The Birmingham Eccentric

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THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 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 Tuesdays. 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 erroneous 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.

Birmingham's Annual Election

Next Monday, April 3, Birmingham will hold its annual city election. At that time you who live here are afforded the opportunity of determining, through the exercise of your own free will and judgment, who shall represent you on the City Commission; who shall be Justice of the Peace and Associate Justice; who shall operate your public library; one local constable; and whether or not you wish to annex lands in the northern area of the community.

At the same election matters relating to State and County government will be placed before you. They include the selection of two Justices of the Michigan Supreme Court; two Regents of the University of Michigan; one State Superintendent of Public Instruction; two members of the State Board of Agriculture, a body that presides over the Michigan State College; one member of the State Board of Education; one Oakland County School Commissioner; the State amendment to place the election of all judges, except the Supreme Court, on a non-partisan basis; a State amendment to impose greater powers in Justices of the Peace.

While this is a year when we are not voting on a President of the United States or a Governor of Michigan, yet it is a year when those for whom we do vote may help or hinder our processes of democracy, and so we ought to be as faithful to the ballot box next Monday as at any election.

Starting at seven o'clock in the morning, and closing at eight o'clock in the evening, next Monday's citizen-demands should be as compelling as attendance at a movie, bridge party, or any other affair, don't you think?

The fact that Birmingham voters use voting machines, and thus speed up balloting, suggests that no voter will have to wait long to cast his ballot.

Com. House Campaign

Birmingham's annual campaign for funds for the support of the Community House will start April 14, and conclude April 24. Harold B. Kuder, manager of the late James Couzen's Wabeek Corporation here, will act as chairman. Mr. Kuder has been in Birmingham but a year, yet has impressed many with his abilities and his interest in local affairs. Here's knowin' he and his aids will meet with success in this year's campaign, thus maintaining the record of this community's wish that the Community House carry on.

A Splendid Hobby, Boys

It must be gratifying to the parents of that group of Birmingham boys who, in the unlimited realm of imagination, have builded themselves a "business" which they call "Round The World Airlines." These youngsters have set up a "corporation" which operates, on paper, a world airline, and they created various departments for handling every phase of the project. They use toy 'planes for certain purposes; maps for others, etc., etc. Who can say that one or more of them, some day, will not become important in the future of air travel? Congratulations, boys and girls (the girls serve in secretarial capacities, you see); keep up your hobby.

Billboard Control

Adoption of the new billboard and sign ordinance by Birmingham's City Commission last week suggests that this community is alert to the problems involved in too much promiscuity of highway disfigurements. While we agree that billboards have a part in the movement of the merchandise of the world, we also agree with those who, in the name of landscape beauty, of highway safety, believe that control of billboards should be exercised. Usually, one finds that billboard concerns are willing to cooperate in framing ordinances covering their products, and that is fine, reflecting credit upon those who guide the industry.

IF MICHIGAN HAS A deficit of 25 millions of dollars, largely acquired during Frank Murphy's administration as Governor, that's a poor record for him to have left behind. However, instead of new taxes to balance the budget, how about a little old-fashioned frugality? That can accomplish the same end.

BIRMINGHAM EXCHANGE CLUB members last week won the silver cup for being better bridge players than the Rotary or Lions Club members who are disciples of the Culbertsons. The contestants had lots of good fun in the tournament, which is really what such projects should accomplish anyway—don't you think?

"WITHOUT VISION, the people perish." That's an old saying. Looks as though many of today's leaders are in need of optical attention.

Four Seek City Office

When you vote for members of the City Commission next Monday, four names will face you in the election booth; each of the candidates is running for a three-year term, but only three of them are to be elected. More often than not, in recent years, there has been little or no competition for these offices. You may know that Birmingham is governed by seven Commissioners, one of whom is the Mayor.

Included among the four to select from next Monday are three present members; they are W. E. Moody, who has completed his first term; Luther Heacock, and Ray A. Palmer. The other candidate is S. E. Gawne, a lawyer.

In the absence of clear-cut issues concerning problems of local government, the civic interest that usually centers about a local election may be on the wane this year—for such is the make-up of the human being that he requires liveliness, the spectacular, to rouse him. A newspaper, too, finds it difficult to "take sides" in such cases, for a newspaper, after printing the general news about candidates and their qualifications, is not inclined to impose its editor's views when the elements of a real contest are lacking.

Commissioner Moody has worked hard on the job, of course; while not having an entire lifetime of experience in government, yet he is close to the problems of this residential area; he knows considerable about personal problems of industry; and he is the kind of a chap who thrives on action. In brief, Mr. Moody is the kind of public official who engages in many community activities and, though not claiming infallibility, is willing to stand on his record on behalf of the public good.

Luther Heacock has lived in Birmingham all his life. He is one of Birmingham's three Supervisors on the Oakland County Board; he knows the varied relations of city-county government; he is not at all given to the spectacular, but his judgment on municipal matters is generally on the correct side of the ledger of public achievements.

Commissioner Palmer, before being elected to the City Commission three years ago, served for many years on the Birmingham Board of Education, for one term its president. Mr. Palmer is in the local real estate business. By nature, he has always appeared to us to be conservative, quiet, conscientious. He certainly wants every good thing for his city.

We have never met Mr. Gawne, the newcomer in the picture, though he has lived in Birmingham for three years, and last year taught law at the University of Michigan. He lives on Glenhurst Drive, one of the newer areas developed in Birmingham. So, you see, we cannot give you any details about Mr. Gawne, but we have no doubt but what he is a fine chap, desiring to serve his community if his community says "Yes" in sufficient numbers at election time.

The other most important local position to be filled is that of Justice of the Peace. The office is now filled by Forbes S. Hascall, who is completing his sixth year. Mr. Hascall is a graduate lawyer, and for several years prior to taking up his present duties, worked on the staff of the County Clerk, in Pontiac. His opponent for that office is Virgil Lockrow, who has lived in Birmingham for more than 15 years; he served as Justice of Peace when Birmingham was a village years ago, under the Township system of government; for a number of years after that he was in the real estate business.

Three candidates are seeking the two offices on the Baldwin Public Library Board; they are J. B. Howarth and Mrs. H. G. Wood, incumbents, and Dr. Hugo Erichsen.

James W. Taylor, several terms local Associate Justice of the Peace, is unopposed. Irwin Neff, Jr. and Arthur Holmes are seeking the one office of Constable.

You Can Help Birmingham

Every citizen of Birmingham has an opportunity to promote its development by making a distinct personal contribution to the community. This does not require that one be rich, or even well-to-do. All that is needed is for the individual to realize that the welfare of every citizen can be improved as a result of multiplied unselfishness.

We do not advocate, of course, that a citizen entirely forget self-interest or that anybody neglect his or her own business and interests. Volunteering some of your time, or a little of your money, for a public purpose is entirely compatible with every demand of absolute individualism.

It seems to us, at times, that many communities fail to accomplish little projects because they have their eyes on mammoth undertakings, entirely impractical under present circumstances. Anything that adds to the comfort, convenience or enjoyment of our citizens is worthy of our activity. There are many such undertakings that require little financial support but can be successfully accomplished by concerted effort.

We do not attempt to list these enterprises because each inhabitant has different ideas about what is important. Most worthwhile ideas can gain the support of a substantial group and these should receive attention. It might be a good idea for some of our readers to make suggestions as to feasible goals for civic activity during 1939.

The Eccentric will be glad to print short letters, containing such suggestions.

Local Music

Not many communities the size of Birmingham can enjoy the variety of fine music that is played within its boundaries, nor can many of them boast of having, as residents, so many talented musicians. The forthcoming entertainment by the Detroit Civic Orchestra here, with Mrs. Dorothy Kemp Roosevelt and Mrs. Frazier McDonald, pianists, should bring out a full house of music lovers. The fact that 70 per cent of the proceeds go to Birmingham's summer recreation program lends added value to the occasion.

"WE LIKE THE NEW HEADING type face started in last week's Eccentric," a number of our readers have told us. Thank you, thank you, very much.

Congressional Comment

by Representative George A. Dondero, 17th Michigan District

To the Editor:

That the people of the 17th District may know my position on the Reorganization Bill, H. R. 4425, recently approved by the U. S. House of Representatives, I devote this letter to a report of my remarks on the floor of the House when the bill was under consideration. My remarks follow:

The question of reorganization of the Federal Government is again before us. This question held the attention of the Congress during April of 1938. This time it is before us in the form of a modified bill, H. R. 4425.

It is a modified bill in the sense that any plan of reorganization proposed by the President would not become a law if the Congress of the United States by concurrent resolution acted negatively within 60 days from the time such plan was submitted to the Congress.

Section 5 of the proposed measure contains this unusual proposal. It is one of the most subtle provisions ever included in a proposed piece of legislation that has come to my attention during my 6 years' service in the House of Representatives. The casual reader, it must be apparent that the plan would become law if Congress did not act. It would also become a law unless both Houses of Congress concurred in disapproval. It would also become a law if one branch voted in the affirmative and the other branch of Congress voted in the negative. It must be obvious to every Member of this body who has been here during the last 4 years, that regardless of the unsound, extravagant, and wasteful nature of Gilbertsville, Kentucky, the TVA, which the House has on at least four different occasions disapproved, that it was put back in the bill by the Senate and there it is today committing this Nation to an expenditure of $142,000,000 for a dam that is not needed, for a project that will do more damage than good, and the American people will foot the bill for the mistake.

That is exactly the method provided in the spending bill to secure the adoption of any plan of reorganization that the President may submit. To say that it is subtle is a charitable expression.

Under this bill, if it becomes law, the President will submit a plan of reorganization. The House of Representatives will disapprove of it, as in the case of Gilbertsville Dam. It will go to the Senate, and the Senate can either act affirmatively or not act at all, and the plan will become law. No Member of this body will be deceived into thinking that any other plan or course will be followed if this proposed reorganization bill becomes the law of the land.

Not one Member of this body or of the committee of this House has told the membership of the House of Representatives why any reorganization plan under this measure should not take the same course as any other bill that is presented to it, namely, that it should receive the affirmative action of both Houses of Congress before it comes the law of the land.

During the last 6 years the country very justly applied the opprobrious name "rubber stamp" to the Congress. A reason exists for that epithet. It has come because the representative branch of the government has surrendered its functions to the Executive of the Nation. We have delegated our power and authority to the President. We have shifted our responsibility and direct duty to the American people to the executive branch of the government, and it has made the laws. This bill calls for a further delegation of power and authority and a further surrender of our powers and abandonment of our duty to the people to the President of the United States.

No one claims this will effect any great economy in the conduct of the government. The report of the Brookings Institution, one of the most reliable institutions of its kind in this or any other country, points out that this reorganization plan might accomplish some degree of efficiency. It would accomplish very little economy.

Possibilities of economy through mere structural reorganization of Federal administrative agencies are relatively minor in comparison with those which might be realized by the elimination and curtailment of activities, according to a study made public today by the Brookings Institution.

I quote from the Brookings report:

"Savings large enough to play a really important part in bringing government outgo down to the level of incdme can come only from elimination and curtailment of certain types of activities, a step which involves large issues of public policy.

"The entire budget for operation of administrative agencies, including the administration of all 'emergency' activities, amounted to $1,827,318,000 in the last fiscal year, which was approximately 17.65 percent of the total amount available for expenditures. The remaining $8,522,590,000 was appropriated for various functions and activities which administrative reorganization would not touch."

Real economy to be affected in the running of the government must come through a withdrawal or suspension of many wasteful and expensive activities in which the government is now engaged. We may well take heed of the statement in the Brookings Institution report touching on this phase of the question. Listen:

"The study, which was made by Dr. Lewis Meriam, chairman of the Institute for Government Research, and Dr. L. F. Schmeckebier, points out that two procedures may be utilized in seeking these larger savings.

"One involves subjecting all present functions and activities to a rigorous, detailed pruning process, which involves examining the multitudinous activities of the executive agencies, abandoning those which are not regarded as essential and reducing others to the necessary minimum. Such a program means that beneficiaries of the national government who are now receiving from its subsidies, grants, donations, loans, pensions, and special services, and even direct or indirect employment would find these aids curtailed or abandoned."

This bill should be amended by striking out section 5 and inserting in its place a section which will provide for the affirmative action on the part of both Houses of Congress before any plan for reorganization shall be considered and become law.

The minority report filed on this bill very justly included the statement, and I quote:

"This bill is a device to allow the Executive to obtain legislation by indirection rather than by the usual and proper method of legislating."

Sincerely yours,
GEO. A. DONDERO

Random Remarks

Paul G. Hoffman, president Studebaker Corporation:

"We can't loaf our way out of legislate prosperity—we have got to work for it."

Harry H. Woodring, Secretary of War:

"No peace-time training can serve as a substitute for war-training experience."

George H. Davis, president, U. S. Chamber of Commerce:

"This public spending, which might achieve temporarily a show of business activity, is simply a 'smoke-screen'."

Henry Norris Russell, Princeton University astronomer:

"The sun should have a good ten billion years to go before it begins to fail."

Arthur T. Robb, editor, Newspaper Men's Magazine:

"The United States has the freest, most intelligent and most honest press in the world."

Wm. E. Borah, U. S. Senator from Idaho:

"We have fought two wars to win freedom of the seas and we haven't won it yet."

Edward A. O'Neal, president, American Farm Bureau Federation:

"There is a limit to the price which consumers will pay for food and fibre."

Heywood Broun, newspaper writer:

"The modern newspaper publisher and his representatives can dish it out, but cannot take it."

George W. Norris, U. S. Senator from Nebraska:

"If we were a weak, unarmed nation, Hitler would come after us."

SPRING CLEANING

WASHINGTON LETTER

BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

1914-1918 Figures Show Likely Agricultural Effect of New War

WASHINGTON.—What would happen to domestic surpluses of wheat and cotton in the event of a new war in Europe can best be judged by what happened in previous war years, from 1914 to 1918.

In the five years preceding 1914 our foreign customers took 8,300,000 bales of cotton as compared with 4,900,000 bales used by the United States. Germany alone bought 2,440,000 bales during this period.

But from 1914 to 1918 we had exported only 61,000 bales to Germany.

The domestic demand for cotton incident to war from 1914 to 1918 did not compensate for the loss of our export market, and production dropped steadily, though prices soared.

* * *

IN 1914, we had the largest cotton crop on record up to that time—16,132,000 bales. In 1918, production had dropped to 12,018,000 bales. But the price of cotton in 1914 was seven cents a pound and, in 1918, it had jumped to 28 cents a pound.

It is estimated that, during the war years, our foreign customers took one-fourth less American cotton than formerly, and that we consumed about one-fourth more at home than we had before. Thus consumption figures nearly balanced.

Cotton acreage planted in 1914 and 1918 was about the same. One reason production figures declined was that the boll weevil was particularly destructive in these years.

If the existing neutrality law is revised in line with Senator Key Pittman's proposals, it is likely to suppose that war in Europe would stimulate cotton consumption in those countries which could get our cotton. But it would be physically and financially difficult for the countries at war to complete such transactions.

If the United States were to become involved in another European war, domestic consumption of cotton might be expected to climb as it did before.

Normally more cotton goes into the manufacture of tires than any other single commodity. And more cotton is used in the manufacture of overalls and shirts for laborers than in any other kind of clothing.

If the United States were at war, the demand for cotton by industry and workers would increase. There would be, in addition, the needs of the army to be met.

Actually very little cotton lint or long fibers are used in the manufacture of munitions, so this industry could not account for much of an increase. Explosives are made from linters, the fluff which clings to the cotton seed in the ginning process.

* * *

IN the case of wheat, production in the war years kept apace of the rising prices.

In 1914, wheat farmers in the United States produced 897,487,000 bushels for which they got 97 cents a bushel, and of which they sold 335,702,000 bushels abroad.

In 1917, when the United States entered the war, wheat farmers sold only 132,579,000 bushels to their foreign customers, but they produced 904,120,000 bushels to meet the demand at home, and they were getting $2.05 a bushel.

Existing wheat surpluses would probably be greatly reduced if the United States were to develop a war-time military machine.

But in clothing and arming an army we would use only about as much cotton as would otherwise be absorbed by the export market.

PARAGRAPHS

The Little Swindler

The Cleveland pair at Lockwood Beck and found a fox in Big Swindle. They ran toward Stanbow and came back through Little Swindle, where the fox went to ground.—From the foxhunting notes in the London Times.

Did That Punster Get Shot?

A duel was fought between Mr. S. K. Shott and A. W. Knott. The result was that Knott was shot. Shott was not. Under those circumstances, who wouldn't rather be Shott than Knott?—From the Fayetteville (N. C.) Observer, of January 19, 1864.

Ecclesiastical Plug

There's a Gold Mine in the Sky" is receiving unusual plugging nowadays these days. Rev. O. L. Poythress, pastor of South Norfolk Christian church, is singing it at funerals he conducts in this section.—Norfolk (Va.) dispatch in Variety.

What Is Genius?

Genius . . . an infinite capacity for taking pains.
—Attributed to Dickens.

Genius, cried the commuter. Consists of an infinite capacity For catching trains.
—Christopher Morley.

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.

Birmingham, Mich.
March 28, 1939

Birmingham Eccentric,
Birmingham, Mich.

Gentlemen:

The need for public servants of integrity, intelligence and high principles has never been greater than at present. In Luther Heacock, Birmingham and Oakland County have a man who is unsurpassed in his qualifications and record of achievement as a faithful, conscientious, efficient servant.

He is a life-long resident of this area, has a most intimate knowledge of its needs and works constantly, and with keen insight and intelligence, to promote the well-being of his city and county.

He serves Birmingham most loyally as a member of the City Commission and devotes himself most seriously to discharge creditably all of his sundry tasks and assignments.

He has been a member of the Board of Supervisors for the past five years and his record in this office is such as to recommend him to all thoughtful citizens for re-election and continuance of his services.

He now acts with distinction on the miscellaneous committee.

Through his ingenuity and planning the Court House was remodeled, thereby saving the County several thousand dollars per year rental. Previously, the county paid for quarters scattered and unsatisfactory.

He has contributed heavily through his efforts in reducing the debt of the County, a task most noteworthy in such times as these of economic stress and uncertainty.

Birmingham and Oakland County are exceedingly fortunate in having Luther Heacock express his willingness to continue his services and should gladly and emphatically accept his offer by returning him to office by an overwhelming vote. He deserves it. Birmingham and Oakland County need him.

Yours very truly,
G. A. ZIEGLER
755 Madison

Mr. George R. Averill,
Editor, Birmingham Eccentric,
220 Woodward Avenue,
Birmingham, Michigan.

My dear Mr. Averill:

I was pleased to learn through a recent issue of your paper that Dr. Hugo Erichsen, who has been identified with your city for over a decade, is running for the position of a member of the Baldwin Library Board. Having known the doctor for more than fifty years, I feel no hesitation in recommending him to your electorate for the position to which he seeks. I know of no one better fitted by temperament and experience to fill such a responsible office. Always a lover of books and a voracious reader, he has even gone further afield in his quest for good literature, as his translations from the French and German amply show.

In these days of turmoil and strife the public turns more than ever to the quietude and the culture of the library. If elected, it will be his privilege to guide, to instruct and to lessen the burden of life. His to offer and sustain the faith.

It is a beautiful opportunity to serve and I hope that he will be elected to the Board. For, if elected, I know that from his temperament, experience and desire, he will serve well. He has my best wishes for success.

I would be pleased to have this recommendation given publicity in an early issue.

Yours very truly,
ANDREW P. BIDDLE
Library Commissioner

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