(3) The cost of supporting jails and reformatories.

(4) The cost of indemnifying the victims of crime.

The amount of this bill will stagger you. It will be your share of a national cost for crime that runs into billions of dollars per year. Estimates vary, for we have no comprehensive system of gathering criminal statistics throughout the nation. The Baumes Commission in 1928 put the annual crime cost (including many indirect losses) at $13,000,000,000. The Wickersham Commission three years later published figures covering many separate items, but declined to commit itself as to a total. It exceeded $15,000,000,000 in 1933, according to an experienced member of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

From these and similar reckonings it would appear that our annual crime bill amounts to somewhere between $100 and $120 for every man, woman and child in the United States * * * * *

The taxpayers already carry the cost of maintaining the police, the courts, and the jails as part of the general expense of government. But no one knows just how much they actually pay for the purpose. If we were each presented with a separate bill for our respective share of this expense, it would strike so poignantly at our pocketbooks that we should acquire a sudden and keen interest in the control and prevention of crime. There would be such a hurrying and scurrying in support of law enforcement such zeal in reporting lawlessness, such cooperation with the police in catching culprits, and such aid and comfort to courts and prosecutors, as were never before seen in these United States.

The effect would be even more galvanic if the cost of administrating the criminal law and the cost of compensating the victims of crime and the victims of the law's blunders were combined in one great levy and assessed in fair proportion against every corporation and individual, with a minimum to be paid in money or labor by every healthy adult.

The state would thus announce: "This is what crime costs, ladies and gentlemen! Here is your Crime Tax! Step right up and take your share!"—Mitchell Dawson in Atlantic Monthly.

Houdini Fails Here

Harry Houdini, the famous magician, made an agreement with his wife before he died that he would attempt to establish contact with her after he passed into the other world.

Since that time Mrs. Houdini has tried on various occasions to afford her deceased husband the opportunity to communicate with her but up to this time no message has come. Various persons have claimed to have been in communication but none have ever impressed the widow as being authentic.

"I want to hold the attempt in the open air so as many people as possible can be present," says Mrs. Houdini. "But I won't accept any message as authentic unless it comes to me."

For the past ten years, Mrs. Houdini says, a light has burned in Houdini's shrine at the Laurel Canyon home near Hollywood.

"But if Houdini does not answer at this one last seance there will be no need to keep the light burning longer," she states.

"October 31 is Halloween, and if a spirit won't come then, I don't think there's much chance it ever will," is her final conclusion on the subject.

Should Be Compensated

Gus Langley, of Morris Plains, N. J., was "ready to die" seven times, he asserts, in the North Carolina death house, where they shaved his head, before receiving news of the seven reprieves which gave him a chance to establish his innocence.

Last month Governor Hringhaus signed a full pardon for the man who faced death after being convicted of a murder that he did not commit. Parole Commissioner Gill approved a suggestion that the Legislature pay Langley for the time he spent in prison and it seems probable that legislation to this end will be passed.

The experience of this man bears out the suspicion that the verdicts of juries are not always what they are expected to be. It reminds us that our system of trial by jury is not infallible, even though we readily agree that it is, from the standpoint of the accused, the best in the world. Plainly the man in New Jersey is entitled to compensation from the State that subjected him to such punishment and there are others like him scattered throughout the United States who probably deserve the same treatment.

Some Day Postmasters Will Be Free From Politicians

Every once in a while a Congressman rises up to tell the truth. Such an occasion occurred in Cleveland, Ohio, the other day when Representative Robert Ramspeck, of Georgia, chairman of the Civil Service Committee in the House, told the National Association of Postmasters that "the Post Office appointment machine has been the backbone of the spoils system in every national administration."

The gentleman from Georgia spoke the truth. The fact is generally accepted today and was generally accepted in the administrations of Presidents Hoover, Coolidge and Harding. There is nothing political in the statement.

Another statement that the Georgian made is worth comment. He said "When first and second class postmasters are appointed, they never expect and the party in power never expects them to undertake to carry on their business of operating post offices seriously." This utterance, we believe, is also true and applicable to all recent administrations.

The evil complained of should be remedied. Our own suggestion would be the abolition of all postmasterships that are within the class mentioned by Rep. Ramspeck. This would save the government some money. It would also prevent any party from reaping political, or other advantage, by keeping its appointees in office.

There is, however, one serious objection to such procedure. It would place the post office business entirely in the hands of civil service employes. Some of these workers, confident in the security of their jobs, are rather careless of their attitude toward the public and, at times, a bit disdainful of the average citizen who patronizes their office. No political appointee would long tolerate gruff, apathetic and patronizing service to the public by workers enjoying a vested right to their jobs.

Taking it altogether, however, and with judicious safeguards, the public would probably benefit tremendously by the abolition of all political appointments in the postal service. One day it shall come about but when no one dares to prophesy.

Courtesy Pays

It is an interesting story coming from Virginia that Washington and Lee University will receive a bequest of $1,500,000 because at one time in the past an unknown student on the campus was very courteous and friendly to a visitor who at the time was unknown.

The visitor turned out to be a millionaire who was considering giving to some college the desirable sum of $1,500,000. To help decide which one would be the fortunate recipient the millionaire decided to pay an unannounced visit to each of several institutions. He was impressed by the courtesy of the undergraduate he met on the W. & L. campus, and when he died left the money to that institution.

Courtesy doesn't cost much, but it can pay big dividends. Even if the reward is not material, as in the above case, being thoughtful and considerate is worthwhile in other ways. It enriches the life of the man or woman who practices such courtesies in everyday life.

Shall Judges Be Appointed?

Again the plan to have Michigan judges appointed, rather than elected, is before the public mind, as members of the Michigan State Bar Association debate and vote in favor of the proposition. It is believed that such appointments, to last during a period of "good behavior," will "take the judges out of politics." There is no doubt but what such a plan could be made to work, providing the method of appointment itself is removed from politics.

All the public wants is assurance that the legal profession itself will lend more able and unselfish help in making such a plan possible. As matters exist today, the handling of justice in this country is centuries behind the way it ought to be handled; while we admire the lawyers for their desire to "take judges out of politics," we also suggest that they can do much to help the cause of justice by purging themselves of unethical practitioners.

Individuals Good And Bad

If an individual will collect all the bad things that he reads about ill-assorted members of the human race he will be convinced, no doubt, that men and women are going to the dogs and that there is no hope of salvation.

If the same individual will carefully collect all the good things that are published about men and women he will likewise come to the conclusion that, after all, the race is making progress and the future is apt to be better than the past ever hoped it would be.

The moral is that we should try to see both sides of all questions and keep faith in the ultimate triumph of right. Just now, in a befogged world, with many old standards under fire, the individual can rely upon the eternal worth of certain fundamental principles. The future may bring us new forms of government and new ways of living but it can do very little to change human nature.

Political Quackery

For a good many years we have been fairly close to the "inside workings" of politics, both in Michigan and nationally. We observe an increasing ability on the part of practical politicians to "pull the wool over the eyes of the voters," and an almost equal willingness on the part of the public to be so blindfolded. It's about as easy to win most elections as it is to make a commercial success with a quack corn cure, or a foolish plan to restore a baby's complexion to an old dowager.

EVERYBODY NOW KNOWS that President Roosevelt extremely dislikes the wealthy DuPont family of Delaware—the family supposed to be financing the American Liberty League. Yet news continues to filter out that, after the November election, the President's son, Franklin D., Jr., will marry the daughter of one of the DuPonts. Thus you observe how Dan Cupid, member of no one political party, obtains "followers" from every political party.

WHILE WE ADMIT that the present mounting federal debt is going to be a burden, we fail to agree with those who think the U. S. about to go into bankruptcy. Our nation can stand its present debt, and more, too; the real alarming phase of the situation, however, is the fact that so much of the money is being handled on a political basis. The electorate is being "corrupted" by governmental expenditures.

My Country, 'Tis of Thee

T. H. Millington

Beer, Booze, and Bunkum

Poor John Barleycorn! The old fellow wept salty tears, and his close friends connived to gain legal admission for him wherever he could. We welcome, at the 1932 election. There were many claims made as to the wealth he would produce if our Uncle Sam, and the revenues he would bring. It was claimed that it might amount to billions, where from 200 to 600 million dollars. And John Barleycorn made good, once he was admitted. Just how much I do not have the record to show, and the Administration does not advertise, but it must have been plenty, both for Uncle Sam and for a lot of breweries, distilleries, stores, etc. He has given employment to many thousands of people, and paid a lot of rent for stores formerly empty, and built a great many new ones.

T. H. MILLINGTON

And just think what a nice old boy he is! Where formerly a woman seen in his places of business was never considered a lady, look at his places now! They are full of ladies—at any event, they look like ladies.

And then, he has provided such cute little seats and tables built solidly into the bar, so even if a patron should fall off the chair, he cannot knock over either chair or table. Then too, sitting down one can enjoy John much, much longer than standing, or trying to stand, up to the bar, as in the days of sawdust and cuspidors as big as a washtub.

Oh yes, John made good! But he gets no credit for it from Candidate Roosevelt. During the 1932 campaign Mr. Roosevelt said that these estimated revenues, plus the 25% reduction in government expenses which he promised to cut off from that heinously unbalanced budget which Hoover had built up, were going to balance the budget. Oh yes! Believe it or not, John Barleycorn was very important in that campaign, and Candidate Roosevelt travelled chumily with him all over the country.

But now John Barleycorn is the Forgotten Man. He is not given credit for a thing by any spellbinder. It is all High Hat now—the "New Instruments of Governmental Power," the "Planned Economy," the "Devalued Dollar," the "Commodity Dollar," the "Social Security," the "More Abundant Life," and all the other rabbits the New Deal has conjured up, pulled out of his hat. These get the credit.

Of course, there are a great many voters "all hot up" over Mr. Roosevelt's Social Security baby, especially among the drys and the church people, who did not approve of him in 1932, and whom Candidate Roosevelt would not offend by mentioning his old friend Barleycorn and so alienate them right now, just before election—by reminding them that he arrived in Washington by the very powerful aid of John Barleycorn, beer and booze! Well, maybe John doesn't care. He is used to beer, booze and bunk, and what that combination will do. In this case, Mr. Roosevelt, instead of balancing the budget, budged the balance—askew beyond repair, he fears.

In Mr. Roosevelt's recent Pittsburgh speech he reminded his hearers that when he took office the national income was 58 billion dollars, and that this year it will be about 64 billions. He took full credit for that—in fact, "We planned it that way," is his favorite way of putting it. But no mention of any debt to the three B's. Oh, no!

Business Better! Who Pays?

Some of us can still figure, although the word "billion" sounds one-half "bills." Remember, 58 billions in 1932 were 100-cent dollars, and the 1936 billions are 50-cent dollars. That is a difference of 41 billions off the 64 billions, it leaves you 38 billions. Just back where we started, despite Barleycorn. I wonder where we would have been without Barleycorn!

I was looking up the average retail meat prices the last week before Roosevelt took office in 1933, comparing them with prices today, and here they are:

Steak	16c now,	33c
Pork loin	14c now,	28c
Leg of lamb	16c now,	32c
Hamburger	10c now,	22c

This is enough to show the increase in the cost of meat. It has not been increased as much in other foods, but the whole cost of living, including rents, has gone up.

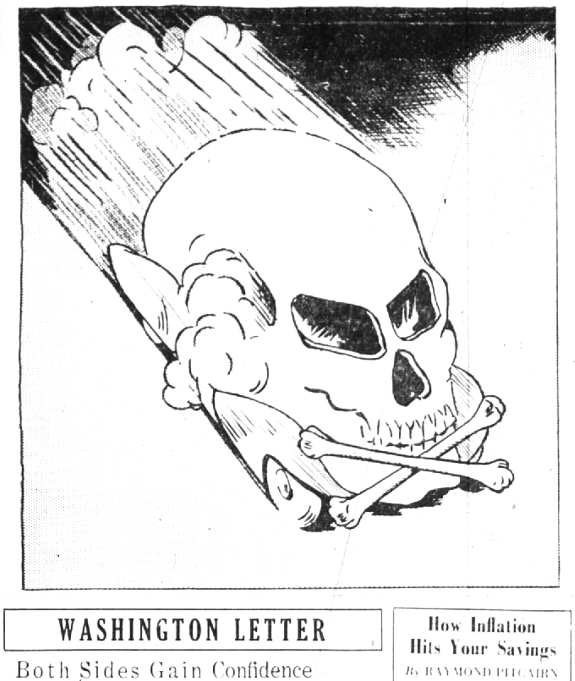
The prices paid in 1933 were 100-cent dollars, while now they are 50-cent dollars. BUT — and "there's the rub,"—salaries are very nearly the same now as in 1933. Jack is getting $25.00 then gets about the same now. However, what he got in 1933 were **100-cent dollars**, and it took fewer of them to buy the same things, and that left him a margin. This increase in prices will go still higher with the devaluation of the dollar unit gold value, and if Candidate Roosevelt planned it that way, it will be tough on the salaried man.

Goosefish

Kathryn—Mr. Quotit paid me a high compliment. He said I reminded him of the song, "Annie Laurie."

Kittye—Hm! "Her throat is like the swan." Just think of a swan's throat picked bare.

STREAMLINING—1936



WASHINGTON LETTER

Both Sides Gain Confidence by 'Viewing' From Own Angles

BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON—With election only a month away, both Democrats and Republicans are increasingly confident. Professional betting on the outcome of the election has probably buoyed up Democratic assurance. Betting odds are 7 to 5 or 8 to 5 on Roosevelt, but these will most certainly be lengthened or shortened before election.

Republicans have taken courage from the Maine vote and from the Michigan and Massachusetts primaries. They expect results from the psychological effect of the Literary Digest poll, and the Hearst finger-pointing at the radicalism of some Roosevelt supporters.

The president has been helped politically by his "non-political" maneuvers to keep himself in the public eye. Privately the Republicans deplore this, but hope that Roosevelt will outsmart himself with his admittedly "smart politics."

• • •

DEMOCRATS feel certain the president is doing a good job of October campaigning, and that when he gives attention in political speeches to denying Republican charges of New Deal waste, increased debts and taxes he proves himself a more effective campaigner than ever before.

Politicians at both Republican and Democratic headquarters are looking to the "Red" issue in this campaign. New Dealers privately say this has been more damaging to them than anything else, particularly with Roman Catholic voters.

The sore spot at the moment is that President David Dubinsky of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union, which sent funds to the republican-worker forces in Spain, is a Roosevelt elector in New York state on both the Democratic and American Labor Party tickets. Some of the Democratic leaders would have more peace of mind if they could get Dubinsky off the ticket.

But it's too late now and Roosevelt could hardly risk losing the labor support such action might bring.

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REPUBLICANS are trying to convince Roman Catholics that the implications of New Deal philosophy threaten independence of parochial schools. Many Democrats feel the president's answer to a "certain notorious publisher" was a blunder and only succeeded in giving first page prominence to the answer Hearst made.

In this last sprint of the campaign, the Democrats are hard pressed for funds, while the Republican machine seems to have plenty of money. The Democrats are praying for a rush of late contributions, if or when it appears fairly certain that they're going to win the election.

RANDOM REMARKS

James B. Conant, president, Harvard University:

"We have only scratched the surface of our interpretation of man's history and culture."

Newton D. Baker, war time Secretary of War:

"I am convinced that our entry into the war was caused directly and solely by the German use of the submarine."

Maud Ballington Booth, welfare worker:

"I believe in long engagements, so that young couples can get really acquainted with each other before the final serious step in their lives."

Leon Blum, Premier of France:

"Democracy, which rests upon order and which imposes order upon the thoughtful will of the greatest number, is certainly to anarchy."

Adolf Hitler, German Chancellor:

"We are forced to consider Bolshevism as our mortal enemy."

John Masefield, Poet Laureate of England:

"You can only have great art when you give great encouragement."

Franklin D. Roosevelt, President:

"I believe profoundly in the efficacy of religion and welfare recovery as basic to any permanent program of industrial and social recovery."

Ray Murphy, National Commander, American Legion:

"The World War was won on the military front, but is has been lost on the diplomatic front."

Henry H. Woodring, acting Secretary of War:

"Peace is a blessing, too precious to be bartered away on the spinning-wheel of international diplomacy."

Helen Jones, British girl visiting in this country:

"You Americans don't eat enough."

Dr. Frederic S. Fleming, New York clergyman, who advocates a moratorium on preaching:

"People are not interested in the drivel expounded by most of our clergymen."

August Vollmer, professor, University of California:

"Public opinion, in this country, with respect to the police, is almost disastrously ignorant."

ENIGMA

What does it matter, after all,
If I keep my grass cut short and
clean,
What grows there, up close to the
sod?
Does anyone know but myself and
God?
If the weeds grow thick and my
grass looks fall,
Do I need to grieve, and sweat to
pull the weeds?

If I tend my lawn, so it's fresh
and green,
And keep my grass cut short and
clean,
My crop of weeds will never be
seen.
Can people see weeds that grow in
a heart,
A heart that's all covered over,
Rank, vile weeds that are cropped
off short?

Oh, I think I'll plow my patch of
lawn
And sow it again—to clover.

Beatrice McDonald.

Electrician—Wire your home, madam?

Lady (indignantly)—Well, [illegible]

How Inflation Hits Your Savings

By RAYMOND PITCAIRN

National Chairman Sentinels of the Republic

"The very man who has the deepest interest in sound currency is the man who earns his daily bread by his daily toil."

Daniel Webster said that nearly a century ago. His statement was true in his time, it was true years earlier, and it is true today.

France proved its verity as early as 1926. With currency inflation forced workers and salaries to pay the equivalent of $9 for a pound of bread and of $40 for a bushel of potatoes.

Germany proved it shortly after the World War when inflation wiped out utterly the average worker's savings, and skyrocketed the prices of everything save the barest necessities of life far beyond his reach.

Russia proved it when her revolutionary leaders used inflation to help drag every worker down to a state of regimented and dependent poverty.

In every instance currency inflation hurt the worker and helped the speculator. Always it crushes the thrifty and exalts the gambler. How?

It achieves this effect not by reducing the number of dollars in the earner's pay-envelope or savings account or insurance estate, but by reducing the actual purchasing power of those dollars.

It means that out of the same income—or savings—he must pay far more for food and clothes and shelter and everything else he buys.

That's fine for the well-heeled speculator who profits by buying in a low market and selling at inflated prices. **But it's hard on the worker—or on his widow and children if he has entrusted their future to insurance or savings funds accounts, as most American wage-earners do.**

How can the average worker and citizen escape this menace?

Well, as history has proved, the blight of inflation descends on a nation in one of two ways. It may be adopted deliberately as a method of inflating prices. But more often it comes as a result of straining government resources through extravagance and debt.

Force the politicians to eliminate waste and the piling up of public debt—and you remove this threat at the earnings, the savings and the security of every worker and his family.

The Other Chap Says-

UPPER PENINSULA GOLD

Ten gold crushing and concentrating mills are now in service in the Michipicoten-Goudreau district on the north shore of Lake Superior in Ontario.

Those operating at Michipicoten are the Parkhill, Minto, Darwin, Centennial, Dome Lake, Hillside and Stanley. The Goudreau group includes the Algold, Algoma Sumpt and Edward. The availability of developed water power has been an important factor in developments. The combined output of the mines this year will be nearly $1,000,000.

All of these operations are being carried on in areas where, a few years ago, some fairly responsible authorities said that gold mining would not be profitable. The fact is that at a little depth the formations are very much like those of the Hollinger farther east, the largest single gold producer in the world.

A well known mining geologist recently made a trip through the country north of Ishpeming and Negaunee, where extensive surface prospecting is now under way. When he came out he remarked to a local iron mining man: "If I had been taken blindfolded into the area without knowing where I was, and had then removed the blindfold, I would have sworn that I was in Hollinger territory, for the reason that the formations are so much alike."

Although the present prospecting venture has been under way but a short time, it is reliably stated that at least two occurrences have been found which warrant drilling operations, and there is a good possibility that others just as promising will turn up. Iron mining activities have diverted attention from nearby gold prospects, but the search for gold is in thoroughly competent hands, and that it will be amply repaid is the wish of every well-wisher in the district.—Escanaba Press.

THE POWER OF DISCONTENT

Discontent is a mighty force. It stirs people to climb to great heights and it twists their imaginations so they fall into great depths. If there had been no discontent in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, the American continent would likely never been peopled.

Discontent with their present surroundings tells ambitious folks to get out of their narrow ruts, learn and earn, and make something of themselves. But it also leads mistaken people to rise in pots, overturn governments, support petty tyrants, and perform things they can't perform. So discontent is a two edged knife, which can produce useful tools, and can also cut your hands cut on it.

The world has been full of discontent ever since the World War. It led to the Russian revolution, it led Italy and Germany into the hands of dictators, it led to the Spanish Civil war, which is now creating the most terrible havoc. In our country it has produced an excited and hysterical frame of mind, and led many people to support fantastic ideas.

When a person is discontented, he usually has some real trouble. Sometimes he never had the schooling to help show him how to avoid the situation that caused him the discontent. Perhaps he never had a fair chance in life. Perhaps that fellow has never tried to honestly earn every dollar he received. Perhaps he never tried to read and grow more intelligent.

Discontent should not be ignored. Where there are real grievances, they should be redressed before they make real trouble. Where the discontented person is to blame for his troubles, he needs advice. Give a boy the right start, set him going on the kind of thing he can do well, and he rarely develops into the discontented person.—Lowell Ledger.

The Greater Need

The Salesman—"Let me show you this new folding go-cart. Folded like this it can be carried under the arm."

The Shopper—"But mine isn't a collapsible baby."

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