The Birmingham Eccentric

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 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 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.

Schools Opening Again

Public schools open again in the United States and millions of children will pursue their studies in the hope of being educated.

The basic idea behind education in the old days was that it helped a man or woman "get along in life." Education as an end in itself was not the goal but rather education was a means to a more successful life. It will be well for school boards and school men to remember this as they plan the school work.

Teachers everywhere have great responsibility as they contact the young people who study under them and are obliged to obey them. More than ever, in many communities, the character of the boys and girls depends upon the teachers they have in the public schools. Most of the instructors are not unduly rewarded financially for their work but, with rare exceptions, they take a great interest in the welfare of their pupils.

Without having any particular subject in mind, or without suggesting that this has not been done in Birmingham, the school officials should constantly seek to make instruction more practical and definitely align school work with the world in which the itely align school work with the world in which the pupils will eventually live. New subjects should be incorporated into the year's calendar in order that the growing child will come out of school up-to-date, at least.

Insists The World Is Flat

The world is still flat, says Wilbur Glen Voliva, religious leader of Zion, Ill., who thinks that the recent flight of the Russian aviators across the North Pole confirmed his theory that the world is saucer-shaped.

While we have it on the authority of the best minds that the world is round, there is nothing to prevent Overseer Voliva from sticking to his theory.

We may be inclined to smile at what we consider the vagary of the idea that he abides by but, just the same, how about our own ideas? Are we willing to check up on them? We build much of our life upon theories that are handed down to us and we exhibit, as a rule, no great willingness to question them. In fact, we are more inclined to consider them settled and our minds at ease.

That most of our accepted ideas are correct happens to be lucky for us, but that every individual's thinking includes some fallacies is certain. Until human beings possess the absolute in truth there is sure to be error in the thinking of man, and where there is error there should be the desire to correct the mistake. To understand this is to begin to possess an open mind and that is to begin the road toward wisdom.

British Social Services

Great Britain is not considered a communistic or socialist State and yet, we are advised, the total annual cost of social services in 1934 was $2,000,000,000. Since the population of Great Britain is little more than one-third that of the United States this amount is nearly equivalent to $6,000,000,000 a year in this country.

A recent report of British social services finds that it includes three categories:

(1) Constructive Community Services—education, public health, medical care, care of the mentally diseased, care of the blind, unemployment exchanges, training centers, etc.

(2) Social Insurance Services—national health insurance, unemployment insurance, and widows', orphans' and old-age contributory pensions.

(3) Social Assistance Services—non-contributory old-age pensions, unemployment assistance (the "dole"), and other services of local public assistance.

The money taken from the taxpayers' pockets for these services increased eight times between 1900 and 1934. The various services touch about one-half of the total population "at a dozen or more points during the course of a lifetime."

Space does not permit a more detailed report of the facts disclosed by the survey of the British social services, but what has been written is enough to emphasize the trend of this phase of governmental activity and to indicate that the United States will probably follow British footsteps and develop and expand the social services that have been initiated here.

Hunters Need To Be Careful!

Now that the hunting season is about to get under way throughout Michigan it might be well to remind readers of The Eccentric of the dangers inherent in the hunting season.

Scores of nimrods are cut down every year through the premature discharge of weapons, carelessly handled. Other victims fall a prey to the nervous hunter who shoots at the bushes that move rather than at game in full view.

Those who hunt this fall and winter might save their own lives by rigorously observing safety codes. In addition, they might spare innocent bystanders.

Let's Hold To "Freedom"

The present "absolute freedom of the press" says Cardinal Villeneuve, of Quebec, Canada, accords the license" to teach all error, gossip all calumny and provide revolutionaries with a means to sing the benefits of revolution."

The only defense against the teaching of error is the teaching of truth. To prevent the gossip of calumny it is mainly necessary that individuals abstain from its practice and to avoid evil from the singing of the benefits of revolution it is only necessary to make real the virtues of existing government.

We are not among those who believe that the newspapers of the world, and of this country, have never abused their freedom. There have been many cases where the press has gone too far and some instances where it has not gone far enough. However, what the world needs today is not suppression but enlarged freedom.

Let the false prophets proclaim their own conclusions. Intelligent people know the answer and need not be protected by a barrier raised by those who are just as apt to be in error as in the right. To permit any power to prevent the exercise of free speech, free press and free worship—inalienable rights of a free people—is to deliver the progress of a people into the hands of a few.

The fear that "liberty of the press in modern society" grants newspaper men "the opportunity to poison as well as falsify public opinion" is shared by some important personages, notably Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and others. However, be it said for the press, it is not the only agency that has been guilty, at times, of falsifying public opinion or of poisoning the minds of men, as well.

China Must Save Herself

The outbreak of real fighting between Chinese and Japanese troops, brought about by attempts of the latter to take possession of Chinese cities, starts a struggle that may last much longer than most of us think, with more important developments to take place later on.

Sympathy of the world, generally, we would say, is with the Chinese, but even these venerable people have discovered that world sympathy will not win battles. They know now that the freedom of China rests upon the fighting ability of the Chinese soldier and that nothing but the exertion of China will prevent the Japanese from mastering the entire country.

There is, at least, a small lesson for pacifists in the present situation. No one, so far as we know, accused the Chinese of attempting to invade Japan or infringe upon the sovereignty of the island empire. The Chinese, as a matter of fact, have taken a steady drubbing from the little brown soldiers for years, and the Japanese have steadily encroached upon the territory of China.

Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of China, is an extremely able man and it is possible that his millions of people have been organized for effective resistance to Japanese might. The price to be paid, however, will be heavy loss of life; but there is this to be said: Japan cannot afford to squander too much national strength in a long drawn-out struggle in China. If the Chinese continue their resistance, even in the face of major defeats, the Japanese will, in the end, lose the war.

The attitude of the United States to this new warfare, by virtue of the neutrality act, will be to cut herself off from trading relations except under conditions that will favor Japan. This, we do not believe, will have the support of the people of the nation, regardless of the fevor with which certain Congressmen pressed for neutrality legislation.

The Japanese, it is said, fear that outside powers might attempt to exert some pressure in the Far East. They suspect the British. Later, they will probably suspect the United States. Meanwhile, they count on the trouble in Spain to keep European nations busy and America's aversion to war to keep us out of the struggle.

What You Save Counts In End

Some weeks ago we read an article by an actor in Hollywood who explained that his $2,000 a week salary went largely to the peculiar expenses connected with keeping up a front at the movie capital, and that therefore he had decided that the stress and strain was too much for the balance left in his bank account.

This comes to mind when we read a dispatch from Los Angeles, saying that Jean Harlow, whose earnings were $4,000 a week when she died, left an estate valued at only $41,000, with some claims outstanding against this total.

Apparently, as many a man in minor place his discovered, there is a wide difference between the gross and the net income, even in the wonderland of the moving pictures.

Dictators Scoff At Democracy

There must be a reason why German and Italian dictators gibe at democracy. The leaders of these dictator-controlled States seldom lose an opportunity to denounce the democratic processes of other countries.

While the denunciation of Communism has first place in their invective oratory, they delight in lambasting the inefficiency of democracy. As Paul Joseph Goebbels, German Propaganda Minister, expressed himself, democratic governments are "waiting on events and realizing the catastrophe only when it is too late." Moreover, they have failed to realize that democracy is "finished."

It might be a good thing for individuals like Hitler, Mussolini and Goebbels that democracies "wait." Otherwise, they might not put up with such foolish oratory without taking effective steps to enlighten dictators as to the power of democracies.

HUMAN BEINGS INCLUDE geniuses, fools, and average persons. The experts have never been able to agree, beforehand, just "who is who" in this listing.

IN ENGLAND, there are an average of six unmarried girls and women to every available unmarried man. That's only one of the results of WAR, ladies.

DOES THE WOMAN who calls her husband several kinds of a fool mean that his taste in selecting a mate was foolish, too?

THE ONLY WAY to obtain efficient team work is to emulate the horses—pull together.

SLOW GOING

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

— By T. H. MILLINGTON —

Has America Changed

Looking back over a half-century of a layman's observation of American business life and political evolution, the question forces itself upon me, has life in America changed? I do not mean such changes as follow in the wake of modern inventions. What I refer to is the citizen's personal attitude towards government. Is the degree of self-government increasing or decreasing? Does the citizens exist for the benefit of government or does government still, as contemplated in the Constitution, exist for the benefit of the citizens? In 1888, during the election of Benjamin Harrison, for whom I cast my first vote, I lived in a booming lumber town where most men went armed. The total number of saloons and houses of ill-fame exceeded that of all other business houses. Yet there were few men in the jail. I know, because a few of us formed a chorus which visited the jail every Sunday and sang for the inmates. Social work and charity work in those days was considered a personal duty and Christian privilege. But there were those who were so ardent against the use of alcohol that, already then, the slogan "there ought to be a law" produced prohibition candidates for political office.

T. H. MILLINGTON

And so the country has continued for fifty years passing more and more reform laws, in various ways restricting the individual and increasing the power of the government until today that power reaches into every man's daily life.

Have Social Reform Laws Helped?

But are there less people in jail? No! Or fewer people in want? They say not. Are there proportionately more volunteer social workers and less suffering among the poor? No!

Social welfare work has become professional; has become a career. Colleges give courses in the subject and it has at last come into politics where it can tap the public till for furthering careers. It has become big business paying princely salaries. All this has added tremendously to the cost of government and, if the increase of government expense is any criterion, there should no longer be any poor and needy.

The amount of government expenditures for various social objects are now greater than the regular expenses of government and nearly twice as much as the National income from dividends and interest.

But what does our President say?

He lifts his radio-idol voice in eloquent plea, not only to high Heaven, but to the prospective recipients of the benefits sought, for "the one-third of our population" (mind you, one-third he says) insufficiently housed, insufficiently clothed, and insufficiently fed—they have many votes, you know.

In other words, where fifty years ago such unfortunates were rare, today, by Presidential authority, we are told that they comprise **one-third of the Nation.** For seven years the President has been pouring out money and still **One-third** of our people need help. One naturally wonders what has resulted from all the work and all the money expended on their behalf for the past half-century. How much of the vast government expenditures are going to sustain personal careers in social work and what portion actually goes to the poor?

There is still another picture persistently intruding itself upon one's mental vision of these problems. That is the cost to the government; the burden upon the taxpayer.

Social Reform Cost

In 1887 the total public Federal debt was only approximately one and a half billion dollars. In 1914 it was slightly over one billion dollars or only $12.00 per capita, has becomes big business paying it was 24 billion dollars. By 1930 this had been reduced to 16 billion dollars.

It has been said that too much impractical idealism, that is: too strong a feeling that the great, prosperous, happy and benevolent United States should show the world how to conduct a successful government, how to "make the world safe for democracy," and what kind of government nations ought to have, that is: nations too small to refuse the political medicine proffered to them, is what brought us into the World War.

Well, if our pride, conceit and impractical idealism ran away with us, we have paid for it through the nose.

Our idealism for the rest of the world, especially in Europe, did not work out and financial disasters overtook them one after another until at last in 1929 and 1930 it hit us.

That was the opportunity, in the United States, for the political quacks and reformers of every sort. Everybody had a cure, "there ought to be a law," etc., etc., and, finally in 1932, **the Great Savior of the Poor and downtrodden** was elected into office.

Needs More Than Ever

To be sure, we were not told before election what his plans were. But we have found out since and, at what a cost! From 19 billions in 1932, the public debt is now 37 billions or about 300 dollars per capita, and an increase of 1800% between 1914 and 1937, exclusive of the World War cost.

Still he, the President, sings his social refrain, the trilogy of insufficiencies; housing, clothing and food and, now everyone of the "underprivileged one-third" of our population must eventually be furnished at the taxpayers' expense, homes worth from 4000 to 5000 dollars.

That the majority of taxpayers live in homes of less cost and less modernity is of no consequence. The political doxology, consisting of the three soul-stirring insufficiencies, is sounded at frequent intervals whenever the President finds himself in a corner on some other question. That is his sympathy from the over-sentimental, who delight in thinking that it is the wicked and ungodly rich who will pay for it. To be generous with other peoples money is distinctly a New Deal sport.

So, I am wondering whither the path leads.

Review of Costs

For the sake of emphasis, permit me to repeat: from 1914, when political and social idealism came into power, until today, the public debt has increased from $12.00 per capita to the great sum of $300.00, and the end is not yet. The President says **one-third of the Nation,** etc. still needs help. From 1887 to 1914, we innocently believed in self-help, except in emergencies.

The reformers have helped themselves and their friends to jobs and profits. But have they helped the poor?

Following The Wrong Road

And now, this writer, who is past the allotted three score years and ten, when no longer personal ambition hold allurement nor any charm; when one's thoughts of the future are necessarily impersonal, I find in prospect no happy terminal to the road upon which professionalized charities have forced this Nation to embark.

The brains that produced employment and wealth have been discredited and pilloried as wicked "economic Royalists." The President has departed from the position of being **"President of all the people."** In Madison Square Garden he pronounced himself "the Master of one group and arraigned himself as savior of another."

Numbers have given political power through their votes, but the power to create wealth, to furnish employment, does not lie in numbers. It lies in brains. It lies in the individual and not in the mob. Everyone of our gadgets that go to make up modern life is the invention of an individual; an individual conceived the idea of creating a business out of some invention and a new source of employment was created. But, when taxes absorb savings, whence shall come new enterprise?

A nation that puts its faith in numbers instead of in brains and ability will become a nation of guinea pigs.

Honor the poor and curse the thrifty is a strange idea upon which to build National happiness.

Yes, this country has changed!

Whose Fault?

The important question is: Is the encroachment of government into our private affairs a deliberate design and intent on the part of the President and his cohorts or has the voter, through political indolence and neglect, become unfit for self-government and thereby has opened the door to Federal control? Is the American employer so shortsighted and selfish that a government agent must watch his every move lest he cheat the customer or enslave his employees?

I do not believe it. The American worker is the highest paid and most comfortable in the world.

I recommend reading the American System, by S. Wells Utley, for sale at Bodine's News Store. It will prove that the American workman got his fair share during the depression when corporations operated at a loss.

Random Remarks

Nikolai Sokoloff, symphony orchestra conductor:

"Millions in this country are yearning for fine music."

Rafael Martinez Nadal, Puerto Rican political leader, commenting on Kent mural:

"It is a libel, a calumny and a gran insulto' to our culture."

Franklin D. Roosevelt:

"World conditions are no better than they seem to be to those of us who read the newspapers."

Daniel C. Roper, Secretary of Commerce:

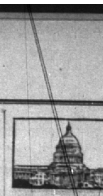
"Barring war, the country will soon witness a major surge of fall business."

John L. Lewis, chairman, C. I. O.:

"Do those who have hatched the foolish cry of communism in the C. I. O. fear the increased influence of labor in our democracy?"

William Green, president, A. F. of L.:

"If there had been no Committee for Industrial Organization set up, there would be no division within the ranks of labor."



WASHINGTON LETTER

BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Action on Delayed School Aid Plan Seen at Next Session of Congress

WASHINGTON.—The nation's school children trooped back to classes this year with the question of future government aid for state and local educational programs still undecided.

There are indications that the next session of Congress may deal finally with the problem which was sidetracked by an economy drive in the recently concluded session.

Four years ago the cry "School's out" went up, and it was evident that many communities could not hope to open their schools again unless help came from Washington. In 1933 appropriations were made for direct spending for educational purposes, for grants and loans to states, which up to now have amounted to almost half a million dollars.

The government has always assisted the states in a program of public education, at an average cost of $20,000,000 a year before the depression.

* * *

AT the last session of Congress, the Harrison-Fletcher-Black bill for placing government aid to education on a permanent basis was introduced and favorably reported by the Senate Education committee. It then went to the House Education committee, but the next day the President blasted all hope of immediate passage with his message on economy.

The bill is on the calendar for consideration at the next session. It will require the signatures of only 11 of the 21 members to get it out of the House committee and onto the floor.

The measure proposes an original expenditure of $100,000,000 for grants to states. This appropriation would be increased $50,000,000 a year for four years, and after that would be stabilized at $300,000,000 annually.

Criticism of the bill is directed mainly at the population basis proposed for the distribution of federal money. Objectors to this feature maintain that grants to states on the basis of child population, regardless of states' ability to support their own educational programs, would not eliminate the existing inequalities in educational opportunities.

* * *

WHEN the bill was shelved, the President asked his special advisory committee on education to prepare a report for him before Congress met again. The committee was organized in September, 1936, to make a survey of vocational education. It is composed of five government officials, three offices of labor organizations, four business men, seven educators, a sociologist, a home economist and an agricultural economist.

Last April, at Mr. Roosevelt's request, the committee put aside its study of vocational education to consider the relations of the federal government to state and local conduct of education. With a staff of 73 trained research workers, the study is being hurried toward a December deadline.

Several members of the committee are on record in favor of the Harrison bill as it is drafted. Others, opposed to the population basis, will make substitute recommendations.

An official of the National Education Association, which is behind the bill, says, "the population basis is the only one for which the government can use its own figures."

This refers to the 1930 census, as against records kept by localities of average daily attendance or enrollment. He also says that "the only alternative is to use the figures submitted by the very persons who would most benefit by what they get from the government."

It is expected, however, that early in the 1938 session the President will send a message to Congress creating permanent federal subsidies to keep the nation's schools open in good years and bad alike.

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.

The Birmingham Eccentric,
Birmingham, Mich.
To the Editor:

Birmingham is to be congratulated for the projected acquisition of a new postoffice.

Last year Senator Prentiss M. Brown requested of the Postoffice Department that a survey be made relative to the request of Birmingham citizens for a new building and this request was acceded to by officials of the Postoffice Department.

It was pointed out at the time that Birmingham was growing faster than any other community in Oakland County from the standpoint of new homes, that due to its location it would eventually grow to be a much bigger city than at present, and that of all the cities in this area it was most deserving of a new building at this time. Evidently the investigations of the Department bore out these facts.

It is to be hoped at this time that a sufficient number of good sites be made available so that a proper selection may be made. From the standpoint of population and carriers a central location, such as the Civic Center, would be desirable. For the more distant users, parking space is necessary and it has been suggested that a location in the vicinity of East Maple Avenue might be suitable, possibly along the new Woodward right of way. To provide for future growth of Birmingham an ample site should be selected, so that possible additions may be made without entailing too much cost for additional land.

I feel that the Postoffice Department is also to be congratulated for acceding to requests of local residents for an additional postal route, and this was followed out.

Very truly yours,
Ralph I. Coryell,
632 Oak Street.

Only Objection

Arabs are reported trading in camels as down payments on motorcars. The objection we see to the camel as a vehicle is that its upholstery is always coming out.
—Milwaukee Journal.

Not Much

The House appropriates only $1,000,000 to cover the grasshopper situation in the West. It doesn't give very much spending money to the individual grasshopper.—Detroit News.

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