

The Birmingham Eccentric

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NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have new value and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper...

Over in Mason, near Lansing, there lives a 69-year-old man who, for 35 years, has been caretaker of some "Friendly Voices" of the public schools...

But now this man, whose name is Roy Parks, is without good health and good vision, his optical difficulty now makes it impossible for him to recognize others on the street...

To a few of his close friends he has expressed a desire "to hear friendly voices." And this news, coming to the desk of The Ingham County News editor, Vernon J. Brown and his son, Nelson, last week caused them to write a front-page article...

That was splendid journalistic cooperation, of course. And we know that the people of Mason, reading it, will do their part to bring more "voices of friendliness" into the remaining years of the faithful school caretaker.

The incident, perhaps trifling to the world at large, does, however, symbolize the eternal human desire for friendship—and whether in Mason, in a lonely cross-road on the prairie, or in a teeming metropolitan city, the plight of Roy Parks may be duplicated in the lives of others...

Because many intelligent readers of this newspaper do not understand its policy in regard to the publication of communications, sent to the editor, by way of state, briefly, the attitude of The Eccentric.

News items are always welcome. Under this heading comes death, weddings, accidents, public meetings, community undertakings, and many other matters. In sending in contributions by way of nature the writer is helping us make a better newspaper. However, many items of this class are omitted because the contributor does not sign his, or her name, which is desired, not for publication, but for identification and to evidence good faith.

Expressions of opinion are also welcome, provided they are fairly intelligent and brief. Letters that do not have to coincide with the editorial policy of this journal, but they are subjected to an editorial judgment as to their value and general appeal to readers. Remember, our columns are for only two purposes, to bring what interests readers, and advertising to bring in revenue for us and business for the advertiser. As a general rule, letters to the editor are printed and it is only rarely that a lengthy epistle about an unimportant matter is refused space in The Eccentric.

The death of Andrew W. Mellon removes one of the great industrialists of the nation, one of the "rugged individualists" of the age according to the prevailing code with great profit to himself.

The great fortune that he left will go largely to charity, according to his family, which has been provided for through earlier gifts. It is estimated to be more than \$200,000,000 some years ago. His estate had been reduced by extensive gifts to charity as well as by distribution to his two children.

His attorney says that in the last few years of his life the Pennsylvania gave away more than \$70,000,000, which includes the valuable art collection presented to the nation, together with \$15,000,000 building and a \$5,000,000 endowment. Significantly, it is noted, the banker stipulated that the great gallery should not bear his name.

For eleven years Mr. Mellon served as Secretary of the Treasury under three Republican Presidents. During his term of office the national debt was reduced by about \$4,000,000,000 dollars and then increased in the last year as depression financing created a deficit.

The monument that he leaves, however, is not public service, but generous giving. The national art gallery will cause him to be remembered long after the public debt and political developments of this era are forgotten.

COOPERATION MEANS more than having the other fellow agree with you, doesn't it? The type of cooperation is the mingling of good ideas in a single objective for all concerned, and the other chap's notions may be better than your own.

The other day the government of the United States closed its fiscal year, but what does the average citizen know about the affairs of the federal government? For that matter, what does the average inhabitant of Birmingham know about the fiscal management of the affairs of his home town, his home county and his home state? We regret to report that they know practically nothing, and it is not altogether the fault of the people.

The operation of governments is not a matter for the average citizen to know about. It is a matter which they may be. Government, in this country, is a partnership of all the people, and the officials in charge should render an accounting to their co-partners. Just how this is to be done, we do not particularly care. The best way that we know for the people of a government to be acquainted with the fiscal affairs of their officials is for the officials to advertise their financial statements regularly.

There are laws in many states requiring this, but financial publicity should be required of all public agencies spending money, from the federal government down to the least official board, including school boards.

Back in 1932 there grew up in Michigan a statewide resentment against payroll adding and the rapid growth of public employment. To be sure, that was a time when state revenues had fallen to a low point and when the general public was in such distress of mind that it was easily aroused. Now that the panic is over, it appears that the people of the state have forgotten all that went with the repudiation of the regime then in power.

As a matter of fact, more public jobs have been created since 1932 than existed at that time. Moreover more public money is now being expended on the jobs than was expended in all governmental departments previous to 1932.

The Detroit Times has recently turned some of its reporters loose on the job of running down the cause of all this public waste. Its disclosures are causing some worry in administrative circles. Not even the promise of a civil service system is going to keep the public mind long at ease on this subject.

For instance, there is one job-dispensing spruce that stands out like a sore thumb in Michigan politics. This news comes with particular force because the man elected to that office in 1936 is editor of a weekly newspaper published in a small town in southwestern Michigan—Waterford, to be more explicit. Leon D. Case went about among his constituency in 1932 declaring himself an exponent of economy in public office. He was elected to the state senate that year and again in 1934. In 1936 he was a primary candidate for lieutenant governor but was not given the nomination by his party.

Later in the state convention he was named as the standard bearer of his party for secretary of state. Good, honest Leon D. Case received a lot of votes and a lot of support because of his record. He was elected to office and his friends expected good things from him.

The Times reporter finds that the payroll of Mr. Case's department has been increased by the addition of 311 appointees. Indeed, it was only a few weeks ago when the fire marshal declared the packed corridors of the upper floors of the secretary of state's offices in the state capitol constituted a fire menace which would have to be corrected. The public did not understand at the time that congestion had been caused by jamming 841 persons into offices formerly occupied by 130 working employees who as far as is known did all that the public service requires.

A year ago in July it required \$27,171.20 to meet the regular semi-monthly payroll. In July of this year the state treasury was nicked to the tune of \$49,035.61 for a two weeks payroll. Besides the added employees a \$1100 increase for Bernard Youngblood, Case's deputy, helped increase the department payroll. Once the deputy received a salary of \$5000 but that was cut back by the legislature and the legislature cut the salary of the secretary of state to \$4800 mark, but the Auditor General's records show Youngblood is receiving \$6000, 11000 more than the state constitution gives the governor.

Youngblood must be an important personage for the best excuse Mr. Case is able to give for his big department is that it is for political campaign employees had been added to his department by Deputy Youngblood without his, Mr. Case's knowledge. Rather a lame excuse which the public can scarcely be expected to accept.—Rep. Vern J. Brown in the Ingham County News.

Leaders of The Eccentric may remember that Mr. Brown led a drive in Governor Bevelock's administration against rising cost of State Government. The Eccentric published his articles at the time.

"No more jokes, Murry," said Frank Converse last week in New York as he died in a hospital where he was taken after being shot by a policeman who cornered him in a cellar.

Too Quick When he saw a man with a pair of horns, his arm grabbed them as a lark but when the stranger mechanically shouted, "Stop thief!"

Policemen took up the chase, cornered the boy in the cellar, called to him to come out and when he didn't come out, opened fire. Three bullets hit him, but he was not hurt.

There is much to be said about the dangers that police officers face in their work, but little excuse for killing a foolish young man for taking a pair of trousers. Policemen carry guns for self-defense and as a last resort, but the laying of petty tricks does not come under that exception, and the blundering officer should be punished.

Just to add to the sum total of the knowledge of various facts possessed by readers of The Eccentric we call attention to the recent disclosure that a boat had been placed in the Atlantic ocean, off the coast of New Foundland, will make it trip to Ireland in slightly less than seven months.

It is not what one would call a speedy drift but for floating it is cheap transportation. The presumption is that a barrel would make the same time across the ocean on the same current.



WASHINGTON LETTER BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Deal-Sponsored Co-Operatives Appear to Be Gaining Headway

WASHINGTON—Although Rexford Tugwell's pet dream to scatter over the countryside hundreds of model rural home-stead projects was shattered by the new Farm Tenancy Act, the town of Greenbelt, Md., modeled by the former brain-truster, will become the first attempt in the United States to run the business of a whole community on a co-operative basis.

Stores, garages, movies, and all other business establishments in this community of 900 families will be owned by their customers under an agreement between the Consumer Distribution Corporation and the federal government. President Roosevelt has a real interest in co-operatives. The study made by a commission of three presidential appointees sent to Europe to report back on co-operative methods in use there is now complete.

There are six true co-operatives in operation now, three in West Virginia, one in Pennsylvania, one in Tennessee and one in New Jersey. In the state of Nebraska there are eight Resettlement projects which have some co-operative enterprise. The method used to encourage co-operatives is to send an agent into an area in need of rehabilitation and to determine whether the residents of the community have the spirit of voluntary co-operation. If it is decided that the project will have practical results it is then established with federal money. The community elects a council which handles all the details of the enterprise but little or no purchasing power before they received government help.

Loans made to co-operative associations can be amortized on a government bond. In some cases the community has as long as 40 years in which to pay for its project.

Arthur Macnally, of British Ministry of Health: "Nervous breakdown and mental diseases give us cause for anxiety, and cannot be dissociated from modern conditions of life."

Bertram Snell, Republican floor-leader in Congress: "The President has not forgotten his Mr. Coolidge reform plans."

Miss Lucy Smoot, school teacher who took a course in baseball at Columbia University: "You have to be awfully smart to play baseball well."

Major Maple T. Harl, national Commander, Disabled American Veterans: "Talk of an organized movement at this time among veterans for a general World War pension is without foundation of fact."

Dr. Gerhard Wagner, Nazi leader for German physicians: "Our aim is not to possess the finest hospitals, but to possess the most of them for them."

Mrs. Chiang Kai-shek, Chinese First Lady: "What Japan is doing is against the will of God and of nature."

OR IS IT? 'My Country, 'Tis of Thee'...

By T. H. MILLINGTON

"Be Not Like Pumb Dumb Driven Cattle by These H. Millingtons. If I actually could talk, no doubt the unequal distribution of work, and service, on the one hand, and the unequal compensation in the way of cost of maintenance and food, on the other would be the chief subject of animal agitation."

Learned men even tell us that the greater wealth than agriculture are due to the products of the cow in milk and meat. But does the low cost of maintenance and grumble about our lack of appreciation? Did you ever hear the heart-rending bawling of a mother cow when her calf is taken from her? It really has a most distressing appeal, but fortunately it is soon forgotten.

I merely allude to this as an example of how the laws of nature have ordained a place and a part for everything and it is required that in that place the assigned task must be done. However, in following this line of thought, one must not become too heated and conclude that similarly humans are not to be profited by his or her niche and there uncomplainingly must function. But if humans are provided with sentimentalism on one hand and the desire to do all in their own estimation, such as Fascism, Nazism or Stalinism.

It is easier to urge the ox than to pull his load. Is there any thing stopping any one of Ford's workers to go and attempt to equal Ford's wealth to the world and create another new industry? There is scarcely a man in the world who does not have more money in his pocket than Ford had to start with. Ungratefulness and envy are two of the meanest qualities in human nature.

Percentage figures to the contrary, the real winner in the National League race between the Giants and Cubs probably will be the one that doesn't have to meet the Yanks in the world series.

Green, says the wise college sophomore, is a word used as a color, a name, or the masculine adjective to describe any freshman.

"She's Serious Now" "Well, how you given John his final answer?" "Not yet, dear; but I've given him his final No."

THE Chinese and Japanese are peaceful people because they eat very little meat, says a prominent vegetarian. Maybe it's only a high-powered publicity gag in the east.

Obviously they call the new dance craze "Big Apple" because it takes a strong limb to keep it up.

Before the discovery of steam and the beginning of the mechanical era, the soil was the means of sustenance. The world was agricultural and its commerce was in the products of the soil. So, of course, in principle, everything comes from the soil today; but there is a difference. The sciences employ a great portion of human-

THE common man in the streets need not worry about checks and balances in the operation of our Government. (Sighing) At a moment—when do you think we can replenish ourselves with another mis-called dividend from the First National Bank? We can both use a little of that now, I assure you, one of the reasons why our people said it with votes in 1932 and again in 1936.

Samuel B. Pettigall, retiring member of Congress from Illinois: "I think four terms in Congress is enough for any man."

August Hecksher, capitalist and philanthropist, on his 89th birthday: "The worst thing in a birthday is to give a man a present; he probably doesn't want it or need it."

Test A large gentleman was one of a party of tourists visiting Palestine. At a hotel he was puzzled to find in his laundry account a charge made for "one tent."

James Gordon Gilkey, preacher: "Keep trying new things, keep undertaking new ventures, keep accumulating responsibilities."

"Tell me, is Mabel still out of her lunatic asylum?" "Yes, the poor girl's down to her lunatic asylum."

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