

# The Birmingham Eccentric

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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 Wednesday. The right is reserved, however, to make such editorial changes as may be necessary to bring the style of the paper and as are required by law of the state. Persons who are in a peculiar situation in the community, leading to a story by one of our writers, or who are in a position to receive information of a person, firm or corporation which may be of interest to the community, are invited to send their copy to the attention of the publisher.

Every week The Eccentric and this is equally true of other newspapers receives enough so-called news and propaganda material from various agencies to more than fill its columns. About 99 and 41/100 per cent of this stuff is fit for only one purpose: the development of editorial skill in throwing things into a waste basket.

## Useless U. S. A. "News Hand-outs"

Two weeks ago we received a notice from the Federal Works Agency of the Public Works Administration, asking us to signify whether or not we would like to continue receiving the stuff. Stated the opening paragraph of the notice: "Under the terms of the 1930 Post Office Department Appropriation Act federal departments and agencies may not send through the mail free of charge any report, periodical, bulletin, pamphlet, list or other document unless the service has been requested."

Perhaps we should have written them to take our name off their list; but we didn't assuming that our silence was the equivalent. But your Uncle Sam is a persistent cuss in these matters. His agents believe in the follow-up system, too.

That's why, the other day, one of the local representatives of the F. W. A. came for us; he was nice about it, just wanting to know if we wanted to sign up for continued receipt of the "news material." We told him, politely, that the stuff merely cluttered up our mail, that when we were getting out the paper we needed all the desk room possible; and that the young woman who got out the paper for the office was losing weight carrying the weight of governmental propaganda.

Perhaps if enough newspapers, and others, who receive government envelopes that are useless to them, will adopt our attitude, it will help Uncle Sam to balance the post office department's annual deficit.

But that might throw a lot of federal employees out of jobs; and that really would defeat one of the New Deal's ambitions, wouldn't it?

A "bum" walked into a restaurant in New York last week, asked for a drink of water, tottered to the bar, got a glass, and died on the sidewalk.

## He Had \$4,937 In Cash

Police, searching his pockets for identifying papers, found four purses, containing \$1,937.

Many of the readers of this item of news would think they were in a "pretty good fix" if they had that much money on the spot. Many of them have never had that much in goods or cash in their lifetimes. Nearly \$5,000, it seems odd, would be about what an individual needed to have friends, get along, and enjoy life.

Well, the stranger with the cash died in New York, just like some "strangers" in Oakland County will depart, without anyone mourning his passing. The possession of money may not be enough; the individual must have something else, as well, and money won't buy it.

The American ideal of government includes the freedom of the individual to live his, or her, life under the protection of the law.

## The General Welfare

Any interference, on the part of government, in the affairs of citizens must be justified on the ground that it restrains some of us from injuring others. This rule also applies to business activities of citizens.

The liberty accorded American citizens is not license. It must be enjoyed without injury to the general welfare, which is as important in the American scheme as individual liberties. This fact should not be overlooked.

LAST WEEK WORK WAS STARTED ON Birmingham's new post office, a federal building to cost approximately \$92,500.00, exclusive of the site, which was purchased at \$25,000.00. It will be the first time that the post office has been housed in its own building in this community. Within ten months, according to the contract, the edifice is to be ready for occupancy. At that time, no doubt, fitting ceremonies will have been perfected for the occasion. Which suggests, for the benefit of local philatelists, perhaps an arrangement can be made with Postmaster Joseph A. Byrne for a special stamp or cover for that opening day.

DID YOU READ THE Eccentric's article last week relative to the detailed work which our Birmingham fire department engages in every year, so that they may be most efficient in putting out fires here? It is easy to see, after reading of their many activities, that Chief Verne Griffith's fire-fighters spend a minimum of time sitting around the hall, waiting for alarms to come in, or the old-age Townsend Plan to catch up with them.

Nobody wants to pay taxes, if they can be avoided, and there is constant effort to impress everybody that the governments of the United States, including local, State and Federal units, are taking about all the money that anybody can make.

Along this line the National Industrial Conference Board reports that taxes took 22 cents of every dollar of the national income in 1938. The total paid in taxes, according to its estimate, was \$13,700,000,000.

If the taxes paid by the people of this nation averaged 22 cents out of every dollar of national income there must be a lot of people paying more money for the support of government than we imagine.

The Board referred to in this article says that the taxes paid in 1938 represented a per capita tax of \$105 or a \$317 tax for each employed person. All we have to say to this is that, if the per capita tax payment in the United States is \$105, there may be many people around here who fail to pay their share.

Taxes may not be preferred to the free spending of your own money. Just the same government will cost more and more money as long as the people insist upon demanding more and more government activity. No treasury can raise salaries, pay pensions and subsidize business and farmers without having to call upon the "dear people" for some hard cash.

Something of a new record for a non-stop transcontinental flight in a light-weight commercial airplane was set recently by Clare W. Bunch, who flew from Burbank, California, to New York, New York, in twenty-three hours and twenty-five minutes. Mr. Bunch said the total expenses for the trip were \$27.50.

People with imagination can easily see where flying is going when planes become a little cheaper through mass production. A flight from New York to the Pacific for less than \$30 will increase the yen of the average American for travel. In time, we will get over our timidity and take to the air with the ease and assurance of the bird.

## Coast-to-Coast, \$27.50

Roosevelt Field, New York, in twenty-three hours and twenty-five minutes. Mr. Bunch said the total expenses for the trip were \$27.50.

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## 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.

### People Swayed By Emotions

This statement is accepted as the truth by astute politicians and by other individuals who are able to set out to persuade a people of this country to follow a given course.

Smart analysis, the statement implies that most individuals, using their intellects, stir up popular emotions in order to gain desired ends. It should be noted that the people, who act according to emotional stimuli, are not fools, which are handled by clever brains. The individual whose conduct or decision is fashioned as a result of his emotional response is like a fish that follows the bait without seeing the hook.

Let no one imagine, that people, swayed by emotions, rule this country. This is a mistake. The nation is ruled by the clever few who have the sense to create situations which result in emotional reactions. Back of the popular emotion, however expressed, is a mastermind that takes advantage of the nature of human beings to secure a definite specific result.

The appeal to the emotions, rather than to the intellect, is characteristic of most political campaigns. This is true, whether the election embraces a small area or the entire United States. The result of the balloting, unfortunately, often reflects the emotional state of the citizens of the area rather than the intelligent judgment of the voters. This is to be regretted, but the remedy is not to be found in a denunciation of the tactics of smart leaders.

Until the individual continues to be true until the individual voters become thoroughly conscious of emotional appeals and intelligently guard against precipitous decisions along obviously inspired lines. This presupposes, on the part of the voter, an intelligence equal to that of the mastermind behind the emotional strategy. This may be too much to expect at the present stage of civilization in this country, but, sooner or later, if democracy is to survive and representative government flourish, the millions of ballots in the nation must be cast on the basis of a reasoned judgment rather than as a result of emotional flurries.

## Corn Growers Urged to Store Surpluses for Another Year

WASHINGTON—Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace and officials of AAA are urging everything they can to persuade the corn farmer to keep his 1937 and 1938 surpluses in storage for another year.

It is proposed that the due date of loans on over 257,000,000 bushels of corn be advanced from August, 1939, to August, 1940. On the basis of past performance at the present rate of 57 cents on the bushel and continue to draw 4 per cent interest.

Corn farmers who want to cash in on their collateral crops are urged to consider what will happen if there is a short crop next year, and what effect their desire for quick returns on their corn will do to the hog market.

THEY are reminded that, if the corn market is flooded this year, hog producers will raise more hogs and prices for both corn and hogs will drop sharply. The "ever normal granary" program so dear to the hearts of New Deal agricultural economists. The annual carry-over of corn has averaged only about 7 per cent of a normal crop. The percentage for wheat is much higher, and the average for all other basic crops is as high as 20 to 30 per cent of a normal year's production.

As a consequence, the market price of corn from year to year soars and falls like the chart of a fever patient.

On his own, the corn farmer tries to compensate for having a



## On The Menu For August

What Is It? The speech of angels.—Caryl.

### PARAGRAPHS

What Is It? The speech of angels.—Caryl.

### What Is Drama

Drama—what literature does at night.—George Jean Nathan.

### An Old-Fashioned Ache

The old-fashioned family doctor is disappearing, we are told. So is the old-fashioned family.

### So Say the Old Men

It is about as bad to be old and bent as it is to be young and broke.—Grand Rapids Press.

### Of Course

Anyone who has learned how to change from a business unit to a lathing costume in a coupe, worn mind dressing in a Pullman berth.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

### Puzzling

"Lapland is the most thinly populated country in the world," says a contemporary. It doesn't say how many Lapps there are to the mile.—The Passing Show.

### Bargains, Again

Something like pre-war normalcy is being regained, when women are injured in a bargain counter crash in New York.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

### Commendable

And now we read that the younger generation isn't with which shows remarkable self-restraint in view of the way it's been talked about.—Weston, Ore. Leader.

### New Words For Old

Hayloft—Summer theater. Also known as "coushsh." Formerly "strawhat."

Burro Bouffe—A Western movie dealing with prospectors.

Banko—Bank night.—From Va. Vets.

### Canada Heard From

American critics now rate a radio drama by the number of listeners that take to the hills.—Toronto Star.

### ALMANAC

"In a calm and every man is a pilot."

JULY 30—Russia ordered mobilization of troops 1914.

AUGUST 1—The first United States patent was issued, 1790.

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### Random Remarks

John L. Lewis, President C. I. O.: "Recovery will not come if Federal investment in the form of WPA expenditures is seriously cut at the present time."

Sam Rayburn, Member of Congress from Texas: "There is not a tax on the statute books, local, state or Federal, that is not a deterrent to capital in some respects."

Cordell Hull, Secretary of State: "We believe that nations treated as equals at a conference table are able to compose their difficulties amicably and with honor."

Robert L. Doughton, Member of Congress from North Carolina: "We are just as anxious to help business as business is to be helped."

Manuel L. Quezon, President of the Philippines: "George Washington was as great a patriot as any man ever born."

Aurelio Goes Monteiro, Chief of Staff, Brazilian Army: "My wildest dream I never believed I would go to the United States aboard an American warship with a Chief of Staff of the United States who had come specially to take me along."

Henry A. Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture: "If the payments to farmers are necessary under present conditions."

T. Jefferson Coolidge, Washington banker: "He could serve as a base for money in a free country."

Will Hays, movie czar: "The slaphstick age in the movies is past."

Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior: "I am chief janitor of the United States Government."

Anthony Eden, British statesman: "A great part of Europe now sees no law prevailing but the law of the jungle."

Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of the President: "Nothing on God's green earth would induce me to run for the presidency."

Key Pittman, U. S. Senator from Nevada: "It is far better to die a few days earlier for Christianity, justice, and liberty than to live a little longer in cowardice and degeneracy."

Anne O'Hara McCormick, newspaper correspondent, in Europe: "Europe is already a vast battlefield of stiffly defended forces."

Jan. Christian Smuts, Vice-Premier, South Africa: "We are fortunate by the grace of God to live in a free democratic country not dictated to by dictators."

Franklin D. Roosevelt: "We have the right to say that there shall not be an organization of world affairs which permits us no choice but to turn our country into barracks, unless we are to be vassals of some conquering empire."

Herbert R. Groves, professor, University of North Carolina, teaching the first credit course on Marriage: "Marriage and the family show the same confusion, restlessness and disorganization that have become so characteristic of the modern world."

Summer Welles, Under-Secretary of State: "Our nation is an integral part of a world closely knit together by the development of modern science and invention."

Adolf Hitler, German Dictator: "We are not impressed by threats, no matter from what corner they may come."

A pessimist may be that way because of the optimists who owe him money.—The Hamilton (Ont.) Spectator.

## Congressional Comment

Representative Donders (1939-1940)

Tax Law: The President of a large corporation, in a recent report to stockholders on the company's business tax burden, said: "It seems that we are running our business for the benefit of the American stockholders."

A tax survey—covering Federal, State, and local taxation—just released by the American Federation of Investors supports this statement. Included in the survey are tax figures for 183 representative corporations and the totals disclose that taxes in 1938 were more than double the dividends paid by these corporations to their common stockholders. The far-reaching effect of the American Federation of Investors' survey is shown by the fact that these companies have 6,500,000 stockholders.

In 1938 the Chrysler Corporation paid 52.8% of its earnings in taxes. The company's tax levy reduced the \$4.84 for each share of common stock as compared to dividends of \$2.00 for each share. The corporation paid 1938 taxes at the rate of \$42.00 for each employee.

In the same year 41.9% of the earnings of the General Motors Corporation went for the payment of taxes and the total tax bill of the corporation represented 14.9% for each employee. Another automobile manufacturer, the Hudson Motor Car Co., paid taxes amounting to \$1.39 for each share of stock but paid no dividends to its stockholders.

In the ratio of taxes to employees, the Detroit Edison Co. ranked lowest, the payment of taxes at the rate of \$1.173 for every one of its 6,553 employees. The company paid 49.5% of its earnings for taxes.

The restrictive effect of our tax structure on the General Motors Corporation was the case of the United States Steel Corporation. In 1938 this corporation showed earnings before taxes, slightly in excess of 41 million dollars. When the tax collection was made, the company's earnings were reduced to a deficit of \$7,174,454 was incurred. As a result 100,000 common stockholders received no dividends.

In the steel industry as a whole taxes were 41.9% greater in 1938, when the industry lost more than in 1928 when it had a prosperous year.

## Fiscal Report: Now That the 1938 Year is Ending

Beginning July 1, 1938 and ending June 30, 1939, the complete report shows that the Federal government collected \$5,608,000,000 during the year and spent \$9,210,000,000, leaving a \$3,602,000,000 deficit for the year. Your per capita share of this deficit is \$27.25. Since March 4, 1933, the Federal government has taken in \$29,422,000,000 and spent \$50,207,000,000 for a consolidated deficit of \$21,184,737,000. As of June 30, 1938 your per capita share of the national debt was \$31,108, which is an increase of \$25.85 since 1933. This per capita increase for 1939 alone is more than twice the per capita for our entire national debt as late as 1916.

Franklin Roosevelt Library: When Senate Joint Resolution 118 providing for the establishment and maintenance of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, was before the House for consideration, Rep. Treadway proposed an amendment to eliminate the admission charge of 25c per person "for the privilege of visiting and viewing the property of the library."

Rep. Treadway suggested: "Let us at least be a little dignified in dealing with this proposition and not make it a dime-museum proposition, charging admission not only to the buildings but to the grounds as well."

His amendment was adopted. Then the House proceeded to pass the bill by a vote of 221 to 124.

May Be: A pessimist may be that way because of the optimists who owe him money.—The Hamilton (Ont.) Spectator.

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