

The Birmingham Eccentric

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 10, 1939

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. All copy must be presented before noon on Wednesday. The right to use or not use as required. In case of the latter, the paper will be returned to the contributor. The Eccentric is not responsible for the return of copy. Any persons who submit copy to the Eccentric will be held responsible for the return of copy. Any persons who submit copy to the Eccentric will be held responsible for the return of copy.

When he signed the Hatch Bill which restricts the political activities of all persons on the federal payroll, the exception of cabinet members, President Roosevelt last week took extreme pains to point out that this bill does not abridge the ordinary Constitutional rights of persons involved from voicing their beliefs on current issues of the day.

The President said "I have been asked whether they (persons on the federal payroll) would lose their positions if they should merely express their opinion or preference publicly— orally, by radio, or in writing—without doing so as a part of an organized campaign. The answer is no."

Continues the President: "It can hardly be maintained that it is an American way of doing things to allow newspapers, magazines, radio broadcasters, members and employees of the Senate and House of Representatives and all kinds of managers for public office and their friends to make any form of charge, misrepresentation, falsification or vituperation against the acts of any individual or group of individuals employed in the executive branch of the Federal Government with complete immunity against reply except by a handful of high executive officials. That, I repeat, would be un-American because it would be unfair, and the great mass of Americans like fair play and insist on it. They do not stand for any gag act."

How inconsistent the President is, then, after stating the above beliefs about individual rights under the Constitution, he should merely express his opinion or preference publicly— orally, by radio, or in writing—without doing so as a part of an organized campaign. In this respect, does not the Wagner Act "rag" Americans from uttering personal opinions?

Well, the New Deal is definitely "on the way out." By this we do not mean every objective that it has been pursuing, for many of its objectives are worthy of human striving and we hope they'll be continued by the next Washington administration—but on a practical, Constitutional basis.

The other day a young man remarked upon the possibility that somebody might practice and develop automobile driving as a fine art.

Culture Behind The Wheel
It is the suggestion. It is amazing how many cultured men and women, who are the essence of gentility in personal contacts, forget all about good manners when they get behind the steering wheel of a modern automobile.

So, as a word of advice to drivers, who would like to live long and enjoy many motor rides, we suggest that they practice good manners on the highway. It will not hurt anybody and it might be the means of avoiding personal injury. Anyway, it would be a good grace to acquire.

The largest market for the products of American industry is to be found on the farms of the United States. Despite everything that has been done the farmers of the United States have had little of prosperity since the boom days of the war. Since that time they have been busy with droughts, surpluses and deflations. In fact, most of them did not even get in on the so-called Coolidge boom.

It may be considered absurd by some of the economic experts, who tell us what is wrong with everything, but just the same our idea is that when prosperity hits the farms of the United States it will hit industry. Every farmer is a potential buyer of the products of industry. There are a lot of them in this country and if they get a little surplus money they will start a buying wave that will make the government's spending program look silly.

The scientists of the world have made amazing advances in the past few decades. There is scarcely a field of endeavor in which the human race has not produced astonishing results.

Science, in truth, has outstepped human beings. We have not yet begun to appropriate the discoveries to the full use of men and women. It is the present task and it must be accomplished.

There is little use in knowing, for example, that there is a way to better health and sounder life unless the knowledge redounds to the use of the men and women who make up the human race. There is no value in a discovery that cannot serve mankind because of economic obstacles or other impediments that prevent its complete utilization.

All you have to do is to read the newspapers fairly regularly and you will run across interesting examples of the "Showers of credulity of mankind." The latest story to attract our fancy comes from Port of Spain, Trinidad, where a 17-year-old girl is suspected of being an "agent" of mysterious spirits.

It seems that her father ran an inn. Suddenly, in the lobby, showers of stones began to fall. They stopped, so it is said, when the girl moved to another house. A day or so later the showers began at the new resting place.

The dispatch says the parents moved from the inn, the mother unable to "stand it another minute." Persons who gathered said they saw pebbles, marked with crosses, fall in the lobby. Occultists attributed the happenings to "African sorcery."

Of course, nobody with any sense believes that there was any shower of stones, unless the girl first placed them in the air before they fell. However, there are people in the world, and not all of them in Trinidad, ready to believe, and anxious to believe, that showers of stones fell mysteriously and miraculously.

The people, as in older days, look for a sign. Superstitious under the thin veneer of civilization, human beings years for portentous signs and the supernatural. The craving takes strange forms in different localities and every once in a while there are signs that indicate its existence in various sections of the United States.

The news comes from Tokyo that Gen. Iwane Matsui, commander of the Japanese armies that captured Nanking, will spend the rest of his life "in prayers" for those slain in campaign. Earth from his battlefields in China will be incorporated in a statue dedicated to the dead.

This information raises some questions. In the first place, we have been advised that the Japanese believe that soldiers slain in battle go immediately to Heaven; if this is true the general's prayers are useless. In the second place, the Japanese usually report the capture of Chinese cities without losses of any consequence and the commander of the general should be disturbed by his dead soldiers.

There is no intimation in the dispatch, however, that the Japanese hero, in his prayers at Buddhist shrine, intends to have anything to say in behalf of the Chinese men, women and children outraged and killed by his soldiers in the looting and raping of the Chinese capital.

Let's suppose, just for fun, that there were no printed books in the world and no records from the past. Consequently, except for word of mouth recitals, the present generation would have no information whatever about the persons and events of former years.

Then, we imagine that somebody invents printing, books and a method of handing down information about this generation to future ages. We would think, immediately, that the experience of the present will become available for future generations and men and women, in the years to come, will be able to profit by our mistakes.

Well, so we would, but what of it? The records of the past are voluminous. Brilliant minds in the years that have gone have considered many problems that puzzle human beings today. Governments have tried experiments which have failed. Much can be learned from studying men and profiting the past have attempted to do and space in the columns to write about their generation.

How many of us ever attempt to take advantage of the legacy that comes to us from former generations? The records of the past are vast and it looks like something could be learned from studying them and profiting by the experience of the people. However, each generation faces all problems as if they never existed before and men and women continue to make the same errors that brought disaster to those who went before them.

Every year the National Safety Council issues a statistical year-book, Accident Facts, which tells the story of losses in the United States. In 1938, there were 94,000 deaths, 8,900,000 injury cases and "direct costs" of \$3,300,000,000—the toll of accidents in twelve months.

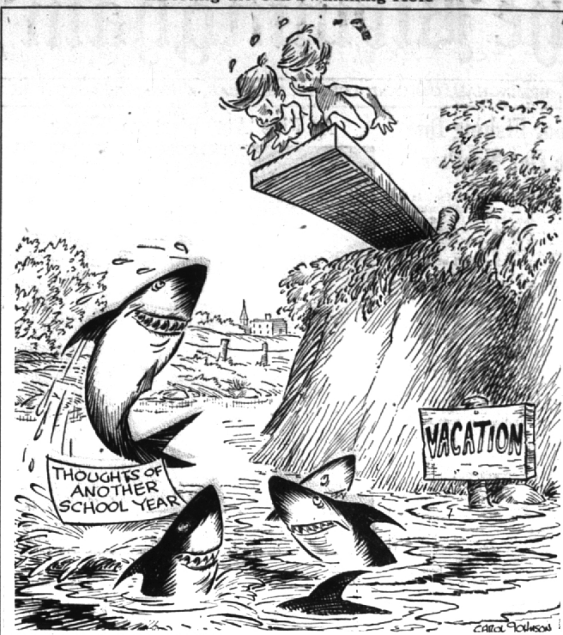
The death toll in 1938 was eleven per cent below the figures for 1937, with a major portion of the decline attributable to fewer fatalities from motor vehicle accidents.

It is also interesting to see that the accident death rate for children continues to decline, thus following the trend since 1929. This is probably the result of effective accident-prevention work and, also, in part, to increased alertness on the part of children who are becoming aware of the dangers that confront them.

Every nation spends a large proportion of its tax money to prepare for war. The taxpayers of the world would receive considerable relief if this huge amount was made unnecessary or largely reduced. To establish a court for the settlement of international disputes, strong enough to compel jurisdiction and obedience, would enable all peaceful nations to reduce their war expenditures.

AS THE NEW DEAL UNWINDS one fantastic spending scheme after another, it gets closer and closer to the principles of the Townsend Plan. After all, that Dr. Townsend wants to do is to apply a sales tax on everything sold, and use that money to give old people \$200 per month, providing they don't work and will spend it. Hang on Doctor, maybe you'll get your new plan right out of the President's magical hat.

Infesting the Old Swimming Hole



Happenings of Long Ago

Bits Of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric—The Items That Make Up The Historical Background Of The Birmingham Of Today.

Fifty Years Ago
Aug. 15, 1889
Water, water everywhere, but none in the streets of Birmingham. We will vote on it some day and see.

Our school will soon open and like all wide awake business men the board advocates the fact elsewhere. Read it.

Mitchell was horrified to receive the following request written by a Henrietta street mother: "Mr. Druggist, please send enough rope to throw up a four year old girl."

Hot for Put-in-Bay. Whitehead & Mitchell's grandest venture yet. To Put-in-Bay and return by the magnificent floating palace City of Cleveland, the loveliest of the lakes, lighted with electricity and carries with them 2,000.

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reported. "No cause for alarm" Dr. William Lloyd Kemp, health officer, states.

Dean S. Firth winner of archery trophy. State Championship to be held in Birmingham on Aug. 26.

Tax collections unusually slow. Annual State head tax is now payable as well as city taxes.

Local news lack produce yet fruit spoils on trees. Residents are asked to contribute any surplus produce to the city.

William Purves killed in wreck. Cranbrook student was driving to summer camp with Winthrop Allen.

Desert Sunshine Lodge. 2245 East First Street, Tucson, Arizona, August 3, 1939.

To The Editor: My name would probably mean nothing to you but Sue was in the Junior Choir of Cranbrook at the time I was directing it.

Just a year ago Mr. Adams and I moved here to Tucson and I opened "Desert Sunshine Lodge," a home for children. We came here because of the health of our son who is an asthmatic. This year we had four boys, one of them Charles Stanley of Birmingham.

Right now we are looking for children for another school year. What we need is some publicity and I wondered if it would be asking too much for you to give us mention in The Eccentric some time this month.

We take children of school age. They attend public school in Tucson. If you desired, attend private day school. Each child coming to the lodge must submit a statement of physical condition from an attending physician to insure proper protection against communicable disease. Further information may be had upon request, or by consulting Dr. John B. Schoenfeld, Waabek Bldg.

You can't imagine how much I'd appreciate it if you would do this for me but if it is out of order to ask I'll understand.

Sincerely yours,
Lillian M. Adams
(Mrs. George Adams)

To The Editor: Am writing this letter in appreciation of the playground started in the South-east section of Birmingham on Ruffner Street. It is a fulfilling a great need here and I am sure the residents of our city ought to know it.

Now they are playing in this field and are enjoying it. I looked out of my window the first day it was usable at all and saw a group of 20 or 30 boys and girls playing happily. I am certain the parents and friends of this section thank those who are responsible and I sincerely hope they will continue to develop it and to have a skating rink there for winter pleasure.

I believe the Dads and Mothers as well as the Children themselves will do what they can to make it a good playground.

Thank you.
Sincerely,
Mrs. G. M. J.
Lila M. Humphrey
1584 Humphrey

Random Remarks

Edwin J. Noble, executive assistant, Department of Commerce: Despite the recent hesitation, business in general is holding most of the gains registered in the last year of 1938.

Constantin J. Oumansky, Soviet Ambassador: The foreign policy of any country is determined with a deep devotion to peace.

John W. Owens, editor, Baltimore Sun, just returned from a tour of Europe: "In an economic sense, much of Europe is already at war."

Louis P. Lockner, Berlin correspondent of The Associated Press: "The Germans craving often comes from an affectionate nature and an intellect incapable of keeping it within limits."

Rock Sleyter, president, American Medical Association: "A Christian church, which has given a million dollars a year in free service and millions more at far below cost."

L. Eugene Emerson, secretary, American Medical Association: "The alcoholic craving often comes from an affectionate nature and an intellect incapable of keeping it within limits."

John A. Lapp, Catholic layman: "The Catholic church, which would be responsible for the recent speeches of Father Coughlin, is unworthy of its founder."

George VI, King of Great Britain: "I pray that our great nations may ever in the future walk together along the path of friendship in a world of peace."

Lammot du Pont, American industrialist: "By direct charge and innocent mistake and distortion of fact, extremists have held the industrial establishments of the country up to scorn."

M. J. Zornely, official, Association of American Railroads: "Government subsidy is the curse of the transportation industry in this country."

David Lawrence, newspaper writer: "A vast gulf still remains between the many kings of our social and economic life—and the common people."

Nicholas Murray Butler, president, Columbia University: "Should a world war come, we shall inevitably be drawn into it."

Helen Everett Meiklejohn, doctor: "It is the quality of the population, not its quantity, which should give us concern today."

George W. Truett, retiring president, Baptist World Alliance: "Every man has the right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience."

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Congressional Comment

Investigation of NLRB: By a vote of 2-1 the U. S. House of Representatives has passed H. Res. 258, introduced by Rep. Sumner, Chairman of the Veterans' Committee, which provides for investigation of the National Labor Relations Board, which is to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, is instructed to make a report on the facts as follows:

1. Whether the National Labor Relations Board has been fair and impartial in its conduct, in its decisions, in its interpretation of the law (particularly with respect to the definition of the term "interstate commerce"), and in its dealings between different labor organizations and its dealings between employer and employee.

2. What effect, if any, the National Labor Relations Act has had upon increasing or decreasing disputes between employer and employee; upon increasing or decreasing employment; and upon the general economic condition of the country.

3. Whether amendments, if any, are desirable to the National Labor Relations Act in order to more effectively carry out the intent of Congress, being better relations between labor unions and employers, and what changes, if any, are desirable in the personnel of those charged with the administration of the Act.

4. Whether the National Labor Relations Board has been fair and impartial in its conduct, in its decisions, in its interpretation of the law (particularly with respect to the definition of the term "interstate commerce"), and in its dealings between different labor organizations and its dealings between employer and employee.

5. Whether or not Congress should by legislation further define the term "interstate commerce" and whether or not further legislation is desirable as a subject of the relationship between employer and employee.

If the National Labor Relations Board has been fair and impartial in its conduct, it has nothing to fear from investigation; if it has not been fair, the public should be informed.

The Congress, in my judgment, is not in a position to have direct testimony as to the effect of the National Labor Relations Act on the economy and employment. The questions of amendments to the National Labor Relations Act should be referred to the attention of Members of Congress and the committee, after hearing testimony, will be in a position to advise as to the extent and nature of amendatory legislation.

If the National Labor Relations Board has not, by regulation or interpretation, attempted to write into the Act intent not intended by the House, it is not justified by the language of the Act, the Board is on solid ground; but if it has altered the Act in this manner, the Congress should be fully informed on the subject to properly correct any abuses that may exist.

The investigation directed by H. Res. 258 should go far toward clearing the atmosphere with respect to the National Labor Relations Act and should be welcomed by both opponents and proponents of the Act.

The Hatch Bill. On the same day that the House voted for an investigation of the National Labor Relations Board, S. 1871, known as the Hatch bill to curb pernicious political activities, was passed by the House by a vote of 242 to 132.

The Michigan delegation voted on S. 1871 as follows:
For: Rens, Blackney, Bradley, Crawford, Donahoe, Egan, Hoffman, McLeod, Meares, Michener, Shaffer, Wolcott, and Woodruff.
12, all Republicans.

Against: Reps. Dingell, Hook, Lesinski, Rabaut, and Tonerowicz, 3, all Democrats.

This bill has since become law, President Roosevelt signing it on Wednesday, August 2.

Jots'n'est

RULES of etiquette get the go-by every year about this time. But if you've altered the cob against the lure of corn-on-the-cob.

Employees loaned an Illinois boss \$175,000. That should make it easy to ask the old man for a raise—but not especially profitable.

Scotland's secretary of state says water is his nation's real national beverage. He'll have a hard time making Americans believe it.

The answer to a driver's prayer: fender benders. A judge was so busy firing traffic offenders that he left his own car overtime in a one-hour parking space.

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