The difference between a statesman and a politician is exactly the difference between citizen interest and citizen apathy. Statesmen are aired by an alert, intelligent, and active democracy; politicians are fooled in the stable of stupid, inactive, and disinterested citizenship.

The Birmingham Eccentric

16 PAGES, PART 1

SIXTY-FIRST YEAR—NO. 50 BIRMINGHAM, OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN, THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 1939 $2.00 PER YEAR—SINGLE COPIES, 5c

THIS and THAT

By G. R. A.

Home Again

This, the last of four articles on our 15-day motor trip through the historic old south, is written in Birmingham, Michigan—our home-port, after 3325 miles of driving. It was a lot of driving to pack in the allotted time used, really too much to keep one rested. Had the weather been warmer, I would have persuaded Mrs. Averill to have remained a few days longer, for I did want to do some deep sea fishing on the Gulf of Mexico. But when you consider that the mercury dropped to 22 degrees at Mobile when we were there on February 23, you may know why we started northward.

—

Southern Anti-New Dealer

Leaving New Orleans the morning of February 22, following the big Mardi Gras Day in New Orleans, we started eastward along the famous Gulf Coast, going through Pass Christian, Gulfport, and Biloxi. At Gulfport we spent two hours with Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Rand; two years ago he was president of the National Editorial Association, which held its annual convention in Michigan. He lives in a beautiful, big home right on the Gulf highway. Incidentally, Mr. Rand is one of the South's greatest anti-New Dealers; his syndicated editorial service, which reaches millions of readers in the United States, contains plenty of opposition to the left-wing Democrats. Mr. Rand publishes a newspaper in Gulfport and, as an avocation, spends much time each year travelling around the United States making speeches before large conventions.

—

Michigan's Capital

"Don't fail to drive out of Biloxi and see where the State of Michigan once had its capital," admonished Mr. Rand as we left. So we did cross the river at a point just north of Biloxi and saw a large white cross on the bank of the river, said to have been the place where Bienville landed his men when he claimed, for France, what later became the Louisiana Purchase. I'm not going to argue that Rand was correct in claiming it as the capital of territory that years later became Michigan. Let the conflicting historians do that, I say.

—

Bellingrath Gardens

We reached the famous Bellingrath Gardens about noon that day, and spent two hours going through them. They are advertised widely through the South, and are in reality the 60-acre estate of W. D. Bellingrath, one of the few men who still have an oldline Coca Cola contract—which means millions in coin of the realm. Mr. Bellingrath started the beautifully terraced gardens ten years ago as a private year-round estate; the public wanted to see it all—and for one dollar per person was instituted, and it is worth the money. (However, when the head man learned I was a northern newspaperman, he insisted upon giving me back my money—a custom adhered to, for really the dollar fee isn't needed by Mr. Bellingrath at all; is only asked to keep out too many people.) These Gardens, by the way, are 20 miles south of the city of Mobile. The Gardens are filled with azaleas, camellia, japonicas, five-hundred-year-old live oaks, oleander, dogwood, wisteria, and dozens of other specimens of well-kept flora. It's a great place to take colored pictures, which I did. But March, if it is warm, is the best time to see this lovely spot.

—

The TVA

Last week I referred to Birmingham, Alabama, in which my third letter was written. Leaving this "Pittsburgh of the South," we drove north and west through rolling country, our destination being Muscle Shoals, near Florence, Alabama. Fifty miles out of Birmingham I turned the wheel over to Mrs. Averill for the first time; 12 days from home and I was willing to admit that perhaps a rest camera shy couldn't do me harm. (But I actually did drive 3100 of the 3325 miles covered.) At Muscle Shoals, on the Tennessee River, the federal government's huge Wilson dam, one of a number located on that fairly big, muddy river. During the World War, you will recall, this dam was built for the chief purpose of making nitrates, one of the elements of high explosives. In peace time the government makes fertilizer—but in 24 hours the plant can be turned over for the manufacture of war explosives.

—

Three Good Reasons

There are three constitutional reasons why the federal government is damming the Tennessee

(Continued on Page 6, Part 1)

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CLUBS VOICE OPINIONS ON SIGN ISSUE

Limitation Of Billboards In City Plea Of Three Local Groups

As a preliminary to the official hearing on the proposed legislation restricting the use of billboards within the city limits, set for next Monday night by the City Commission, representatives of the League of Women Voters, Roadside Improvement committee of the Birmingham Garden Club and the Southfield Avenue association, together with several private citizens, appeared before the Commission Monday night. They were there to urge the adoption of the legislation. Letters from owners of property leased to various sign companies indicated some objection to any ordinance which might destroy the use of their property for such purpose.

Mrs. Frederick B. Smith, president, and Mrs. Lee A White represented the League of Women Voters; Mrs. Aaron H. Webster and Mrs. Robert F. Grimley were there from the Garden club, and A. C. Utter represented the Southfield association.

Donald C. Egbert, city manager, was authorized to proceed with the preparation of estimates incident to the improvement of a section of Cambridge street. The building inspector was authorized to issue a permit for the alteration of a house at Pierce and Merrill streets.

The commission adopted a resolution appealing to the State Legislature for further consideration of an act known as the Scavenger act, in an effort to protect the interests of municipalities.

THREE MEMBERS OF SCHOOL BOARD STUDY REVENUE

In an effort to increase the annual operating income for the Birmingham public schools, the Board of Education Tuesday night voted to have the president, J. Mark Hardin, appoint a committee of three members to investigate every possible means and method of achieving this purpose. Mr. Hardin appointed J. Harvey Rosso, treasurer, William A. DaLee, secretary, and Lee E. Joslyn Jr., as the committee to act.

One of the chief sources of increased revenue will probably lie in having the taxpayers of this school district, which includes portions of Royal Oak, Troy, Bloomfield, and Southfield townships, vote to approve an increase in the mill tax levy. According to the school officials, an increase from $1.50 per thousand dollars of valuation to $1.75 will relieve the present fund shortage, and thus enable the Board to pay its teachers and the teaching staff. A two-thirds vote of the electors legalizes the increased rate.

Ever since the County voted in its rural districts to adopt the 15-mill tax limitation, in November of 1932, which automatically included this school district, funds for current operating budgets have been decreased. As an illustration, in the tax statements for 1932 the item for school purposes amounted to $18.86 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation; that year the schools received, for operating revenue alone, the sum of $179,131.50. When the 15-mill limitation went into effect in 1933, the tax rate dropped to $10.96, the total valuation of the district decreased four millions of dollars, and the operating revenue amounted to only $103,227.02.

The special committee expects to hold weekly meetings and make its report as early as possible.

Magician Gives Show For Rotarians Here

Birmingham Rotarians, through the courtesy of member George E. Baldwin, were given a rare treat Monday noon at the Community House when Al Saar, Toledo, Ohio, funereal director, performed feats of magic for 45 minutes, completely mystifying even the most skeptical in his audience. An added feature was a series of "shadowland" silhouettes projected on a screen, created entirely by the nimble hands and fingers of the amateur magician.

Last week the Club was entertained with motion pictures of Alaska, by Rotarian Eric Bergishagen and Hjalman Olsen, both of whom spent a year in that far-off land five years ago. Mr. Olsen, recently of Saskatchewan, Canada, is now associated with Mr. Bergishagen in the latter's dog kennels on Adams road. Mr. Olsen is reported to be one of the foremost hunting dog trainers in the country.

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Birmingham City And Schools Menaced By Loss of $400,000 In Taxes, Unless . . .

By George R. Averill

Co-operative action by officials of municipalities, school distrfcts, township boards, and county governments is being speeded up this week to prevent the State of Michigan, through imposition of the reputed unconstitutional provisions of what is known as the "Scavenger Tax Sale," from depriving these units of government of millions of dollars of delinquent taxes due them.

In the case of Birmingham's city treasury, according to Harold H. Corson, this community stands to lose not less than $250,000 of delinquent tax assets; the Birmingham public school district is menaced by the loss of not less than $150,000, according to Louis M. Randall, business manager. Conversation with Royal Oak's City Manager, Ed Shafter, yesterday revealed the fact that Royal Oak's stake approximates $5,000,000.

Wires To Lansing

In defense of local interest, Monday night the City Commission wired Lieut.-Gov. Luren D. Dickinson, president of the Michigan Senate, and Howard Nugent, Speaker of the House, to use their influence to hold up final amendments to Act 155, otherwise known as the "Scavenger Tax Sale," until the city, together with other communities, could appear before the Taxation Committees of both Legislative Houses. Tuesday night the Birmingham Board of Education also sent a wire to these men, requesting the same privilege.

Plan "Defense Rally"

In the meantime, according to City Manager Shafter, Royal Oak is getting out letters to the officials of dozens of interested communities in the State, calling them to a "defense rally" within the next few days. Out of this meeting definite plans, including a proposed amendment for the Act, will come, Mr. Shafter reports.

Under the terms of the Act, all 1935 and prior delinquent tax lands that are not redeemed on or before November 3, 1939, will be offered for sale in May of 1940, through the agency of a State Land Office Board, of three commissioners, who are privileged to sell then delinquent lands "for not less than 25 per cent of their last assessed valuation." Those entitled to bid, or negotiate with the Land Office, include everybody but the representatives of the units of government that really own the tax delinquency liens. This latter group may bid, if they possess cash; however, since few of them are able to meet this cash demand, it is readily seen that private interests—and that means generally the land owner—is in the best position to obtain the delinquent property at a fraction of the delinquent taxes assessed against it.

Favors Land Speculator

Those who have investigated the matter are of the opinion that, in general, the Act was written, even though unintentionally, in the interest of the land speculator. Thus, property against which taxes have been unpaid for many years is being given partial consideration, while those who have supported government by their continuous payment of taxes are losing equities owned by them on the respective books of their various units of government.

They hold that this is unconstitutional discrimination and against the legitimate rights of those who have paid their taxes.

Typical Local Case

A typical case existing in Birmingham was presented at a recent meeting of City and School officials, showing the unfairness of the Act. Mr. Corson made a detailed study of one fairly large subdivision south of Lincoln avenue, and west of Bates street. An average lot has delinquent taxes assessed against it amounting to $450.00; total interest and penalties against it amount to $340.00, making a total tax lien of $790.00. The assessed valuation of this lot is $250.00. Under the Act it may be purchased by the owner, or other person with cash, for 25 per cent of its assessed valuation, or $65.00. Thus, it is obvious, the several units of government who own the delinquent taxes will lose $725.00 in accounts receivable. One proposed amendment before the Legislature would waive all accumulated interest and penalties; as applied to the above lot, the actual loss in tax principal alone would amount to the difference between $450.00 and $65.00, which is $385.00.

We Go To Lansing

This reporter, together with City Treasurer-Engineer Corson, Howard D. Crull, superintendent of local schools, and Louis M. Randall, school business manager, went to Lansing Tuesday of last week to interview our State Senator, George P. McCallum, and Representative George N. Higgins, on the subject. Rep. Higgins, who lives in Ferndale, admitted he does not know all the details of the Act, since this is his first term in the Legislature; but he promised to do everything in his power to protect the rights of those units of government claiming the delinquent taxes.

Senator McCallum, however, who comes from Ann Arbor, is chairman of the Senate Tax Committee, and he appeared to be a vigorous supporter of the present Act. He admitted that his interest was to "get the property back on the tax rolls, and to save the distressed property owner."

Senator McCallum pointed out the case of one Oakland county farmer whose present tax delinquency amounts to $8,000.00, said to be worth more than the value of the land involved. Our committee, while expressing a sympathy for that farmer, also pointed out that "persons who have improved property have stood the same general increase in taxes over the comparable years, but have paid them to save their property."

Perhaps unintentionally, Senator McCallum also revealed in his conversation that "one man was in to see me about this Act and he promised to pay up a total of $50,000.00 toward redeeming his delinquent property." Of course, your Birmingham delegation wondered why a man with so much available money should be compared with a "distressed property owner."

Sen. Moore's Bill

Personally, this reporter compared the present Act with one presented several years ago by the late State

(Continued on Page 2, Part 1)

MERIT SYSTEM IS BACKED BY RESOLUTION

Cost of Civil Service Low Speakers Affirm At Public Rally

A resolution urging Gov. Frank D. Fitzgerald to "do his utmost to preserve and improve the merit system he inaugurated," was adopted Friday evening at a gathering in Baldwin Library auditorium held under joint auspices of the Birmingham League of Women Voters and the Oakland County Citizens League. The resolution, which was offered by Henry S. Booth, president of the Oakland County League, was unanimously adopted by the 100 who attended the meeting called in defense of civil service as opposed to the spoils system.

Mr. Booth's resolution was presented after the speakers including State Senator James D. Dutch and Mrs. Siegel W. Judd of Grand Rapids, told the audience that the hope of saving the Civil Service Act now in effect, lay in the sending of letters and telegrams to the Governor and legislators.

"People Believe in Act"

The resolution stated further: "A great majority of the people believe in a genuine Civil Service Act for State employes as the surest means of eliminating from their government an inefficient spoils system, which encourages both high taxes and corruption."

Evils of the spoils system in comparison with minor defects in the merit system as it is now in operation in Michigan were set forth by Mrs. Judd, who was a member of the civil service study committee appointed by Gov. Fitzgerald in 1935.

"Those who complain about the cost of civil service are forgetting the cost of the spoils system," Mrs. Judd declared, "as it would cost the state government one-half million dollars to train new employes under the spoils system. It must be remembered that under the spoils system there was no record of how many employes were on the state's 25 payrolls, or of what kind of work those employes were supposed to do. It is an admitted fact that the spoils system cost the state money in excessive employes.

Not a Panacea

"Civil service is not a panacea, but we should not try to blame everything that is wrong upon it. It is not true that there has been a blanketing in of Democrats. Of the 17,000 employes in the State, it can be shown that 4,000 were appointed under Gov. Murphy's term of office, 3,000 have been admitted by civil service and that the remaining 10,000 were appointed in Gov. Fitzgerald's and other previous administrations. The cost of Civil Service last year, $250,000 is a small percentage of a $25,000,000 payroll."

The enemy of Civil Service is not the legislator who seeks jobs for a handful of constituents, Mrs. Judd told the audience, but "something bigger," more difficult to reach, and yet unmistakably en-

(Continued on Page 2, Part 1)

STATE EDUCATORS DISCUSS PROGRAM IN CAPITAL TODAY

A state-wide meeting of school board members, superintendents, county school commissioners and others interested in education will be held today, at the West Junior High school auditorium in Lansing.

C. H. Runciman, president of the Department of School Board Members and Superintendents, will preside. Four talks will be given in the morning on the department's six-point program. Invitation was extended to Governor Frank D. Fitzgerald to speak at the afternoon session.

Judge E. J. Millington of Cadillac, will be the morning's principal speaker. Discussing various phases of the six-point program will be: H. Franklin Donner of Garden City, who will talk on "Building Needs and Fifteen-Mill Limitation;" Arthur Valade of Silver Lake, "Emergency Appropriation;" J. W. Stallard of District No. 8, Wayne county, "Borrowing by School Boards," and Dr. A. J. Phillips, ex-secretary of the Michigan Educational association, State Aid for Schools." W. E. Thomas, M. E. A. director of field service, will discuss the constitution.

Have You Met?—

M. and Mrs. Kenneth White of 1063 Mohegan avenue. They are the parents of a daughter, Frances, who will be 13 years old this month, and who is a student at Adams School.

Mr. White is associated with the Detroit offices of the Wilson Jones Company of Chicago.

The family moved to Birmingham from Oak Park, Ill., their home for 20 years.

State Amendments, Annexation Proposal On Ballot April 3

VOTERS TO DECIDE ON MEASURES AFFECTING CONSTITUTION

Two amendments to the State Constitution, and candidates from four political parties for state offices will appear on the ballot of the biennial election to be submitted to voters April 3. The date will also mark that of the annual city election. The four parties represented on the State ballot are Republican, Democrat, Socialist and Commonwealth.

The first of the two amendments proposed provides that all primary elections and elections of Justices of the Supreme Court, judges of the Circuit Court, judges of the Probate court, and all county judicial officers, shall be non-partisan. It provides also that nominations for these offices will be made at primary elections, and that nominating petitions for candidates shall be filed at least 35 days prior to such primary election.

Nominating Petitions

The amendment specifies also that nominating petitions for judges of the Circuit Court shall be filed with the Secretary of State, and those for all other judicial offices affected, with the county clerk. Under the terms of this amendment, a separate ballot will be used in the primary election for these judges. The incumbent or other candidates will not be permitted to use a party designation.

The second proposal provides for the vesting in Circuit Court Commissioners such powers as exercised by the justices of the peace. It would give the Legislature the right to confer upon Circuit Court Commissioners practically the same powers as those of a justice of the peace.

State officials to be elected include two Justices of the Supreme Court, two regents of the University of Michigan, a superintendent of public instruction, a member of the State Board of Education, and two members of the State Board of Agriculture.

Republican Ticket

On the Republican slate, Howard Wiest and Henry M. Butzel are candidates for Justices of the Supreme Court. Harry G. Kipke and J. Joseph Herbert are seeking election to the board of regents. Eugene B. Elliott, incumbent, is candidate to succeed himself as Superintendent of Public Instruction. Miss Mary F. Farnsworth, assistant principal of Cooley High School in Detroit, is candidate for membership on the State Board of Education. Forrest H. Akers of Detroit and Melville B. McPherson, tax commissioner, are seeking election as members of the agricultural board.

On the Democratic slate, the names of Thomas J. Murphy of Detroit, and Clarence D. Dwyer of Crystal Falls, appear as candidates for Justices of the Supreme Court. Seeking election to the Board of Regents on this slate are Dean W. Myers of Ann Arbor and Charles C. Lindwood of Detroit.

T. Thomas Thacker of Ravenna is the Democratic candidate for Superintendent of Public Instruction. Mrs. Edna Cornell Wilson of Saginaw seeks election to the State Board of Education. Benjamin Halstead of Petoskey and Albert A. LaLonde of Davidson, are candidates for the State Board of Agriculture.

Socialist Slate

The Socialist Party offers as candidates: For Justice of the Supreme Court, Emanuel Seidler of Detroit; for regents of the University, Francis King of Detroit and Harold Chalk of Birmingham; for Superintendent of Public In-

(Continued on Page 2, Part 1)

CANDIDATES

S. E. Gawne

Virgil Lockrow

TEMPTATION IS SERMON THEME OF REV. MEARS

The Sixty-First Psalm furnished the inspiration for the sermon preached Sunday by the Rev. Joseph A. Mears, pastor of the United-Presbyterian church. The title of his message, Mr. Mears took from the Lord's Prayer, "Lead Us Not Into Temptation." In his text he finds a hopeful note, Mr. Mears said.

In the old Sixty-first psalm we read these remarkably stirring and searching words: "From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I." It is the heart cry of man in desperate need of leadership and guidance as he walks his way through life's experiences. It is as old as the race and as modern as each generation coming along.

"Let No Man Say"

"In the Epistle of James there

(Continued on Page 2, Part 1)

Word 'Success' Spells Just That For City's Only Boy Winner In Grade Bees

The last word was "Success"—and it meant just that Friday afternoon to the boy who spelled it correctly—the only boy to win a grade spelling bee in Birmingham public schools. He is Donald Champney, 11 years old, a sixth grade pupil at the Adams school. Runner up in the sixth grade was Bob Ely, who stumbled on the word, which brought "Success" to Don, the last standing in line. As the winner of his grade, Don will receive the dictionary offered as one of the prizes to bee winners by The Detroit News, sponsoring the contest.

Girls Are Victors

All other Birmingham winners in grade bees are girls. At the Adams school, Nancy Moritz won the fifth grade contest, Jean Eddy won for the seventh grade and Jane Hardin for the eighth grade. At Barnum school, Phylis Jones was winner in the fifth grade, Dulcie Krasnick in the sixth, Elizabeth Poje in the seventh, and Dorothy Jackson in the eighth. At Baldwin high school, Gloria Cromwell and Carolyn Kane were winners in the seventh and eighth grades respectively. Girls were the victors at Pierce school, with Barbara Westerby winning for the fifth, and Irene Young for the sixth grade. The same thing happened at Quarton school where grade bee laurels went to Martha Penfield in the fifth grade and Nancy Burns in the sixth.

Champions for each Birmingham school will be determined Friday, March 31, when the school bees are held. Winners in this contest will be eligible to enter the district bee Friday, April 21, and the district winner enters the Metropolitan bee on May 12, which will be held in the coliseum at the State Fair Grounds. The winner of the Metropolitan contest will be sent to Washington, D.C. to take part in the national spelling bee.

Whether the word "success" was a lucky omen for Don will be learned at the school bee March 31.

CONTESTS GIVE ZEST TO ANNUAL CITY ELECTION

Interest in the annual city election to be held April 3 centers around four contests for municipal offices and in the annexation proposal for "The Heights," which will be submitted to voters for the third time.

A new name among the four candidates for the City Commission is that of Samuel E. Gawne of 717 Glenhurst drive, who filed his petition for one of the three places to be filled. The other candidates, all incumbents, are Wilmer E. Moody, 253 Chesterfield drive, Ray A. Palmer, 720 East Maple avenue and Luther Heacock, 652 Ann street.

The other contest is that for Justice of the Peace, in which Virgil Lockrow of 575 Townsend street, opposes Forbes S. Hascall, who now holds the office.

Instructor In Law

Mr. Gawne has been a resident of Birmingham for three years. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan, in which he also served as instructor in the Law College last year. He was born in Lorain, O., in 1906.

Mr. Lockrow is seeking election to an office he formerly held when he served as active Justice of the Peace from 1917 to 1923, and continued as a member of Bloomfield Township Board until 1927. Mr. Lockrow's term of office covered the period when Birmingham was growing rapidly into a suburban community from a small rural town. He was instrumental in bringing about the change which placed county deputy sheriffs on a salary rather than a fee basis. Mr. Lockrow has been a resident of Birmingham 15 years.

Three candidates are seeking election to the Library Board for which there are two vacancies. Dr. Hugo Erichsen, 415 Harmon avenue was the last candidate to file his petition, making the third to seek one of the two vacancies. John B. Howarth and Mrs. H. G. Wood, incumbents, also filed petitions for re-election.

Annexation Issue

James W. Taylor is unopposed as candidate for associate justice. Another contest is for the office of constable, with Irwin Neff, Jr., and Arthur Holmes as candidates opposing each other.

Both residents of Birmingham and those in Bloomfield Township will be asked to decide by ballot whether the area known as "The Heights," north of Oak street, shall be included within the city limits of Birmingham.

When the question was placed upon the ballot in 1937, annexation lost because there were no houses in the area at the time, In 1938 it was voted by residents of the area but approved by Birmingham voters. Following this action, the City Commission voted to refuse water and sewer service to this section after the date of the 1939 election. Residents of The Heights do not receive fire and police protection from the City of Birmingham.

Candidates In Hills

Outside of Birmingham, voters will pass upon candidates for offices in the various townships. In the city of Bloomfield Hills, Clarence E. Utter, Stanley D. Davis and Harry J. Klingler are candidates to succeed themselves as members of the city commission.

Besides voting on annexation for The Heights, voters in Bloomfield township will select officers from candidates renominated Saturday at a Republican caucus held in the Township Hall. Perry A. Vaughan is candidate for re-election as supervisor, Floyd Beardslee

(Continued on Page 8, Part 1)

ENGINEERS HAVE ANNUAL BANQUET

Oakland County Engineering society held its annual banquet Tuesday, at the Community House. It was a joint meeting of the Michigan section, American Society f Civil Engineers, Col. Edward D. Rich, engineer of the bureau of engineering, Michigan Department of Health, was the speaker. One hundred and four persons attended.

APPOINT TEACHER TO QUARTON STAFF

To assist in reducing the teacher-load at Quarton school, for the 6A grade, Supt. Howard D. Crull was given permission Tuesday night by the Board of Education to engage another teacher on a half-day basis. That grade had 48 pupils in it up to last week, which is held to be too much for one teacher to handle with fairness to the number of students.

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