The Birmingham Eccentric

(Founded in 1878)

Published every Thursday, at Birmingham, Mich., in The Eccentric Building, 220-222 North Woodward Avenue
Telephones 11, 12 and 13

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Entered as Second Class Matter in the U. S. Postoffice at Birmingham, Michigan

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

(In Oakland County)
One Year $1.85
Six Months ..... .85
Three Months ..... .50

(Outside Oakland County)
One Year $2.00
Six Months 1.25
Three Months ..... .75

All newspaper and advertising copy must be in the Eccentric office by Tuesday noon to obtain insertion for that week.

The Eccentric is a member of: National Editorial Association, Michigan Press Association, University Press Club, and Oakland County Weekly Press Association

THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 1939

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 W'dnesdays. The right is reserved, however, to make such superficial changes in the work submitted as are necessary to the style of the paper and as are required by laws of the state. Because of a mechanical situation in the composing room, headlines written by those other than members of the staff cannot be used. Any intentional reflection upon the character, standing or reputation of any person, firm or corporation which may appear in the columns of The Eccentric will be gladly corrected upon being brought to the attention of the publisher.

Death, that universal guardian of the portal whose opening presents the vista of Eternity, reached into the humble home

Frank D. Fitzgerald

of Grand Ledge's chief citizen Thursday evening of last week and led the tired spirit of Michigan's late Governor, Frank D. Fitzgerald, to his ever-lasting reward. Within a half hour from the time of his passing, the news was flashed to Michigan and to the whole country, and when Friday morning beckoned renewed human activity again, thousands of flags in this State were at half mast, and hundreds of thousands of friends and neighbors were grieving at the loss of the State's Chief Executive.

Columns have been written about Frank D. Fitzgerald since his passing; millions of words have been spoken in kindly remembrance of his personal and political life; few, indeed, have been the criticisms for in the hour of bereavement human beings gallantly and divinely rise above passion and prejudice, and the human heart and mind bow before the Eternal Portal. That is as it should be. That is as it ought to be more during one's life, of course.

"Fitz," as he was known to many friends, was a unique character in the history of Michigan's higher political strata. For 25 years he served in some capacity in some State department, from humble clerk to Governor. His record is filled with faithful service only a comparatively few mistakes. He was a friendly man; honors never spoiled him; too good, perhaps, to some, but never too little good for anyone whose case merited consideration.

Re-elected Governor last fall, his come-back was heralded over the nation as a great Republican victory; higher Republican honors, undoubtedly lay before him, had he lived. We are sure, too, that his presence in Lansing for the remainder of his term would have been responsible for the laying down of substantial principles for the guidance of the political and economic life of our commonwealth. Perhaps the best monument in his memory that can be erected is the carrying out of every good legislation that he supported.

Frank. D. Fitzgerald will live long in Michigan Republicanism.

The Amendment you will vote on at the election April 3 which relates to the non-partisan election of Judges in Michigan, is designed to overcome the problem that Republican Judges face in Democratic Detroit. Perhaps the most criticism one might direct toward that Amendment is that, when an incumbent Judge is up for nomination or election to the same office, the name of his office shall be printed beneath his name. This, we believe, gives the incumbent an unfair advantage over his opponents; no doubt this is what most of the present Detroit Judges want. Perhaps they are human in asking for this concession. But time will unravel the snarl and, with future non-partisan judicial elections in Michigan, no doubt some smart parents will take a hint from the popular song, "Franklin D. Roosevelt Jones," and see that their lawyer-minded off-spring get names that will appeal to the greatest number of voters.

Non-Partisan Judges

Again we assert that the best way to connect Michigan's Upper and Lower Peninsulas is not by bridge or tunnel. The expense involved would be tremendous, and the traffic over it will never pay interest on the investment. Our idea is to transport a majority of Michigan's prison inmates to Mackinac City and St. Ignace, house them in proper and safe shelters, and use them to build a great causeway across the Straits, allowing for one bridge span under which steamboats may pass. This would eliminate lack of employment in our prisons, thereby improving the morale of prisoners; it would cost least in the long run; and the project would be more durable and permanent. Money poured out on a bridge or tunnel would, as an investment, be very unsound, but use of prison inmates on such a project is in keeping with centuries of public works projects.

Prisoners To Build Bridge

STATE HIGHWAY Commissioner Murray D. Van Wagoner last week informed the City Commission that acquisition of the 15 acres of land in the northeast section of the town for park purposes is a good move; he promises to aid in landscaping it when his department completes the Woodward cut-off this summer. Thank you, Mr. Van Wagoner—how about using part of the project for planting several great white pines, in honor of "the Michigan that was"? You could thus impress tens of thousands who otherwise never will see a virgin forest.

REVELATION is the last chapter in the Bible. In modern women's wearing apparel, it seems to constitute every chapter.

Ever since the untimely passing of the late Governor Frank D. Fitzgerald, and the elevation of Lieut.-Governor Lu-

Gov. Dickinson, A Godly Man

ren D. Dickinson, of Charlotte, to the Governorship, we have been asked: "What kind of a Governor will that 80-year-old gentleman give Michigan?"

This has been our answer: If Governor Dickinson retains his good health, and surrounds himself with able and honest aids, Michigan, for the next 21 months, will be given excellent leadership. As far as contemporary Governors in the 48 States are concerned, the character and personality of Luren D. Dickinson probably places him at the very top in legislative experience, in knowledge of the problems of State government — and certainly in the realm of Christian attainments. For Governor Dickinson, life-long foe of every social and political wrong, will be governed only by a Light that comes from the inner recesses of his conscience and his heart!

Personally, The Eccentric rejoices that Michigan, finding it necessary to supplant its late Governor Frank D. Fitzgerald, has available the type of man represented by Luren D. Dickinson. Going to the Bible, which has always been the guide of Governor Dickinson, it may be well to study these declarations: "For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof; but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged." (Proverbs 28:2) "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice." (Proverbs, 29:2) ". . . and the government shall be upon his shoulder:" . . . "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." (Isaiah, 9:6, 7)

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine". (I Timothy, 5:17) "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way". (Psalms 37:23) "He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back and stood by the bank of Jordan." (II Kings, 2:13)

With Governor Dickinson at Lansing, truthfully it may be said: Verily, verily the forces of good hath a defender against the forces of evil.

Many sociologists have bemoaned the fact that the birth rate, among healthy and intelligent couples, is much lower than among people who occupy a lower classification along these two lines.

Genius And The Birth Rate

That the poorer, uneducated and less healthy portion of our population is presenting the nation with most of its children and that the so-called more privileged group is apparently regulating the size of the family by economic factors is, we think, too apparent for argument.

One thing, however, should be borne in mind. So far as we know, there is no known method of determining where genius originates and, often, from unfavored and unprepossessing parents the race is presented with great sons and daughters. Saying this much is not denying the law of averages, which insists upon asserting itself, and makes more probable the gift of superiority to those infants blessed with fortunate parents.

Given a number of children, the republic, through the public schools and other democratic processes, can develop good citizens. The larger the percentage of boys and girls that bless the homes of humble and impoverished parents, the greater the obligation upon government and society to give them a chance to develop for themselves. With proper educational advantages and equal economic opportunity there is no telling where any boy, or girl, may go in a land of liberty, freedom and justice.

The earth quakes every few minutes, according to sensitive seismographs, located in the laboratories of the scientists of the world.

Earthquakes Every Few Minutes

Most of these quakes occur in thinly populated areas and cause little damage. Consequently, the world pays little attention to them.

The earthquake which killed so many people in Chile, during the last week of January, happened in a thickly populated area and was a catastrophe of the first magnitude. However, in November, a far greater shock was experienced off the Alaskan Peninsula, but because it affected few human beings, the world paid it little attention.

Along this line, Dr. Charles Richter, of Pasadena, California, says that every large quake is followed by three reports. One comes by waves directly through the earth, a second series of waves comes along the earth's surface and a third goes around the world in the opposite direction. The waves from an unusually heavy quake travel around the world three times, he says. He points out that the greatest shock ever recorded in the United States shook the Mississippi Valley in 1811 when not nearly so many people lived in that area.

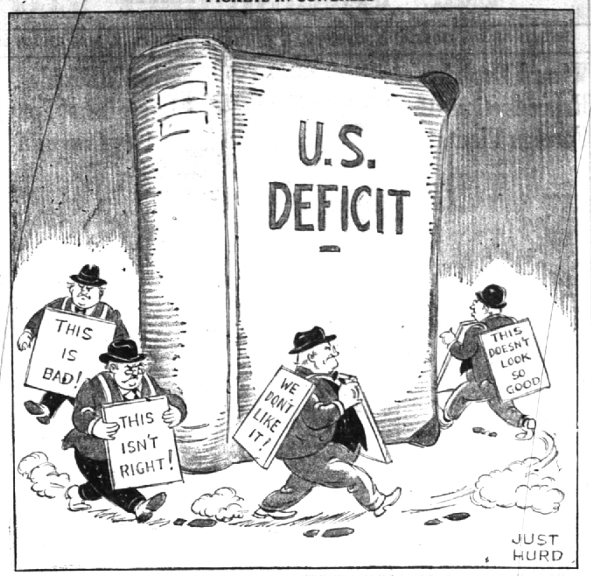
Something of a sidelight on the present psychology of the Japanese people can be gained from the fact that, in an annual Imperial poetry contest,

One Out Of 40,523

only one poem out of 40,523 mentioned a hope for peace. Apparently, the Japanese have an "immutable" intention of waging war to fulfill national ambitions.

WHEN YOU GO to the polls April 3, among the candidates to cast your ballot for are Regents of the University of Michigan. One of those candidates, Dr. Dean W. Myers, of Ann Arbor, is a Democrat. If you want a good man on the Board, even though you are a Republican, a vote for the Doctor is a vote for decency, ability, and thorough honesty. That's how we intend to vote.

PICKETS IN CONGRESS



Congressional Comment

by Representative George A. Dondero 17th Michigan District

To the Editor:

With the subject of national defense before this session of Congress, the Republican delegation in Congress designated a group of its members to study the problem of national defense and legislation proposed to meet the present situation.

This committee, known as the Republican Conference Committee on National Defense, consisted of the following members: Rep. James W. Wadsworth of New York, J. W. Ditter of Pennsylvania, Richard B. Wigglesworth of Massachusetts, Melvin J. Maas of Minnesota, Walter G. Andrews of New York, D. Lane Powers of New Jersey, Dewey Short of Missouri, Ralph E. Church of Illinois, Henry C. Dworshak of Idaho, Leland M. Ford of California, and Earl R. Lewis of Ohio.

The conference reported itself in agreement with the national defense plans proposed by the administration with but two exceptions. It doubts the wisdom of fortifying Guam and it favors staggering the plane production program.

Definite suggestions were made respecting pending legislation and I quote that portion of the conference report:

"We believe that the item of appropriation which, if adopted, would go far toward perfecting our Panama defenses, is sound.

"Likewise, the item providing for the placing of educational orders by the War Department is equally sound. In fact, we believe that a state of reasonable industrial preparedness, while not as dramatic, is fully as important as preparedness in the purely military sense.

"Again, we find ourselves in agreement with proposals contained in pending legislation looking toward the addition and strengthening of naval aviation and submarine bases in the Atlantic, as well as the addition of similar bases in the vast Pacific area bounded roughly on the west by the 180th meridian.

"We entertain serious doubt as to the necessity or wisdom of extending our line of defense so far to the westward as the Island of Guam.

"Coming to a consideration of our air forces, we believe that our vital interests demand the procurement of additional planes for the Army which, when added to useful planes now on hand and to planes now in course of manufacture, shall bring the total to a maximum authorized strength of 5,500—all obsolete planes being eliminated.

"We suggest, however, that instead of acquiring additional planes in substantially a single increment, it would be wise to manage our production so that our maximum authorized strength will be reached by annual increments over a period of three or four years.

"By such a program the problem of training new pilots and the organization of new tactical units in the Army Air Corps would be greatly simplified, and further, the ever present problem of obsolescence in the planes themselves could be met from year to year without impairing the fighting strength of the Air Corps as might be the case if obsolescence of a large proportion of our planes should overtake us at recurring intervals.

"By thus spreading the effort the financial strain to be reflected in the budgets of 1940 and 1941 will be lessened.

"In any event, with an Army Air Corps at a maximum strength of 5,500, with additional Army personnel trained for its operation, coupled with a Naval Air force approximating 3,000 planes, we believe the air defense of the country will be adequate."

Sincerely yours,
George A. Dondero,
M. C.

Random Remarks

Henry Ford, motor magnate:
"A man who can't find a job doesn't deserve a job."

Carter Glass, Senator from Virginia:
"A liberal is a man who is willing to spend somebody else's money."

Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior:
"Democracy needs appeal to the heart as well as to the mind."

Dizzy Dean, star pitcher:
"If I don't win 20 games next season, I'll pitch in 5-cent for nothing."

Eugenio Pacelli, now Pope Pius XII:
"We hope for peace, for that peace for which our predecessor prayed and for which he offered his life to God."

Franklin D. Roosevelt:
"Where democracy is snuffed out, there too, the right to worship God in one's own way is circumscribed or abrogated."

Edward J. Flanagan, Catholic priest, founder of "Boys Town":
"I have really never found a boy who wants to be bad."

Adolf Hitler, German Dictator:
"All the German nation wants is peace and quiet."

Herbert Hoover, former President:
"The greatest healing force that could come to humanity is prosperity."

James A. Farley, chairman, National Democratic Committee:
"The notion is spreading that sound business and sound morals are one and the same thing."

Dr. Mary Shattuck Fisher:
"Don't marry a man who had a wonderful mother."

Thomas E. Dewey, New York prosecutor:
"It is not enough to pass good laws. It is necessary to administer and enforce those laws."

Emory E. Smith, member, World War Industries Board:
"At the Armistice, Germany, England and Japan were bare of iron. The World War ended because scrap iron failed."

Charles E. Coughlin, radio priest:
"England and France . . . in the strict meaning of the word, are no more democratic than Germany, Italy, Russia or China."

Neville Chamberlain, British Prime Minister:
"However much the British people may want unity, they feel instinctively that there are things without which life, as they know it, would not be worth living."

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt:
"The price of keeping our personal liberty is that we shall have to think for ourselves."

Herbert Hoover, former President:
"The third great mission of the Republican Party is peace for America."

Ely Culbertson, bridge expert:
"All bridge and chess players are slightly cuckoo. And that goes for me too."

George Bernard Shaw, British Playwright:
"A nation's morals are its teeth; the worse they are decayed the more it hurts to touch them."

WASHINGTON LETTER

BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

FSA Low Cost Farm Dwellings Offer Idea to Private Builders

WASHINGTON.—The Farm Security Administration is not essentially a housing agency. But it has had such success in building low-cost dwellings on its rehabilitation projects for tenant farmers that there is widespread interest in its methods.

About 20 per cent of the $10,000,000 appropriation which Farm Security has spent on tenant farmer rehabilitation has been used for the construction of houses.

Most of the FSA farm community houses have five rooms and cost from $3500 to $4000 to build. But pre-fabricated houses of the same size, which cost only $1100, are the ones which have excited interest in FSA designs and methods.

Most impoverished farmers cannot afford a $4000 house. Unless they have tenant farmer status they cannot qualify for transfer to an FSA farm project. But independent farmers all over the country have made inquiries about the pre-fabricated $1100 dwellings, with which this bureau of the Department of Agriculture has successfully experimented.

• • •

FSA recently published a compact answer in a booklet on "Small Homes." It describes and illustrates floor plans and exteriors of eight approved pre-fabricated houses.

The houses described have been built and are occupied. There are 100 such houses in the FSA Southeast Missouri project. It is estimated that it would cost about $1300 to build them privately. At this price, they do not have inside plumbing.

By cutting and pre-fabricating parts of the house with a sawmill on the site of the project, it was possible to build homes with bath for about $400 a room, and houses without a bath for as little as $250 a room.

A typical house of this type has three bedrooms, two of them 9 feet by 11 feet, and one 11 feet by 11 feet; a living room-dining room, 11 feet by 19 feet; two porches, both 7 feet by 10 feet, and a kitchen 7 feet by 11 feet.

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SIMPLIFICATION of design and pre-cutting make it possible for the farmer to build such a house with unskilled rural farm labor.

While it costs a little to install a bathroom, as indicated, all FSA houses have running water, and electricity wherever current is available.

It is understandable that tenants of these pre-fabricated houses who have previously lived in crowded, leaky shacks without sanitary facilities of any kind, regard them as palatial.

But the interest shown by independent farmers indicates that they may appeal widely as a sound investment for the private builder in rural areas.

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications for this column. All communications must be signed, but signatures will be kept confidential upon request. Letters must be limited to 500 words, and must be in the office by Tuesday noon for publication the following Thursday.

March 16th, 1939

Birmingham Eccentric
Birmingham, Mich.
Att'n Mr. George Averill

Dear George:

Your discussion of taxes, particularly the operations of the Scavenger Tax Sale, proved most interesting. I believe almost everyone is interested in arriving at an equitable solution to the problem of the heavy load of delinquent taxes in Michigan.

As you know the delinquent tax was not much of a problem in years gone by. The taxes and assessments were moderate, the farmers paid their taxes out of the proceeds of the fall crops, and the cases of delinquent owners were few and far between.

In the past 15 years or so, however, we have seen a rise in land values accompanied by a rise in assessments and taxes, followed by a sharp drop in values together with a smaller drop in assessments and taxes. The reduced buying power together with almost total cessation of building brought the sale value of certain lots almost to the vanishing point, certainly far below the taxes assessed against some of them.

I am not fully familiar with the terms of Act 155 and the Scavenger Tax Sale, but we all know that they were designed to correct the former mistakes of land owners and tax assessors, and bring the total taxes payable on these properties down to some reasonable relationship to the values of the properties and the abilities of the owners to pay them.

The specific items mentioned in Birmingham show that a great discrepancy exists now between the value of the lots and the taxes assessed, using the figures of taxes of $450.00, interest and penalties of $240.000, with a total of $790.00 as compared to a present assessed valuation of $250.00. Any public officer who may think this unit is acquiring $750.00 in value by taking over such a lot is certainly indulging in wishful thinking. Moreover, if money is borrowed against such taxes as these, there is some heavy shrinkage due somewhere before the money is fully collected and paid. It is evident, therefore, that the present system and taxes and penalties is archaic, if such results are arrived at now.

On the other hand it is only fair to point out that present assessments have pretty generally discounted the deflation in values and it remains only to dispose of the inequitable prior burdens between taking the properties to normal tax-paying basis.

I do not know which properties are being discussed in this instance, but even taking the lots valued at $65.00 set for the full payment of taxes, that compares rather favorably with lots in Berkley which are selling for $50.00 each after having passed into the hands of the city through the same route which our public officials apparently want this property to travel. The transposing of property from private hands into public hands does not confer on the property any special degree of value and it would seem that in this case a heavy charge off of value is due, no matter where the ownership rests.

It is not pointed out in your article that the amount of 25 per cent of the assessed valuation is the minimum selling price of the lots to the individual. If it is too low the way is certainly open for others to bid up the price and the property owner will either have to meet the bid or lose the property, and in any event the amount will have to be approved by the board.

If the city takes over the property it loses the taxes thereon for the period of ownership and if it wants to sell in the open market it cannot exact a price higher than that set by supply and demand.

Therefore, George, I think in all candor that you should retract the statement that these various units are losing the full amount of the delinquent taxes. The loss is there now, exacted by the depression, and the units would only be taking a long-deferred charge-off in values. Any business man knows that the sooner he can bring his accounts into a proper relation with cash values the better off he will be, and this applies also to municipalities.

Very truly yours,
RALPH I. CORYELL

(Editor's Note: Mr. Coryell is right when he says that most of this delinquent property is now worth less than it was offered for during "land boom" days. But it is also worth more than the 25 per cent minimum that Act 155 allows it to be sold at. My chief object in seeking an amendment to the Act is to make it possible for local units of government to defend local interests by allowing them to bid at the sale, using their credit in lieu of cash. In other words, let the units of government make concessions on behalf of the people of their areas who, in reality, own these tax delinquencies; let these units, where they wish to, bid to protect their interests; this merely sets up a local constituted public agency to cooperate with the State Land Office Board in final disposition of the delinquent properties. Those who have paid their taxes, and thus supported government, are entitled to defend their accounts receivable.—G. R. A.)

Birmingham Eccentric
Birmingham, Michigan
Attention: Mr. Geo. Averill

Dear Sir:

As a newcomer to your City, am asking why does Police Dep't allow your citizens in automobiles to make a right hand turn without coming to a stop on a busy corner of Maple and Woodward Ave. Believe your city is courting a serious law suit, as I have just missed being hit at these corners several times while crossing with the green light.

Birmingham Pedestrian.

Mr. Geo. R. Averill will you kindly publish this in your paper for comment, from the rest of your citizens.

Am sending a copy of this to your local police Chief as a matter of record.

Jots in Jest

TIP to ladies: a climb up the Washington monument will work off the weight of one pat of butter, reports a medical professor. How much simpler not to eat the pat of butter.

• • •

A decrease of horses brought a surplus of fodder crops. And many a back-yard gardener will testify that a decrease of chickens would do the same for his seeds.

• • •

A Denver judge sentenced a WPA worker for hiring a substitute to work at his $5-a-day job. Imagine hiring a guy to lean on your shovel for you!

• • •

With circuses hitting the road again, the time is ripe to get Sonja Henie help with the chores. By convincing him that it will get him in shape for the season.

• • •

Schoolboy Boners (British)

Disraeli was the first British statesman to become a film star.

The royal mint is used by the King at meals.

Matterhorn was a horn blown by the ancients when anything was the matter.

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What Is A Gentleman

The social duties of a gentleman are of a high order. The class to which he belongs is the natural repository of the manners, tastes, tone, and, to a certain extent, of the principles of a country.—J. Fenimore Cooper: The American Democrat, XIX, 1838.

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