The Birmingham Eccentric

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 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 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.

Let Us Be Thankful!

Thanksgiving Day, now a national holiday, originated because the colonists, devout followers of a Divine Father, wished to express their appreciation of bountiful harvests, which meant something to eat for the following year.

This year the nation has bountiful harvests, although there are few farmers inclined to be thankful about the "blessing" which has reduced the prices of their products. However, in humble spirit, all of us are inclined to give thanks to a Supreme Being for untold benefits and blessings that have come to us. We realize that life has been good, in spite of hardships.

In a spirit of reverence we pause in a busy Fall to utter appropriate prayers for a beneficence that, upon reflection, we realize is greater than commonly supposed. Our standard of living exceeds by far the eager expectation of past generations and the well-being of our bodies is the envy of the world. No wonder Americans have felt the need of a special day to return thanks to God!

We are grateful for past progress and we should also be thankful for the opportunity to go forward. Let us give thanks for the past goodness, which has been shared by us, but also, in anticipation, look to the day when there shall be more general distribution of the munificence of nature among the sons of men.

Opportunity For The Bar

A committee of the American Bar Association has sharply rebuked vaudeville appearances by jurors and other trends tending to transform trials into public spectacles. The report of the committee will be considered at the Convention of the Association to be held this week.

Among other things, the committee condemned public discussions of trials by witnesses in speeches, magazines, articles or newspaper interviews, broadcasting of arguments and giving out of argumentative press bulletins by lawyers and public criticism of the Court or jusy by lawyers during a trial.

We have no way of knowing what the American Bar Association will do about the report. As a matter of fact, there is not much that it can do in regard to some of the trends which are objectionable, but there is a field in which the Association should be able to render effective service. As a general idea of what we have in mind, we call attention to the fact that, in the conduct of trials, the lawyers of the nation are almost without restrictions of any kind. In the strategy of a case, in the baiting of witnesses, in the use of cheap claptrap, intolerance and partisan appeal, and in the age-old practice of "working up" a case, lawyers of a certain type enjoy a field day at the expense of justice. The American Bar Association might render a distinct public service by attempting some reform of the admitted evils which now tend, at times, to disgrace the Courts of the land.

Wild Animals Are Prolific

Citizens who have been worrying about the slaughter of wild life in Africa and fearful less the great beasts of the forests there become extinct can take heart from the report sent to this country by Mrs. Martin Johnson, who recently returned to Kenya after an absence of three years.

The woman explorer says that elephants have become a nuisance in Uganda and that local authorities are encouraging the killing of zebra which have overrun the plains. On the Tanganyika plains alone, she estimates, there are more than 10,000,000 wild animals and they continue to increase in spite of the licensed shooting and the heavy unlicensed toll of the natives.

Boys Only . . .

To ALL boys who would like to be tough or become "headliners" as bandits: I wish every would-be "tough guy" in Midland could have been along with me yesterday. It was the kind of a scene that takes all the "glory" out of crime. It was the "end" of the road for a man who had graduated from several state prisons.

There he lay a gory mess on the pavement, the top of his head blasted off, his blood flowing on the pavement and his brains scattered on the roadway as he gasped out his last breath. No one paid any attention to him; they were all happy he was dead. He was the most-hated man in Midland, even in death. This was his "end of the road" and it is usually the end of the road for all would-be "tough guys." He tried the old game once too often and it turned on him.

The other thug said "never again" as he shook with pain. No one offered any sympathy; a few did volunteer to him that it was "too bad it didn't hit you harder" or "sorry you didn't get it through the head, too" . . . pleasant condolences for a sick man.

These fellows live in fear and usually die in horror . . . Let all boys who think there's glory in crime take heed. It isn't worth it.—Phil T. Rich in Midland Daily News.

Hidden Taxes We Pay

A study of concealed taxation, recently concluded by the Northwestern National Life Insurance Company, reveals that laborers, clerks and small income individuals pay enormous taxes through hidden imposts.

The record of 7,964 families in forty-eight cities was used to compute the contribution to government and, while the figures may not accurately apply to all similar individuals, they probably come close to the facts in each case.

An $18-a-week laborer, for example, owning no property, pays $116 a year through taxes included in the prices of the goods and services he buys. A man with a $150-a-month income, operating a used car, pays about $229 annually in taxes, although he owns no other property and is exempt from income taxes.

The study estimates that "invisible" taxes in retail food prices average 7.1 per cent, in clothing 8 per cent, in fuel and light bills 9.5 per cent, in miscellaneous items 10.2 per cent, and in rent 25.3 per cent. It might be well for people in Birmingham to ponder these estimates when attempting to calculate the taxes they pay.

The newspaper report of the study that we have seen does not go further than the recital above. It is a pity that some adequate study is not made of the sources of the concealed taxes, whether due to local government, the State's levy, to Federal excises, or tariffs and other causes. If this was made clear the people might have some method of relieving themselves of some of the burden.

Even as it is, the figures should have some bearing upon the imposition of new tax burdens and some influence upon the debate as to lowering income exemptions, increasing direct taxes, and using sales tax methods.

While it is easy to understand that government costs money, to appreciate the benefits that stable government offers and to willingly support the necessary expenses of what we enjoy, the taxpayers of the country might as well keep a weather eye on the uses of the money collected by governmental agencies. In fact, every spending agency of the people, whether local, State or Federal, should be required to make an accounting in plain, easily understood terms, to the voters.

There are increasing demands upon governmental agencies and the future does not promise that the activity of our governments will decrease, although some present undertakings can be eliminated. In the long run it may be that there will be need of greater revenue by governmental units and because of that fact it is more vital than ever that the people study taxation and public spending.

New Idea Of The Sun

A new idea of the sun follows the discovery, through a photograph, taken during the recent eclipse, that the great tongues of flame, supposedly leaping from the sun, do not in fact leap at all, but that the solar globe is surrounded with an envelope of atmosphere which glows and the tongues of fire are part of the whole.

The pictures from which this discovery was made were taken by Major Stevens, flying around 25,000 feet above the earth of South America, during the last eclipse. They will lead to renewed efforts to secure additional stratosphere photographs of the next eclipse of the sun, which, we believe, will come in about three years.

"They Say"

Someone has said that if you quote the Bible as an authority for a statement you make, nine out ten people will pay little attention to your statement. If, however, you quote as your authority the all-knowing "They say" group, then you can get an attentive ear.

A New York clergyman has borne out the conclusion that ignorance of the Bible is the cause of its lack of influence. He says that thirty six million young men and women of this country have never been in a Church and thousands of them have not heard of the Ten Commandments.

Great leaders are the product of the times and if the people are rotting morally, the leaders do not meet high standards. We have today, dishonesty, corruption, selfishness and unmorality in our business, social and political life, and we are producing many leaders equally faultless. Our only hope for our own and the world's salvation is a return to God and his way of living—to a knowledge of the Ten Commandments and their practice in our lives.—Ionia County News.

Organized Church Not To Be Scorned

Every once in a while you run up on a citizen of Birmingham who tries to impress you with the broadness of his religious viewpoint by taking a few pot shots at the churches of the nation. The speaker will tell about helping other human beings in distress, and exhibit every sign of superiority over those who worship in organized churches in the name of their religion.

It is rather seldom that these talkers realize that without the organized churches of the past it is highly improbable that they would know very much about religion. It is worse than that. Without the organized churches of the past it is doubtful if our present civilization even vaguely would be as good as it is. The critics of the church are quite willing to accept the fruits of its work, but they are not always just enough to give credit where it is due.

Before long most of us will be reading reviews of what took place in 1937. Lists of events, compiled by experienced chroniclers, will stress various "important" occurrences and developments.

What Is Important About You Today?

It might be interesting to average, therefore obscure, parents in Birmingham to realize that the birth of a little baby, the hard-won battle in the secrecy of some human heart, or even the youthful understanding that came to a pair of lovers may have been the one really important happening of the year, destined to play a vital part in the progress of humanity.

Don't smile at the above idea too quickly. Somewhere in the world, in 1937, lives the leader of the civilization of 1970. Perhaps he, or she, rubs elbows with you, and has been influenced in life or character by your attitude, or what you do. More interesting, perhaps, is the idea that you might be the leader yourself—and there's no reason to laugh this off.

My Country, 'Tis of Thee

By T. H. MILLINGTON
MODERN CIVILIZATION WHO MADE IT?

In the two preceding issues of this column we discussed briefly the parts played by inventors and capitalists in the production of labor-saving devices, and which in turn have produced what we call modern civilization.

T. H. MILLINGTON

We must of course, not forget the part played by skilled labor. While invention and capital furnish the idea, plans and facilities for production of a much needed device, the production of it cannot take place without labor. But right here, we must define the word "labor" when used in this connection.

It is a basic principal that wealth can be produced only by the cooperation of natural resources, capital and labor. But there are persons, notably the labor agitators, who emphasize the importance of common labor too much and do not put enough emphasis on the so-called white collar worker. It is due to this error that, in their own minds, common labor is of more importance to industry than it really is.

I do not mean that common labor is not important. It is. But its abundance is so great that its supply is not a problem. Then too, in an emergency, a skilled worker and an educated person can perform common labor, but the common laborer can never replace those who are skilled and educated. An educated and trained mechanic may become lazy and shiftless until he is good for nothing but a common laborer. Could common labor, by laziness, become skilled?

What is meant by the term labor is, of course, any and all human endeavor which may be required to produce the desired article. Under such a definition, we recognize that mental exertion is labor, and that mere thinking is a form of labor often far more exhausting than manual labor. It is apparent, therefore, that the president of a big corporation may do the hardest and most important work of all.

In fact, being the president, he has the whole responsibility of making a success of the enterprise, while a laborer can come and go without causing any great loss. Yes, it is the president who gets the most abuse from labor.

All of this is elementary, yet it seems to be lost sight of in these labor agitations.

After all, it is brains and sound ideas, in both capital and human efforts that make for progress. Capitalism and labor are the same thing so far as concerns the need of brains, sound judgment and constructive effort.

When labor goes on strikes, siezes plants and makes demands that cannot be met, it hinders the production of wealth, and so increases its cost to itself and to everybody else. When labor associates to improve its skill and so raise its ability, that is constructive. But to use the power which members and organization give, to force unjust compensations, is little short of highway robbery.

Strikers, of course, are a part of our modern civilization. But they are not a productive part. They have not created wealth, but tend to destroy, and actually, often do destroy.

Common labor has done nothing to create modern civilization. It was there, always, before the dawn of history. It needs someone else to plan and direct it. The ability to think, plan and direct is rare. And because it is rare, it commands higher rewards. It is brains that can initiate and manage, that command these higher rewards, and that is only because they are rare. However, for that very reason, labor is one of industry's problems. Inasmuch as the wage earner of today must be able to buy automobiles, radios, washing machines and innumerable other products of industry, in order that industry may prosper, it is necessary that wages be much greater than before the war.

The wage earner's monthly payments for all of these things very nearly equals the total sum of his pay before the war. And there is still food, shelter and clothing to be paid for. In this fact lies a sound reason for higher pay. A way to pay it must be and will be found. But not through highwayman tactics.

Jots 'n Jest

MEXICAN bandits are causing trouble on the Texas border again. Which gives United States reason to annex Mexico if the Japanese procedure is to be followed.

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Carmel, Calif., noted for its colony of artists and writers, reports infestation of squirrels. That calamity has been forecast for a long time.

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American influence is noted strongly in Britain. King George is accused of "saying nothing" in a speech, after the custom of U. S. politicians.

THE VICIOUS CIRCLE

WASHINGTON LETTER

BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Farm Problem Puzzles Congress, Drafting New Crop Control Bill

WASHINGTON.—Before the 75th Congress adjourns and congressmen go home to mend their political nets for the 1938 elections, assuredly there will be new farm legislation embodying what is said to be the best of the old, and even better new features.

The new streamlined farm program, it is estimated, will cost anywhere from $600,000,000 to a billion dollars a year.

For this sizable outlay of federal money, farmers are fairly sure to have the present "soil conservation" program continued. This would include payments to farmers for the transfer of crop land from "soil depleting crops" to "soil building crops," and production quotas for cotton, wheat, corn, tobacco and rice.

The old AAA voluntary adjustment programs probably will be revived with benefit payments for farmer co-operation which is given a new name: "production goals."

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SECRETARY of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace has long sponsored an "ever normal granary" and it is likely he will see provision made for his system in the new farm law.

Under such a system producers of cotton, wheat, corn, rice and tobacco would store up enough of their crop in good years to see them through lean years, and for promises to reduce their acreage they would receive commodity loans.

A device for maintaining "parity price" for the farmer under the old AAA probably will be adapted in the new law and described as a "parity income" policy. Thus when it is not economically safe to boost commodity prices to "parity" levels, there will be provision for making benefit payments to bring farmer income into line with the ratio between farmer and non-farmer incomes from 1909 to 1914.

Processing taxes on cotton and wheat undoubtedly will be revived, for Roosevelt insists that the increased cost of the new farm program, over and above $500,000,000 a year which finances the current program, must come out of new revenue.

Secretary Wallace is of the opinion that new processing taxes are the answer. But the House Agriculture Committee has turned this problem over to the Ways and Means Committee which will probably not be in sympathy with administration recommendations on this point. A majority of its members are known to be opposed to processing taxes.

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SECRETARY WALLACE will run into a lot of opposition in Congress to his "ever normal granary" plan, which he defends by saying some form of compulsory control could be imposed to keep reserves of surpluses from growing to unhealthy abundance.

Others, including Chairman Marvin Jones of the House Agriculture Committee, contend that our farmers will suffer in the export markets if control is compulsory, and that voluntary control as under the old AAA is sufficient to our needs.

Those involved in reconciling the differences of farmer groups, those interested in farmer purchasing power, and blocs for and against the administration farm plan in Congress, do not seem to give a thought to the fate of proposed farm legislation if it is referred to the Supreme Court.

Southern Democratic leaders in Congress will use the farm bill fight as a fever in their attempt to pry party leadership from Roosevelt.

RANDOM REMARKS

Franklin D. Roosevelt:
"Speculation in news stories is just as dangerous as speculation on the stock market."

Henry A. Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture:
"Humanity everywhere is hungry both for a new freedom and a new discipline."

Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary:
"Whatever action is taken in the Far Eastern dispute does depend essentially upon the cooperation of the United States."

Lady Wright, English horsewoman:
"Any fool can drink a cocktail."

Rouben Mamoulian, movie director:
"The motion picture industry is no different from the underwear industry."

Alfred Rosenberg, German publicist:
"The domination of women is responsible for the low cultural level of America."

Charles Evans Hughes, Chief Justice:
"There will always be a multitude who are congenitally unable to think straight."

Joseph W. Martin, Jr., Chairman Republican Congressional Committee:
"If there is going to be any future for the Republican Party, it must rest with the next election to Congress."

Alfred M. Landon, Republican nominee in 1936:
"I reference it (the Constitution) because it is so intensely practical—because it works if you give it a chance to work."

Vyachlesloff Molokoff, Soviet Premier:
"Soviet foreign policy has been consistent throughout the years. It is a policy of peace."

Stanley Baldwin, former British Prime Minister:
"Courage, discipline and efficiency are as necessary to democracy as they are to dictatorships."

PARAGRAPHS

American Place Names.
Presenting: Ideal, S. Dakota and Perfect, Ark.

In An "Advisory Capacity"
Probable advice of the President's six helpers: "Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes."—Columbia State.

Observation.
The only thing the modern girl can cook like mother used to do is a bachelor's goose.—Answers.

Conflicting.
Conflicting advices pour in from the growing areas. Bumper crops are seen in some, while in Idaho the bottom is falling out of a farm.—Detroit News.

Can't.
As long as disgust for those who rob the public is nine parts envy we can expect many effective reforms.—Whitsitt Impressions.

Suggestion Dept.
They keep saying the next great war will be with insects. Il Duce versus the Mediterranean fruit fly would be something.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Ignorant.
A blessed event in an Iowa trailer reveals the law there forbids a child to be born in a vehicle, a thing the average Iowa babe possibly does not know.—San Francisco Chronicle.

In These Parlous Times
A reporter of curiosities finds a western steer with four horns. Any peacemaker today will tell him this isn't many for a dilemma.—Chicago Daily News.

Handsome Is, Etc.
People are better looking than they used to be, according to a leading beauty expert. Well, our faces may not be so homely, but neither are our virtues.—Worcester Gazette.

Questionable.
There is a man in this neighborhood who knows exactly how the election is going to come out by states, but he also believes in the weather forcasts for the coming week—The Columbus Ohio State Journal.

Congressional Comment by Representative George A. Dondero

CONGRESSIONAL COMMENT
No. 6

"The administration of government, like a guardianship, ought to be directed to the good of those who confer, not of those who receive, the trust."
—Cicero

The United State House of Representatives has a membership of 435, the Representatives being elected by districts that are appointed according to population. Each member is elected for a term of two years and the entire membership of the House is subject to election biennially.

Membership of the House has varied from 65, the number provided for in the constitutional apportionment, to 435. The present membership was first reached in the 1910 census; no apportionment was based on the 1920 census; and the apportionment based on the 1930 census maintained the membership at 435.

The apportionment based on the 1930 census was made by the system known as the method of major fractions, which as applied to a House of 435 mebers, gave each State as many Representatives as the whole number of times 279,712 was contained in the total population of the State, plus an additional Representative if the fractional remainder was greater than onehalf. This gave Michigan an increase of four Representatives.

In addition to the above number, Alaska and Hawaii are represented by Delegates; the Philippines and Puerto Rico, by Resident Commissioners. Anthony J. Dimond of Valdez is the Delegate from Alaska; Samuel W. King of Honolulu, the Delegate from Hawaii; Quintin Paredes of Bangued, Abra, the Resident Commissioner for the Commonwealth of the Philippines; and Santiago Iglesias of San Juan, the Resident Commissioner for Puerto Rico.

Frederick A. C. Muhlenberg of Pennsylvania was the first Speaker of the House of Representatives, serving in that capacity for the 1st and 3rd Congresses. Jonathan Trumbull of Connecticut was the presiding officer of the House of Representatives for the 2nd Congress. The Hon. Wm. B. Bankhead of Alabama is the present Speaker. The Hon. David B. Henderson of Iowa was the Speaker at the turn of the century. Joseph G. Cannon of Illinois, Champ Clark of Missouri, Frederick C. Gillett of Massachusetts, Nicholas Longworth of Ohio, John N. Garner of Texas, Henry R. Rainey of Illinois, Joseph W. Byrnes of Tennessee, and the present Speaker followed in the order named.

The first Congress, under the Constitution, consisted of three sessions; the 1st and 2nd sessions were held in New York convening on March 4, 1789 and January 4, 1790, repectively; the 3rd session met in Philadelphia on December 6, 1790. All of the sessions of the 3nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Congresses and the first session of the 6th Congress were held in Philadelphia; all subsequent sessions have been held in Washington. The first session of the 1st Congress, although convened on March 4, 1789, did not have a quorum in both houses until the 6th of April.

Five Congressional districts of Michigan, the 1st, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th, are entirely within Wayne county. The 17th district includes within its boundaries all of Oakland county, the 22nd Ward of the city of Detroit, and the townships of Northville, Livonia, Plymouth, and Redford, in Wayne county. It has a population (1930) of 318,146. Only New York Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, Texas, and California have larger delegations in the U. S. House of Representatives than Michigan.

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