The Birmingham Eccentric

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1937

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 Tuesdays. 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.

U. S. A. Not Strong In Military Size

An appropriation of more than $400,000,000 has been approved by the House of Representatives for the War Department, which will manage the American army of 165,000 regulars during the next fiscal year.

Recent figures compiled by the War Department show that the United States ranks tenth in size of regular forces, behind Poland, Rumania, Spain, Japan, Italy, Germany, France, Great Britain, and Russia, including trained reserves, this nation drops to nineteenth place in potential fighting power.

This country has, besides its regular army, an estimated 309,000 men in the National Guard and other trained reserves. Compared to Russia's regular army of 1,545,000 and trained reserves of 19,490,000, we are not in the select military circle, even though our army costs us a lot of money.

Whence Cometh Thy Counsel?

American citizens delight in boasting of their liberty and freedom and, sometimes, apparently, undertake something just to show how free they really are.

It is interesting, once in a while, to learn how affairs are managed in other lands. For example, Edgar Kelmer, writing in The Baltimore Evening Sun, tells of visiting libraries in Germany and Russia. He reports easy access into well-stocked shelf-rooms where thousands of volumes repose, but tells us that it is practically impossible for a native in these countries to get any book to read except those approved by the authorities.

The point made by Mr. Kemler is that much of the Nazi and Communistic philosophies would collapse if the people were allowed to read the books which contain intelligent criticisms of the respective regimes.

The story of Gamaliel, the Pharisee and doctor of the law, comes to mind every time we read of such restrictive efforts on the part of constituted authorities anywhere. His advice, given many years ago, reads, "For if this counsel or this work be of man, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it." This is good doctrine in 1937. It carries a lesson which the self-righteous might learn with profit in the midst of modern perplexities.

Flying Trapezes And Motor Cars

Did you ever watch a slender girl perform on the trapeze, high above your head, and say to yourself, "she can't get hurt" as she went through her routine?

Well, once in a while, they do get hurt. The other day a 20-year-old girl, concluding an "iron jaw" stunt, holding on by her teeth as she swiftly whirled, suddenly fell sixty feet. Doctors say she will die.

Perhaps you have visited some great city and gazed with astonishment at some huge bridge or towering building without thinking of the human beings who gave up their lives in the processes of construction. If you thought about the victims you probably wondered why these people take such risks for the sake of making a living.

After all these thoughts about the casual way foolish people face death for money, have you gotten in your automobile, without thinking, and driven the car at sixty miles an hour to get nowhere at no particular time? Have you ever taken a few drinks, and while a bit woozy, slumped under the steering wheel and raced to get home and in bed?

For A College Boy's 'Dad'

They tell us every day in every graphic way that college men and women do a deal of "doodling"—which is true. But they fail to say that in odd moments those lively, handsome young folks do quite a little worrying, too, worrying about their individual futures.

Maybe your "kid" is back for his first week-end at home. Maybe you've wanted to give him a fatherly boost, but haven't known quite how to start. Cut to fit your predicament is this bit of advice from the distinguished scholar, Charles A. Beard;

". . . I have found the world to be, as Emerson says, all doors, all opportunities. Life itself is crowded with unexpected occasions and choices. It is impossible to plan for them accurately in advance. The greatest opportunities come suddenly, out of a clear sky. When I was young, I worried about the long future, so clouded with uncertainty, but I found in time that it was futile. So I would say now to youth: go forward with the work in hand, the plain duties and obligations immediately ahead; seek accurate knowledge, strive for the widest possible outlook on life, fear no evil, establish habits of fairness and mercy, seek to understand others through sympathy rather than hatred, waste no time over mistakes that cannot be remedied, and march onward with firm confidence that one so equipped in spirit and mind cannot fail to find gateways to labor and reward worth while and to enduring satisfactions. Such, at least, is my confession of findings in this world of almost baffling mysteries and choices."—Rotarian Magazine.

Help Wanted!

In the heat of political campaign, after the self-starters have started and while the ins are trying to keep out the outs, the people of Michigan have very little time to think of the qualifications a man should have to be the Governor of Michigan. By the time the campaign is on, the candidates have been selected, or have selected themselves, and then there is nothing for the voters to do but to choose between two men, neither one of whom may have the proper qualifications for the job he is seeking.

Did you ever stop to think of what you would want your Governor to be like, if you could have your choice?

Undoubtedly you would demand the following things:

That he have executive ability—
That he be a man of sincere convictions—
That he be fair to all classes of citizens—
That he devote his entire time to the job—
That he should so guide the business of the state that less money is spent than is taken in.

Wouldn't that kind of a man make a pretty good Governor?

Executive ability could be measured by whether or not the candidate had been successful in his private life, either in business, a profession or labor.

A man of sincere convictions would not allow himself to be run by anyone, those who had helped to elect him or by someone who could profit through a connection of any kind with the Governor.

A man fair to all classes of citizens would see that the laws were strictly enforced. He would not take sides with business, with labor, nor with any class of citizens.

There have been governors of Michigan who have spent much time away from the job, and you would not like this. Surely, the state's business is important enough to demand, and get, the governor's whole time.

Spending less than is taken in would seem to be so elementary that it should not need argument, and any man smart enough to be governor should realize that if it were not done, the state would eventually go bankrupt.

There are those who will say that it is impossible to find such a man. We do not think so. It may be impossible to find him in the ranks of the present politicians, but there is little doubt but that such a man could be found somewhere in Michigan.

He would have to be an outstanding man, it is true, but given such a man, with a sincere desire to do a good job, who didn't care whether he had more than one term in office or not, and he could do a wonderful job for the state.

And here is the peculiar thing, and one which few politicians realize: this man, if he did a good job for all the people, would have but little trouble in getting a second term.

He might not have the liking of the politicians on whose toes he stepped, but he would have something much greater—the respect of the citizens.

Help will be wanted to find such a man.

We can't blame him, but you might well study over the proposed list of qualifications above, and if such a candidate should by some miracle, appear; he would make SOME GOVERNOR!—Tuscola County Advertiser.

Be Careful, Labor and Industry!

Mr. Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., it seems to us, expresses accurately a current problem when he says that "the public should consider what may happen if a few men gain dictatorships over America's industry without any responsibility attached except to themselves."

Mr. Sloan was talking about the dangers that are inherent if irresponsible labor leaders obtain a strangle-hold upon American business. Undoubtedly, such dangers exist and the public should take due notice of the potential threat to the general welfare.

Now, the other side to this question is that similar dangers exist if a "few men gain dictatorships" over American industry without any responsibility "except to themselves," and magnates of big business. The public should also take due notice of this potential threat to the general welfare in the future.

In fact, the greatest danger to the general welfare is that over-zealous leaders of labor or industry may so misplay the game as to permit the other side to capture overwhelming public support for impracticable proposals. This has happened in the past to the injury of the sound progress of labor and of business.

Religion Greater Than Mere Churches

The Eccentric is a great believer in religion and firmly supports the work of the organized churches of the world.

However, it is just as well not to get the idea that religion is dependent upon any, or all, of the existing churches. Religion is far greater than the institutions of the world and will live if all of them crumble into decay.

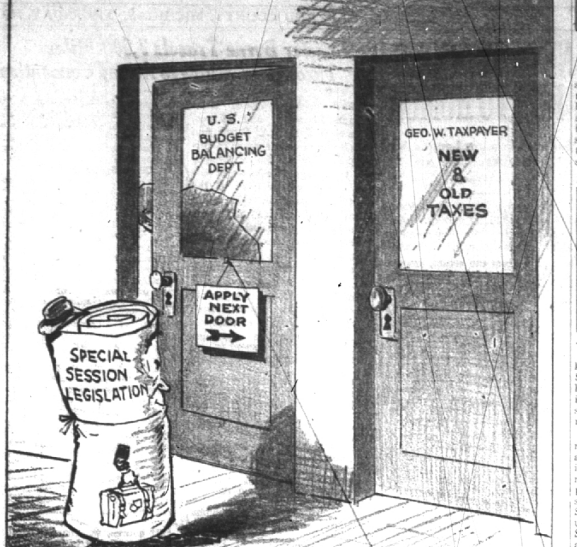
It has very often happened that careless thinkers have confused opposition to organizations with opposition to religion. Nothing is farther from the truth. Sometimes the cause of true religion is advanced by spirited antagonism to organized institutions which easily gather the impression that they are religion itself.

For example, we are profoundly convinced that religion is above politics and even above nationalism. The churches and other organizations, very often, fail to stand above either politics or nationalism. Their fate, in the circumstances, depends upon the success of the cause that they espouse and it thus becomes necessary for them, sometimes, to make bitter attacks upon people who oppose what their organization supports.

ANNA HAHN, blond thirty-one-year-old Ohio mother, accused of poisoning four old men for their insurance money, has been found guilty, and will be executed in the Buckeye State in the near future. It will be Ohio's first woman to die at the hands of the State. Is Mrs. Hahn mentally "sick?" It would seem that anyone who premeditates murder is far from being well, mentally. Does the killing of such people really solve society's problem of the mentally ill?

RELUCTANCE OF THE Duke and Duchess of Windsor to go ahead with their visit to the United States will sadden the hearts of many who hoped to meet the well advertised pair of romancers. Thus, you see, even a former King can't always do what he wants to do—one of the penalties for being in the limelight. "The meek shall inherit the earth."

LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER JOB FOR GEORGE



WASHINGTON LETTER

BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Wage-Hour Legislation Remains Major Task of Special Session

WASHINGTON.—Of a multitude of problems which Congress will address itself when it reconvenes here in special session this month, perhaps the most important is the administration's proposal for a new wage-hour law. The wage-hour bill sponsored by the administration in the last session was hardly recognizable in the form in which the Senate finally allowed it to pass.

The House Labor Committee made further changes in the bill before it was approved. Southern Democrats and Republicans on the Rules Committee combined to pigeon-hole it, but House leaders promised they would bring it onto the floor early in the next session.

* * *

THE House bill would create a labor tandards board with the power to fix maximum hours not lower than 40 a week, and minimum wages not higher than 40 cents an hour.

These standards would be set for industries which have traffic in interstate commerce. Sympathetic as most people profess to be with the objectives of wage-hour legislation, there is much difference of opinion over the best method of getting higher wages for the exploited and most poorly paid laboring classes, and the elimination of child labor.

It is said on one hand that criticism directed against proposed wage-hour laws is made with the purpose of improving on existing plans. On the other hand, administrationists feel most of the criticism is not constructive in intent, but is a form of propaganda aimed at destroying an effective measure.

One point of disagreement between those who honestly want wage-hour legislation but cannot decide just how it could be made most effective is over the question whether a board with discretionary powers should be set up, or whether it would be better to write into the law an inflexible wage-hour standard.

* * *

THE new Congress will convene in the middle of a business slump and when wage-hour legislation comes up there will be much discussion of how industry may be affected. The pending bill requires that the board it would set up must find out in advance of each order issued what the effects will be on the particular industry for which the ruling is made.

But that will not satisfy some of the objectors who complain that the compulsion to pay higher wages is bad medicine for slowly recovering business. Roosevelt and those who go along with his economic theories hold that however discouraging wage-hour legislation may seem to some business men, industry would be benefited when increased purchasing power was reflected in increased sales and lower cost of production.

If the administration continues to favor the House bill, it must get the signatures of 218 congressmen before the bill will be discharged by the Rules Committee, barring the possibility that rebellious southern Democrats and northern Republicans on that committee relent their bitter opposition.

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.

Birmingham Eccentric,
Birmingham, Michigan.
Gentlemen:

We are enclosing a copy of a letter to the Public Utilities in Lansing protesting the rates that we pay for telephone service in Birmingham, and it looks to us like if your paper wants to be of real service to the community here is your chance.

We appreciate that the Telephone Company gives you a little advertising from time to time to keep this matter quiet, but this certainly is not the way to render the greatest service to the community which you are supposed to be serving. If this matter is given front page publicity, and enough Birmingham citizens write to Lansing on the matter you are going to get some action.

There is no reason why we shouldn't have the same telephone service as they get in Grosse Pointe and Grosse Pointe farms, and even Dearborn. In other words, the Detroit telephone at Detroit rates. Our case is no different than hundreds of others in Birmingham.

Yours truly,
Dale O. Miller,
594 Lakeview

Michigan Public Utilities,
Lansing, Michigan.
Gentlemen:

We are writing you again in regard of the telephone rates that we pay in Birmingham, Michigan. This past month we had 46 calls to Detroit and Royal Oak, costing us a total of $7.50. In other words all we get out of our telephone in Birmingham is the privilege of paying $3.00 a month to have the phone put in, and then paying long distance rates even to Royal Oak, which adjoins Birmingham and Detroit. It is only seven miles from the Eight Mile Road to Birmingham, and this distance is less than some of the sections in Grosse Pointe, served directly by the Telephone Company. Inasmuch as Birmingham and Royal Oak are now made up of 80 percent Detroit residents, it certainly looks like a Detroit proposition.

Of course, the Telephone Company is going to continue this exorbitant long distance rate for neighbor service as long as they can get by with it, and as long as you permit it. They are certainly not going to take the initiative. In Detroit for $3.00 we can have 100 calls. Here we pay $2.00 and get no calls, and get a bill for $7.50 additional for 46 calls, and as mentioned, 11 of these calls were to Royal Oak costing us $1.35, when Royal Oak and Birmingham join each other just about a mile from Maple Avenue and Fourteen Mile road, and in our opinion it should not take any investigating committee long to find out the unfairness, to the telephone subscribers of such a proposition as this.

This thing now has been hanging fire for several months and even years.

Please let us hear from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours very truly,
Dale O. Miller.

Easier

Dentist—I think I'll have to pull this tooth.

Patient—Just leave it alone, doctor, and it will jump out.

RANDOM REMARKS

Dr. James A. B. Scherer, former economic adviser to the Japanese Government:
"The vast body of the Japanese people, who are pitifully poor are being ground under heel to finance a campaign of ambition and greed."

Chas. A. Jones, General Manager, Home Owners' Loan Corporation:
"The vast majority of HOLC borrowers are leaving no stone unturned to meet their obligations."

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, First Lady, at Cornell University:
"The best you have to give in the open competition of everyday life is never too much."

James A. Farley, chairman, Democratic National Committee:
"The Democratic Party is going to be in power for a long time to come."

Thomas W. Lamont, back from Europe:
"Real preparedness for America means not merely a first-class navy. It means a well-ordered nation, running smoothly."

Yakichiro Suma, Japanese diplomat:
"It is impossible for Western nations to be of any benefit to China. They could only make conditions worse for the Chinese people by interfering with Japan."

Bruce Barton, author:
"The best thing that could happen to this country would be the election of a hundred businessmen to Congress."

H. G. Wells, British historian and novelist:
"I believe in an educated democracy, not a go-as-you-please democracy."

Nathan Straus, Federal Housing Administration head:
"My job is to spend the $500,000,000 as quickly and as intelligently as possible."

Alexander Troyanovsky, Soviet Ambassador to the U. S.:
"Russia is very quiet but Russia is ready for anything."

J. B. Priestly, British author:
"'Propaganda' is an unpleasant, cold-blooded word: it has a cynical bought-and-paid-for sound."

Mme. O. K. Yiu, wife of Shanghai mayor:
"China will fight not only to the last man, but to the last woman."

Francis E. McMahon, of the University of Notre Dame:
"A fairly bright ape never will know it is an ape, but even the most stupid man will at some time know he is stupid."

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

By T. H. MILLINGTON

MODERN CIVILIZATION Who Made It?

T. H. MILLINGTON

In this column, Nov. 11, it was shown that up to the Reformation, men's minds had been restrained by government, church and guilds, so that very little progress had been made. The world's work was still done by manual labor. But after that period the world progressed and a new mechanized civilization has been created by the inventors and their inventions.

In giving credit for this transformation of civilization, we must not forget the aid given by what today we call "capital." We must remember that an invention without capital to produce and market it, can do the world no good. Seldom indeed does an inventor have the money to complete his invention without financial aid to say nothing of manufacturing and marketing.

In this respect the inventor is much like Columbus. He too had an idea, but it took money to carry it out. So also the men who furnished money to equip the English privateers to harry the Spanish shipping between America and Spain, resulting finally in the war under Elizabeth, in which the Spanish Armada was destroyed, and the power of Spain was broken, deserve great credit. The early settlers of the American Colonies were financed by English capital.

I merely allude to these well known facts, that it takes money to do things, because in this crazy present-day world there are men who, while drawing princely salaries at public expense, would have the public believe that all our economic ills come from men who have money.

To such an extent has this theory been publicized that although we all want money, yet those who have it, are under suspicion.

The point I wish to emphasize is that, but for capital, not only would the world's work still be done by manual labor, but there would have been no America for, without it, Columbus would not have been able to build and equip his boats.

This truth is so elemental that it seems childish to refer to it, but the world owes a debt of gratitude to the man with capital, and the New Deal tirade against capital and capitalists is little short of idiotic.

Who Is The Capitalist?

Any man who is able to save money, and put in a savings bank, building and loan association or postal savings, is a capitalist. It is the total sum of such money, some 25 billion dollars, which is the country's reservoir of capital for our vast industries.

It is estimated that there are about 20 million stockholders, owning our 225 big corporations. It is an interesting fact, that while the General Motors has 350,000 stockholders, it has only about two thirds that many employees, and the large units of the steel industry have 400,000 employees and 550,000 stockholders.

But while these figures are eloquent proof that our people generally have been investing in our industries, those in one class of investment which has been so much "intimidated" by laws, governmental abuse, and over unionization that investment therein are well nigh zero. I refer to the building industry.

As various times, during the last four years, this column has called attention to the fact that this industry enterprises were the greatest sufferers and had the greatest unemployment—the real serious unemployment. Services and retail trade had only about a 20 percent unemployment, while the building and heavy industries had an 80 percent unemployment.

Where new enterprises formerly received from six to eight billion dollars annually, it now gets less than a quarter billion. It has been my privilege to see a great many valuable inventions, which, if capital were obtainable, would give employment to many men, but capital turns a deaf ear to requests for money. The taxes on corporation profits are such that men with money say: "What is the use to risk money in new enterprises when the government sides with labor in strikes and passes laws to rob us of profit if we make any?"

We are getting right now, a hard lesson in the demonstration that progress cannot go on without the cooperation of capital, and that when a government is foolish enough to punish thrift and enterprise, it wrecks progress.

Secretary Morgenthau's recent speech and Washington rumors indicate that the New Deal now appears to see the error of its ways, and is trying to coax capital into activity, but it is going to be difficult to restore confidence. The President has made so many promises and broken them, that he has lost his influence.

Maddening Headlines

The headlines in the daily press which scream: "Government To Aid Business," etc., are quite maddening. It is business which supports the government. What it does need is to get rid of interference from the New Deal experimenters and government abuse.

In invention and capital lie progress and employment. Government is only a necessary burden which business can readily support but which is in the wrong place when it attempts to direct business.

As Congress Meets

By RAYMOND PITCAIRN

National Chairman Sentinels of the Republic

As Congress meets in its current special session, the American people look hopefully to Capitol Hill for relief from the many problems which have troubled them through recent months.

For from Washington and elsewhere have come many signs more or less optimistic in nature.

They indicate:

That members of Congress, fresh from human contacts with the men and women back home, will be guided by the wishes of those constituents, rather than by the demands of officeholders and politically-appointed bureau chiefs.

That Congress will again assert a sense of its responsibility under the government, of balanced powers established by our Constitution.

That Congress will remember that taxes are paid out of the earnings of the men and women who labor, and that every dollar flung recklessly into new and odd experiments is a dollar out of a wage-earner's envelope or a housewife's budget.

That Congress will realize that the solution of unemployment lies not in jungles of diagrams and figures, but in encouraging the enterprise which creates employment—and with it national progress.

That Congress will insist that ours is a government of and for all the people, and not for groups and classes favored on the basis of how many votes they represent.

This, say commentators from Washington, represents the spirit of many Congressmen, after their thankful contacts with the folks at home.

America will hope it is an accurate picture. And Congressmen should hope so, too, for on the judgment of those folks at home, depends ultimately not only re-election to Congress, but the progress of our nation as well.

Politicians may talk and threaten, but it is the people who make the decisions and cast the votes.

This is something for Washington to remember—as Congress meets.

Gentle Hint?

"Willie," said the hostess at the party, "you appear to be in deep thought."

"Yes'm," replied Willie. "Mom told me something to say if you should ask me to have some cake or ice cream or anything—and I've forgotten what it was!"

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