

# Michigan Mirror

## NON-PARTISAN STATE NEWS LETTER

LANSING—The "home rule" policy of the late Gov. Frank Fitzgerald, which the legislature followed in enactment of the new welfare act, is now coming home to roost.

Counsellors "must take up the slack" in cost of relief, it is announced by Walter P. Gries, chairman of the state social welfare commission.

With the state commission available for the present fiscal year, the state commission allocated \$650,350 to counties for August relief. Counties had requested a total of \$1,207,072. Wayne county alone wanted \$489,000.

Under terms of the new act, counties are given final authority over relief expenditures. When state funds are exhausted, responsibility for maintenance of welfare—according to the new act—falls back on home governments. Are all counties doing as much as they can for relief of unemployed? The commissioners think not. Jackson county, for instance, expended \$440,000 for a new courthouse in 1938 when it contributed only \$9,000 for relief while the state was giving it \$553,000.

Officials of some counties, however, think otherwise. Quoting G. R. Harris, Wayne county welfare superintendent: "Counties are limited by the 15-mil amendment and some of them can't raise enough taxes altogether to meet their relief costs."

**Problem of State Aid**

The relief problem in which home rule was injected by the 1939 legislature is but an example of how state aid to local governments has mounted in the past few years. Back in 1933 the total of revenues collected by the state and returned over to counties, townships, cities and school districts did not exceed \$400,000 a year. With the passage of the new act, in behalf of local governments only has grown approximately \$600,000, or a grand total of more than \$1,000,000 or half of all the money that the state collects. The state has obtained more than \$25,000,000 more each year. County and township relief commissions last year absorbed nearly \$400,000.

County road funds received \$30,000,000 from the state treasury.

And so the story goes. What is the answer? Will "home rule," which taxpayers talk about so fondly, stop the apparently ever-increasing trend toward more spending of money for governmental public services? Here is a test question. The property owner and consumer, who together constitute Mr. Taxpayer, must provide the answer. After all, it is the fellow who foots the bill.

**Vulnerable G. O. P. Spots?**

Conflicts between Murray C. Van Wagner and Frank Murphy at Washington over 1940 political aid said to have elicited a comment by the former governor that the Michigan Republican administration has two vulnerable spots in its armor at present:

1. Revision of civil service by the legislature. Murphy's belief is that civil service is now largely a figure of speech, instead of safeguard for good government. Kenneth C. Pennebaker, whom Governor Dickinson appointed to succeed Brownrigg as civil service director, apparently shares Murphy's ideas, for he recently declared that the administrative board's action in refusing an additional \$101,500 had assured that the law "from now on is a gesture." And he added: "We might as well close shop."

Facts are that civil service cost money. The department spent \$250,000 last year; the legislature requested for \$300,000 down to \$75,000. Of this amount, \$15,000 goes for salaries of the five civil service commissioners.

Non-partisan public health department. An August 1, Dr. H. A. Meyer, personal physician for Governor Dickinson, succeeded Dr. Don W. Gudakunst as health commissioner. Dr. Gudakunst, who is a Republican, was appointed by Murphy on recommendation of the American Public Health association.

A report just released by the association, after a 11-month survey of Michigan's health facilities, recommends a non-partisan appointment of the commissioner by the state council of health. A sentence says: "The fact that the commissioner of health is appointed directly by the governor and

may be removed by the succeeding administration, without any consideration other than that there has been a political change, makes for a lack of efficiency and results in a periodic lowering of the morale of the entire personnel."

Dickinson's Crusade

City slickers can laugh all they want to about Governor Dickinson's crusade against "high life," but a lot of folks respect him for it just the same.

Gov. Earl Long, brother of famed Huey, has decided that a governor should set an example. Hence the Louisiana governor's mansion no longer will serve liquor of any kind.

We inquired of an upstate newspaper editor about how people there had reacted to the Dickinson drive on sin. He said: "It has been popular with most people. I would judge that he has made votes."

Of course, the governor's attitude on drinking and gambling and immorality in general is very much a personal matter. It is not a political issue. James Thomson, state assembly republican chairman, has made that clear.

The governor's famous exclamation, "Pipeline to God," elicited this explanation the other day: "It's a simple enough thing. I have electric and gas lines passing your houses, bearing comforts you can only get by making a connection. There is not a place on God's earth without one of those spiritual lines. It's near you and it's up to you to make the connection."

**Medics to Serve**

Appropos the home rule situation in which the welfare problem finds itself that is resulting from the current curtailment of state aid for care of crippled and afflicted children.

The legislature, economy-bent, limited such state aid to \$800,000 for the entire state. This sum was only \$100,000 more than the 1938 quota for Wayne county alone. If any county feels that the state aid quota is insufficient, it may supplement the amount.

When the cut was applied, criticism was voiced that the administration was neglecting the welfare of children. The Detroit Medical Journal, publication of the Wayne County Medical society, took a middle-road position to the effect that doctors could not afford to quarrel with the legislature in the latter's effort for economy. This stand was applauded widely by the press.

The Michigan Medical society has taken a fairly liberal attitude on the subject of public health. Physicians and hospitals say they will willingly do their part not to deny medical aid to anyone in an emergency. Furthermore, the society took the leadership this year to pioneer a new field of group health insurance. Incorporation of doctors has been effected and the program will get under way shortly after Sept. 18 when the society holds its annual meeting.

No other state has a comparable health insurance program.

**More Liquor Stores**

Whereas the late Governor Fitzgerald believed that the state get out of the liquor business entirely, the opposite is about due to the legislature. Additional liquor retail stores are to be opened soon by the state liquor commission in the hope of increasing the state's revenue to the treasury, the latter being sorely in need of money. Studies have disclosed that private retailers netted substantial profits from liquor sales, and the state commission believes this profit could well be utilized at Lansing.

Michigan, one of 16 states with state stores, enjoyed a net revenue profit last year of \$10,210,000. Of this license fees produced nearly \$3,000,000; state liquor taxes, \$4,300,000; miscellany income, \$330,000, and the balance in retail sales profit.

Gross receipts were \$45,000,000. Administrative and collection costs, plus cost of goods and selling cost, amounted to \$25,800,000. Michigan's "take" out of the liquor business thus was more than \$19,000,000. Nationally, the net revenue of state and local governments from alcoholic beverages reached a staggering total of \$318,000,000.

**Loony On Lids**

Wife (hinting)—This writer says that a woman should have a hat for every mood.

Hub—You seem to have one for every time, as well.

## Pie Face

always preached, "in season and out of it, that the finest training ground for the screen is the stage. I don't want young people to come to Hollywood, I want them to go on the stage first and study for the job of acting in rehearsals, openings, successes and flops. If they have the divine spark that makes the difference between a parrot and an actor they will be spotted and they will be grabbed up and will be in Hollywood soon enough."

"My method the stage will soon benefit by the inclusion of new and young professionals so that it will soon be as true as I hope, that there is not a man under forty in America capable of playing Romeo. It will benefit the screen, too, for as soon as the young people are seen to be good we shall 'steal' them from the stage."

"But as your fund of new tal-

ent at Union College—and other colleges with similar programs also, let us hope.—will be inexhaustible I know you won't mind such thefts. Indeed, it ought to be a source of gratification to you, for my dear Charles, I have already stolen you from the stage and want to continue a praise-worthy habit."

Up steps Walter Connolly with more praise for the man who has dedicated four months of his life each year to helping young people get a start in the stage world.

**Today's Problem is "How?"**

Says Walter Connolly: "Today the problem of how to become an actor, master a technique, find a foothold on the ladder of success in the theatre is baffling to the aspiring young man or woman who feels he or she may have a talent for the drama. Constantly one is asked, 'How shall I begin?' 'Where can I get a start?' And

the only answer is 'In a good stock company.'

"I feel that Charles Coburn, in establishing the Mohawk Drama Festival where young actors can absorb the practical methods of the theatre through daily contact with experienced professional players, has founded the ideal stock company. I wonder that someone else did not think of it, but I'm glad they didn't. It needed a man with great theatrical experience, with a sympathetic understanding of the beginner's problems, but it needed above all a man with an unselfish love of the theatre. Such a man the Mohawk Drama Festival has in Charles Coburn."

**"Fan" Mail Important**

And now, a word from Charles Coburn himself to one of his former pupils: "I have learned since I have been out here (Hollywood)

that there is a marked difference in a certain compensation to the actor of the stage and the actor of the screen as far as his audience is concerned. On the stage the audience responds immediately during the action of the play and expresses its approval or disapproval of one's performance, whereas on the screen the actor never knows what his audience thinks unless they write him their opinion.

"This has created, what is known in Hollywood as 'fan mail.' I have never gotten over being embarrassed when I am paid a compliment and I have never gotten over liking it."

**Even a Church Event**

Platonic—Young man, do you wed my daughter for herself or for her money?

Suitor—You know very well,

sir, that I am an amateur athlete. P.—What's that got to do with it?

S.—A great deal, sir. It shows me from taking part in any event for money.

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## Screenarios

By C. F. Smith

Now that the Mohawk Drama Festival and Institute at Union College, Schenectady, New York, have been given the go-ahead with attention from the entire United States, questions arise as to the nature of the Festival.

What is in charge of it? What does it do? What are its ends? We shall, in the following paragraphs, attempt to answer those questions, calling in for help the able comment of people who are in charge of it.

Mr. Coburn has appeared as "Of Human Hearts," "Lord Jeff," "Yellow Jack," "Vigilant," "Idiot's Delight," "Made For Each Other," and "Bachelor Mother." Soon he will be seen in "Stanley and Livingstone."

**Beginners Get Chance**

Briefly, the Festival presents a professional company, made up of actors and technicians and famous visiting stars in a series of outstanding plays during the months of July and August. These plays are produced upon a large outdoor stage.

The casts for the plays are supported by the apprentice-students of the Institute, each one of whom may expect not only to appear in all the productions in some acting capacity but may also be assigned to at least one speaking part during the course of the summer.

Because educational results in such a scheme require a high degree of personal contact, the attention to each student, the first year group is limited to 35 and the second year to 15 apprentices.

The story behind the Mohawk Drama Festival is the story of several men, but the success of it must go to Charles Coburn.

The group of successful pictures in which he has appeared must testify in some manner to his instinct of what constitutes a good play. Charles Coburn possesses a rare feeling for the stage and has a staunch belief in the fundamental training it offers for the screen actor as well as for the one who aspires only for the stage, although it must be confessed that the latter group is not very large at this writing.

**Stage Supplies The Screen**

"Potential screen talent," said Mr. Coburn in an interview published in the New York Herald Tribune last year, "has always come from the stage. Unless the universities of America come to the rescue, the screen will be unable to find new talent, fifteen years from now. The universities teach drama, but do not give professional training in it. So far, the average university has been unable to teach from a practical standpoint, two subjects, drama and journalism. Practical professional experience is the only teacher for these callings. An actor learns only from an audience of customers who exact their money's worth, and not from audiences of their friends (in amateur groups)."

**A Parrot Isn't An Actor**

Clarence Brown, motion picture director of such hits as "A Free Soul," "1931," "Ah Wilderness," "1935," "Conquest," 1937, and "Of Human Hearts," 1938, provides a number of interesting thoughts in a letter to Mr. Coburn, part of which we publish here.

Says Clarence Brown: "I have

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