

The Birmingham Eccentric

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Editor's Note: Richard M. Coats, who with his brother publishes the Hastings, Mich., writes this week's editorial column for The Eccentric, concluding the series of "guest editorials" contributed by prominent state editors and publishers during the absence of G. R. Averill, local publisher.

Subbing

Attempting to sub for the editor of The Eccentric, now in process of sending Europe first hand, is the easiest assignment which could be handed one in the newspaper profession. However, the writer considers it an honor to have the privilege of contributing a couple of columns toward the make up of this outstanding weekly journal. And since the Birmingham people came to our rescue on one occasion a couple of years ago, all we can do is "pitch in" and do our best and hope that we can return as good as a favor as we received.

We hope that George has had a fine time on his trip through the old country and have no doubt that he will have some interesting and pertinent observations to make when he returns. Possibly he can help to explain why the people of Europe, despite their civilization and background of culture and learning can solve their governmental problems only by iron-fisted dictators and their differences only by armaments and threats of warfare.

Seeing of dictators in the American people will have to be on guard or they may find themselves eased into one. Personally we can applaud the present administration for many of its broader social objectives but see no reason why it is necessary to permit dictatorial powers to put them across. History affords plenty of examples to illustrate that too much power concentrated in the hands of one man sooner or later results in plenty of grief for the nation so governed. If it comes to a choice between a hasty revision of our social structure or the preservation of a government which over a period of time will insure the greatest amount of civil liberty possible, it is our personal opinion that the wisest course would be to preserve our present form of government at all costs and go about making the necessary social revisions at a slower and more studied pace.

After all, time is limitless, as there is in terms of comprehensibility to the ordinary human being, so why not take plenty of time in solving our troubles? What all of us need is patience. It takes time to bring about change in an orderly manner. Think of the variety of people there are to convince in order to put across even the most simple of changes. The different nationalities, the various degrees of intelligence, the different degrees of family and environment, traditions, and any number of other factors which might take several columns of type to list and classify.

You can browse people into temporary submission, but for lasting results they have to be convinced. In Germany, Herr Hitler and his Nazi have taken the public into submission in Italy Benito Mussolini and his Fascist have accomplished a similar feat, while in Russia, Stalin and his cohorts by means of numerous "blood purges" are keeping the people in line. Temporarily these three countries have governments that really click. People have to follow the lead. They have no other choice. Anything resembling a protest or a criticism is regarded as treason and punished severely. Consequently these dictatorial administrations get things done with a smoothness, swiftness and precision which surpasses by far the speed possible in a slower, more bungling democracy where every action of the country, and every faction has its "day in court" to speak its piece.

But how permanent are these dictatorships? What will happen when Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin are removed from the state? In all probability people will take things into their own hands again. There will be regional fights and factional bickerings with attempts to install the framework of a real representative government. Then, possibly, some ambitious leader with a magnetic personality and a ringing, oratorical voice will attempt to "solve matters" by grabbing all the power himself—and dictating what the people shall think, act and do. People will be discontented, but browbeaten as before and the dictatorial cycle will begin again. A dictatorship never has been and never will be the answer to anything.

Yet dictatorships are more easily installed today than ever before. An ambitious leader of the present can speak to almost every man in the country by means of radio. This is true in America as well as Europe. People, restless at the slow pace of their representative government and tired of political bickerings may see in this golden voice of the air an answer to their troubles, never thinking what it might mean to voluntarily give up the civil liberties which have been won slowly through long years of struggle.

Patience is essential in a representative government. Perseverance is a more important virtue than speed. After all a government should be a more human institution than a mass production line where things are geared to move along with mechanical precision. Reforms can be put across without resorting to dictatorial methods, but it takes almost as much perseverance, in fact, that only the really

worthwhile projects are likely to survive. In fact our government set-up was deliberately constructed with authority divided between three main divisions—legislative, executive and judicial—to that changes could not be instituted suddenly. It insured plenty of time for leaders to cool off, to think things over, to deliberate and study once they got an idea which on the spur of the moment seemed to be particularly hot.

To cite an extreme hypothetical case, suppose that an administration in this country, following the example of Hitler, decided that something should be done against modernistic art, and that the government should step in and regulate the schools of art which artists should be permitted to follow. All Hitler had to do was sign a decree and the decree became law. But over here a president would first have to convince a House and a Senate that such a measure should be passed. If Congress meekly consented there would still be the Supreme Court which, unless it, too, were controlled by the executive, would reject such a proposal as contrary to the spirit of the Constitution. Hitler had no resistance in his path. His slightest fancy can be made law with lightning-like speed. Over here, even with House and Senate stacked with members of a president's own party, such a proposal probably wouldn't even get out of the committee. A representative government works slowly but at least it does protect its people from the whims of a leader whose equilibrium is out of balance because of the power concentrated in his hands.

High pressure leadership has no place in a representative government. If an idea isn't worth careful study and consideration by Congress, if it isn't worthwhile to take the time to inform and win over the public, then it isn't worth considering at all. No man ever lived who is big enough to do the thinking and planning for a country as large and complex as the United States. To quote from a speech delivered by President Roosevelt when he was governor of New York:

"The doctrine of regulations and legislation by 'master minds' in whose judgment and will, all the people may gladly and quietly acquiesce has been too glaringly apparent at Washington during these last ten years.

"Were it possible to find 'master minds' so unselfish, so willing to decide unobtrusively against their own personal interests or private prejudices, men almost good-like in their ability to hold the scales of Justice with an even hand, such a government might be to the interest of the country, but there are none such on our political horizon, and we cannot expect a complete reversal of all the teachings of history."

In the past we've done our share of harping at Congress. In the future, however, we're going to be more tolerant than ever before. During the past few years we have learned that good, bungling and inefficient as Congress is, it still provides a more livable form of government than one in which it surrenders a large slice of its authority to the executive department. In the future, when we get impatient at the way things are going, we will try and remember that Congress, after all is our voice in government; that it is one of the two institutions which stand to block the path to a dictatorship of the European variety.

But enough of this. Possibly it all verges too closely on party politics, although partnership has nothing to do with what has been said. We like the American form of government and want to see it preserved.

Hastings and Birmingham have quite a few things in common. Both are pleasant residential cities. Both show evidence of civic pride through the maintenance of neatly paved streets, fine school buildings, libraries and other public institutions.

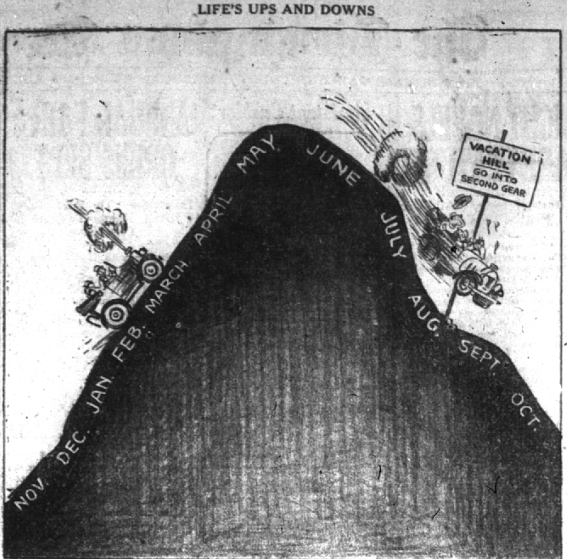
I doubt though that Birmingham possesses a "legendary monster" among its what-nots of tradition. Hastings and Barry county have. In fact we'll stack our Carter Snake up beside the Loch Ness creature, near the lake in the week and give odds at that. The Carter Snake hasn't been seen for several years now but its stature has in no wise lessened. In fact it has probably added several feet in length and inches in girth during these intervening years.

Some claim that the snake was thirty feet long; others maintain it was at least forty. Some reputed first hand observers report that it was as large around as a big bag pole. This modest estimate, however, was indignantly discounted by others who said that the creature was as big around as the middle of a telephone pole.

The habitat of the snake seems to have been in the neighborhood of Carter's lake, a small body of water surrounded by bogs and swamps and a few miles north of Hastings. From time to time it was reported seen, even by those of unquestioned sobriety, in the tall grass, or in the water. One honest old gentleman actually shook his head sadly and refused to tell what he had seen because he didn't want to be dubbed a liar—in fact he couldn't convince himself that he had seen correctly.

About the time that the Carter snake appeared, a large prairie belonging to a traveling show escaped from the lake in a small boat about twenty miles from Hastings. Possibly there is some connection between this fact and the sudden appearance of the Barry county monster. But any loyal son of Barry refuses to accept such an easy explanation; prefers to believe that by some unaccountable phenomenon a variety of snakes are prowling about the fastness of Carter's lake and will some day reappear again. Anyway, the Carter snake, is a pretty good answer to any fish story we've ever heard.

Even more famous than the snake, itself, however, were Sylvester Greusel's snake hunts. Sylvester was a local non-mouder and he decided that something should be done about this snake which was putting the veracity of so many honest, sober citizens to shame. So he organized a series of expeditions to track the creature down. A characteristic feature of these hunts was that they always seemed to end up in some shady nook where a keg of beer was unconspicuously discovered. Sylvester was a lightning speing, Sylvester, properly decked out for the occasion in a miscellaneous collection of lodge regalia including a plumed helmet and a K. of P. sword, always took a circuitous route, as one should take in hunting for a snake, and these cross country searches seemed to produce their share of snakes as the snake, itself. So about the only criticism of



Sylvester's leadership was that he never seemed able to discover a place where two kegs were concealed instead of just one.

Long after the snake had disappeared, these snake hunts continued with undiminished popularity.

One man who has possibly contributed more than anyone else to the development of industries in Hastings is Emil Tyden. Mr. Tyden has the unique distinction of building up a very successful enterprise from an idea he once tried to give away! An acquaintance of his was trying to invent an automatic car seal. Mr. Tyden looked over the plans, gave the opinion that he was on the wrong track entirely.

He then outlined the method he thought could be successfully developed. But the friend continued with his own idea, was unsuccessful and finally gave the entire project up as useless. Several years later Mr. Tyden became interested in the problem, himself, and working along the lines he had previously outlined developed an automatic car seal which was

practical and at present the Tyden car seal is used almost exclusively by railroads and other concerns in this and many foreign countries where some form of automatic, inexpensive and rapid sealing is desired.

In our opinion a small city is an ideal place to live. Such communities are no longer isolated from the rest of the world by mud roads. Improved highways, the telephone and radio have completely changed the mode of living. A small town now has most of the amenities available in a large metropolitan center combined with the advantage of never being more than five or ten minutes from the open country and seldom more than a half an hour from one or more fine little resort lakes. We frequently wonder if the trend of the next few decades won't be toward decentralization of large cities in favor of numerous small residential cities where living is much more congenial.

WASHINGTON LETTER

BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
Farmer, Labor Groups Look Forward to Coalition Party in Near Future

WASHINGTON.—Leaders of certain farmer and labor groups are hopefully planning a coalition party. A farmer's Non Partisan League is now planning to join in harness with Labor's Non Partisan League, a C. I. O. and A. F. of L. organization for political action.

Even the most optimistic of the farmer-labor movement does not expect to have a party presidential ticket in 1940, but leaders of the movement believe there will be such a ticket in 1944.

The two groups are working closely together to help elect progressive candidates in 1938, and to take advantage of the anticipated battle between conservatives and progressives of the Democratic party in 1940. A conference probably will be held in St. Paul soon, and representation there by farm delegates, progressive congressmen and labor leaders will serve as a gauge of the political strength this coalition promises.

From Minnesota, Wisconsin, the two Dakotas, Nebraska and Montana there has come assurance that there is spirit for a new political organization, and that each country of those states can produce a farmer who would be active in leadership.

UNFORTUNATELY for the new movement, it is widely believed that Labor's Non Partisan League is dominated by John Lewis and the C. I. O. But LNP claims that more than 50 members of its executive board are A. F. of L. officials, that more than half of all its officials are A. F. of L. men, and none of them has resigned.

Executive Vice President E. L. Oliver, who has been in charge of the league's affairs since George Berry quit as president, is an A. F. of L. member and

former director of research for the A. F. of L. Brotherhood Railway Clerks. The other side of the picture is that Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and John Lewis organized the league and installed Berry head of an A. F. of L. union, as president.

Labor's political strength was tested last year when many officials friendly to labor legislation were elected to office. As in the Populist, Granger and Bryan movements, farmers have shown in the past that they can organize effectively to get votes.

But the confidence of labor leaders and the few farm leaders who have formed an alliance may be destroyed if most farmers are found to believe that the two groups are fundamentally different interests. A theory often advanced is that wages increase as demand for goods increases, and that prices which farmers want to receive will be higher. These differences may militate against any real political combine.

THOSE who have faith in a farmer-labor party argue that higher incomes for workers enable them to buy more farm products, and higher incomes for farmers enable them to buy more labor products.

They say both farmer and laborer can be made to appreciate that they have a common interest in obtaining the necessities of life at lower cost, that farmers with their problems of marketing and distribution, and workers with their problems of wages and hours should unite to eliminate waste, minimize profits and attack corruption and profligating in business.

Except for the high optimism and the sincerity of its leaders, this latest farmer political movement has as yet little strength.

Jest For Fun

A Way of Discouragement
Ted—I want to ask you for your daughter's hand.
Dad—You'll find it in my wallet.

The many little simple gifts
That come from friends.

The little gifts that find their way
About the earth—

Kind words and messages of cheer
And all the wealth of friendliness
Make life more beautiful and fair,
The little gifts just here and there
That come from friends.
Beatrice McDonald

A Tragic Anniversary

By RAYMOND PITCAIRN
National Chairman
Sentinels of the Republic

Recently the world noted, with a sort of shocked surprise, that the war in Spain had entered upon its second year.

During those tragic twelve months, terrific losses in life have been suffered. During them, whatever freedom the people of Spain may have enjoyed has been grievously threatened.

For into the conflict have entered the rival influences and forces of the two great enemies of individual freedom—Communism and Dictatorship. And whichever of the two may win in the end, the people themselves will lose.

Both those political products of a distraught and frightened Europe are the enemies of that democracy which we of America revere. Both preach the subjugation of the individual man and woman to a dominant state or dictator. Both are repugnant to the basic principle on which our own nation was founded. And whichever side wins faces a hollow victory. America can prove that. So can those other nations which have democracy stands secure.

With it, government dedicated to freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion and freedom of opportunity.

While Europe endures the tragic conflict, America celebrates this summer the 150th anniversary of a Constitution which announced the principle that "We, the people," would control our government.

What that principle can mean is demonstrated in our established record of national achievement and individual well-being—a record which no Fascist or Communist state has even remotely approached.

It is a little English lad who journeyed alone from Liverpool to Los Angeles, a far cry from the day when mothers provided a map and a stove guide for a youngster's trip to the drug store.

The Brits have been trying in vain for 85 years to win the America's Cup yachting trophy, worth \$85, proving they lack either a fast enough boat or a sense of values.

The height of something or other came when the soap-box racer passed his hat and wound up without it.

"Ow now do you think that lightning was, Arty?"
"Dunno, kid—but this fog wasn't lit a second ago."

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

By T. H. MILLINGTON

IS GOLD INDESTRUCTIBLE?

The New Deal is teaching the world a lot of things. Among other things it is teaching us that idealistic theories, when brought face to face with the realities of practical life, often are found wanting.

Such is the case with the new price put on gold by the Roosevelt Administration. When President Roosevelt raised the price of gold from \$20.67 per ounce to \$35.00 per ounce, this increase in price had the same effect on the production of gold as when the price of potatoes is increased. It increased production to such an extent that the Administration now is worried about being able to keep on buying money to buy all the gold offered.

Therefore, just as potatoes are sure to fall in price when too many potatoes are produced, so must gold fall in price when Government no longer can borrow money to buy gold to put in the hole in the ground. When the price drops, as some day it must, there will be a great loss in value of the 12½ billion dollars, the present value of gold on hand, but the debt, incurred by borrowing the money to buy it, will not decrease. No one can tell how far the price might drop. The loss sustained by such drop in value is a real loss in realizable assets in the hands of the United States Treasury and, therefore to the taxpayer and, whatever the loss, it will have a same effect on the total value of gold on hand, which actual destruction of a part of the gold would have, though the price would not fall. It is the same as when a property drops in value below the amount of the mortgage on it.

All that is said herein about gold applies to silver as well, and it is poor comfort to know that, speaking scientifically, gold cannot be destroyed when actually its cost is increasing daily but its market price does not increase and may decrease. Gold, not in circulation, like an idle factory, is eating its head off. Why not put it in circulation? Ask the Gods in Washington.

If gold were put into circulation, the total amount of money in the world would be increased by the amount of gold put into circulation. It would not have to borrow money to buy it. It would be a real gain for all gold offered and would not have to borrow money to buy it.

Sometimes one is tempted to think that somebody in the Administration owns both gold and silver mining stocks.

The Government is going in debt to buy something it has no use for and is spending millions to take care of it. Is this superfluous financial science or is it just plain foolishness?

RANDOM REMARKS

Charlotte Carr, New York relief worker, to become head of Holl House in Chicago.
"Despite all talk to the contrary, nobody who can get off wants to be on home relief."

Willis Van Devanter, former U. S. Supreme Court Justice.
"The Supreme Court, as established by the Constitution, is indispensable under our system and form of government."

Anthony Eden, British Foreign Minister.
"No nation wants the Spanish Civil War to be an European war."

Daniel A. Peling, president, International Christian Endeavor Society.
"The growing menace of liquor is a challenge to Christian citizens in every state of the Union in every city and in every town."

Emil Ludwig, exiled German author.
"You must see a man's enemies in order to understand him."

Hamilton Fish, Jr., member of Congress.
"I claim the Treasury Department has amended any number of times in every state of the Union in every city and in every town."

David E. Lilienthal, TVA Commissioner.
"No amount of skill in administration and no perfection of organization can take the place of human understanding."

William Green, president, A. F. of L.
"We cannot permit all organized labor to be penalized because of the stupid mistakes of the C. I. O."

Francisco Castella Najera, Mexican Ambassador.
"When world peace is threatened, the peace of America is also being placed in jeopardy, whether we believe it or not."

Percy W. Bidwell, Economist, University of Buffalo.
"No law manufacturer feels it is wrong morally not to produce to his full capacity, even though some families are without shoes."

Mary E. Woolley, 74, retiring college.
"Why shouldn't one start life at seventy-four as well as at forty?"

Charles F. Kettering, auto maker.
"Research surveys have shown the people on the average do not want to go over sixty miles an hour."

Donald D. Conn, transportation official.
"Socialism has obtained a menacing foothold in this country."

Wm. E. Borah, U. S. Senator, arguing against a sales tax.
"You are taxing the man down at the bottom and reducing his purchasing power."

Colton E. Warner, economist.
"We have much to learn from the economic planning of the Soviet Union."

Richard B. Gregg, lecturer.
"The great modern war would probably destroy Western civilization as well as its democracies."

J. Edgar Hoover, head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
"There is no place in America for a national police. Effective law enforcement is essentially a local problem."

lots in Jest

SOON will come the clamor call for college football and many more of the same old, same old will have to start cracking their skulls.

Colorado had its grasshoppers. Camden, N. J., its crickets. And there was the "friends-from-the-city" pestilence that invaded the farmers' cottage.

A little English lad who journeyed alone from Liverpool to Los Angeles, a far cry from the day when mothers provided a map and a stove guide for a youngster's trip to the drug store.

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