The Birmingham Eccentric

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 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 Wednesdays. 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.

Republican Spoils System

It must make former Governor Frank Murphy and his Democrats smile when, recalling the attacks that the Michigan Republicans made upon their application of civil service, they now read what has happened in State government since the first of the year—you remember that January 1, 1939, marked the advent of the Republican Party in control of affairs at Lansing.

Over in Lansing is a young newspaper reporter whose name is Carl B. Rudow; he is one of The Detroit News' correspondents in the State Capital; he gets the facts and his newspaper prints 'em. In a recent story Mr. Rudow, shows how the Republican Party applies civil service, and reveals how, in spite of a promise to decrease the number of State employees since January 1, the list has been increased. Here is Mr. Rudow's highly enlightening article:

"Spoils politics has filled nearly 2,000 jobs in the state government since the administration's revised civil service law went into effect and took about 7,000 positions out of the merit system, state payroll records showed today.

"Republican officials contended that 'few changes' would be made among employes despite the 'ripper' law, which they have contended-ended merely was to 'make civil service more workable.'

"But records show that 1,926 employes have been placed in jobs that used to be under civil service and now are in spoils politics. This turnover is since only May 30, when the revised law really took effect. It does not include undetermined changes made earlier in the year in the 1,606 jobs unclassified in the original law which placed 15,000 more jobs under civil service.

"Other records show that nearly 8,400 jobs now are unclassified or open to spoils practices, while only 8,500 to 8,700 remain under civil service. The declassification of former civil service positions is not yet complete.

"Payroll records also indicate that the new unclassified employes, who obtained their jobs without merit tests, tend to get higher salaries than did the old civil service employes. This also indicates the historical viewpoint of politicians in regard to taxpayers' money.

"One of the peculiar developments is that employes placed in non-civil service jobs since May 30 get a median pay of about $125 a month. The median pay for employes still on the job but no longer under civil service is only $110. The Median pay for civil service employes hired since May 30 is slightly in excess of $80.

In other words, the taxpayers got work done for less expense under civil service. Experts in the past have estimated that the taxpayers lose about $1,000,000 a year when spoils politics dominates state employment.

"Another peculiar fact is that the new politically-appointed employes seem to have gravitated toward better-than-the-average pay levels. Computations from records show these paradoxes:

"Salaried workers in the non-civil service group who receive less than $100 a month—new political employes hired since May 30 take only 19 per cent of these unclassified jobs. (Why bother with these jobs, anyway?)

"Salaried workers in the same group who receive $100 to $150 a month—new political employes hired since May 30 are 29 per cent of this better-paying section of unclassified workers. (Hm, now we're getting into real money.)

"Salaried workers who receive more than $150 a month, running to as high as $766.67 a month — new political employes hired since May 30 are 35.5 per cent of this unclassified group. (These are the jobs we want, Boss.)

"The indication therefore is that politicians pay their friends more money for state work than personnel experts pay after a scientific effort to give "equal pay for equal work." Exactly half of the unclassified employes who get $500 to $600 a month, which is a lot of money, are newly hired since May 30. So are the remnant of similar employes who get more than $600 a month.

"A third peculiarity develops in a scrutiny of those new unclassified employes who 'just happen' to have been given salaries that 'just happen' to be a rememberable figure.

"A total of 168 such employes, for example, get exactly $1,500 a year. Politicians probably will insist that this salary coincides with the work only 58 old workers in declassified exactly, but it is noticeable that positions got the same pay.

"Another 391 new political appointees just happen to get exactly $1,800 a month, and this again is scores more than get exactly this salary among declassified workers. The same sort of emphasis on a 'round number' salary for new non-civil service workers comes at the pay level at $2,400, $3,000, $3,600, $4,000 and similar higher figures for a year's work."

Parallel Parking Now With Us

Considerable opposition to the change from angle to parallel parking on Woodward avenue, between Willits and Brown street, is being evidenced here since the new State law, effective September 29, went into existence. Under the terms of this law every State trunk line comes under the control and regulation of the State of Michigan; one of the clauses in the law requires that only parallel parking be allowed on State trunk lines. Thus the control of parking on Birmingham's main highway is lost to the City; hence the inability right now to "do anything about it."

Our own suggestion is that Birmingham wait until the new Woodward cut-off is completed and in use by through traffic; then we can determine just how much congestion, if any, remains on the present Woodward avenue. Reactions of the merchants and the shopping public can also be assembled. Then, if the situation is ripe for the restoration of angle parking, a delegation from here can go to Lansing to lay the matter before the State Highway and State Police Departments, the agencies charged with carrying out the new law.

If the evidence warrants restoration af angle parking, no doubt the State will be fair in its final decision.

Of course, if Birmingham wants to assume complete responsibility for repairs and maintenance of the present Woodward avenue, perhaps it may be able to do so; this will allow for local control of parking habits; it will also require local taxpayers to pay for the highway's upkeep. The advantages or disadvantages from a monetary standpoint can be weighed when the evidence is in later.

In the meantime, since nothing can be done right now to change the parking problem, we suggest that everybody remain calm.

Political Hokum

For a bit of illogical hokum, we must credit the Republican Party with this terrific suggestion: "No man or group of men in the Republican Party today is greater than his Party." Such a suggestion, if acted upon blindly, would result in the blind leading the blind—especially in the State of Michigan. Editor Harry H. Whiteley, in the Dowagiac Daily News, states our own long held conviction on the topic when he wrote last week:

"Under that philosophy which binds the individual to submit to whatever fate a majority may impose upon him, we have a state machine which controls the candidates of the party, its conventions, and under unofficial sanction, permeates most every avenue of subordinate state administration. So long as this condition exists we refuse to accept the dogma. We reserve to ourselves the right to fight within the party to extinguish this undemocratic procedure under which one or two men with their stooges rule the roost."

Europe Full Of Hatred

While our sympathies are entirely with the Allies in this present war, we cannot overlook the fact that England and France, by their failure to liquidate the oppressive features of the Versailles Treaty upon Germany, has at least advanced by a number of years Hitler's march into Poland. The historic truth is that these European countries have been fighting power politics for centuries; they have changed and re-changed national boundary lines times without number; now they are at it again. In peace, is the time to prevent war, instead of preparing for it. If the Allies win this present war and set up peace terms that are leavened with hate and revenge, it will be peace terms just like the Versailles Treaty; and that means another war, like the present one. The United States should keep out of Europe.

Chase S. Osborn

Yesterday, October 4, the citizens of Saulte Ste. Marie, assisted by men and women from many other areas, both inside and outside Michigan, gathered to pay homage to Chase S. Osborn, the Soo's "number one personality." As you know, Mr. Osborn was once Governor of Michigan; he has travelled the world over many times, is a recognized historian, a statesman, an author, and lecturer. The sum total of the good deeds he has wrought from the good thoughts he has thought, would equal the combined lives of many average men. It is fitting that his friends should gather to do him great honor themselves, should gather to do him great honor—by doing so, they also honor themselves. Chase Salmon Osborn most assuredly has earned the bread and butter, the fresh air and sunshine, and the host of friends that this good earth has provided him with. May his life reach beyond the hundred mark!

Where Does Defense Begin?

Senator David I. Walsh, of Massachusetts, urges the slogan, "No war, except in defense of our country, our freedom and democratic institutions." Mr. Walsh is chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee. He insists that all we want is to "protect our freedom and our democratic institutions for our own children."

Well, so we do, but this doesn't tell us exactly what the Senator means by his generalized slogan, which will be promptly approved by every American, including those who would like to see an American Hilter and the demolition of the democracies of the world.

The point to be understood, in all this talk about defending our country, is where does the defense begin. It is possible for other nations to cripple the economic life of the United States and reduce the standard of living of every American home without firing a gun against an American fortress or warship and without landing a man on the soil of the Western Hemisphere?

NEW TRAFFIC RULES are the order in Michigan. Obedience to them will preserve life and property.

BOMBARDMENT OF WASHINGTON

Knocking on Wood!

with JOHN H. HARWOOD

"What are the duties of a Knight of the Garter?" asks a correspondent. We don't know but we imagine they are fairly elastic. —Montreal Star.

—o—

A Chicago "information man" has retired after answering 50,000,000 questions. It is hoped that he has children so he can taper off gradually.

—o—

THE DARKER SIDE

One of the nation's biggest oil booms is now under way in Michigan, with Isabella County one of the boom spots. It is interesting to note in the Isabella County Times News a column "Lime Failures," listing a dozen drillings which did not pan out. Such things as failure are usually forgotten when a boom is on.

We've often wished the same could be done for the Irish Sweepstakes. Newspapers which loudly proclaim: "Americans Win $2,165,000 in Sweeps" ought also to state something like this: "American Suckers Drop $25,000,000 in Sweeps."—or whatever the amount is the unlucky ones never see again.

—o—

While on the subject of games of chance, this is the way a nearby country club has announced its forthcoming numbers party: "Because of the horrible things that may happen to people who win at Bingo we will not play Bingo, but KENO. We have a pipe line direct from the end of the pipe and the only sin will be not to win one of the many prizes."

—o—

A LIMITED EMBARGO

No man alive has the perspicacity to know whether lifting the embargo or strengthening it would keep America out of war. Our own private solution would be a compromise—a limited embargo which would prevent either a boom or a depression, and thus remove economic factors which may involve us.

These possibilities can not be overlooked:

(1) Should the United States retain its strict embargo on arms and munitions (which, incidentally, has been estimated to amount to only 15 per cent of a total war trade, and which does not cover raw materials which can easily be shipped to Canada or abroad for fabrication into war machines), it is POSSIBLE that our policy may retard a prompt victory of the Allies, and perhaps bring nearer the day when our fears of "dictators conquering the world" will be so great that we will get into the fight.

(2) Directed against that theory is the widespread fear that selling munitions will get us into the conflict, and that we ought not to alter the present embargo.

The weakness in that argument, as it was pointed out in paragraph (1), is that while staying out of the arms business MAY keep us out of war, the embargo as it now stands is not inclusive enough for this reason: As the historian Charles A. Beard pointed out recently at the conclusion of the Nye investigation, the thirst for war profits is not limited to munitions makers. The farmer, the laborer, the miner—in fact, a vast segment of our population, SEEMED to profit in the World War boom. The materials of war are not just guns and ammunition, but wheat, coal, oil, iron, copper, machinery and foodstuffs of all kinds, as Germany indicated last week when sinking a Swedish ship carrying what might be assumed to be non-contraband.

The present embargo does not cover this vast field.

(3) If the United States instituted a total embargo, it is possible that the depression bound to result would be a boomerang.

(4) The only solution in this writer's mind is a limited embargo. We want neither a boom nor a depression. Why not impose restrictions which would prohibit any more than a 10 per cent increase in exports this year; 15 per cent, in 1940; 25 per cent in 1941, and a 25 per cent maximum for the duration of the war? These percentages are only hypothetical, of course, and should be made the study of economists and foreign trade experts.

It is vital that this country experience no great war inflation, nor a depression. The debacle of 1929 was due, more than anything else, to the tremendous upheaval in our economic system caused by the World War, and it goes without saying that we do not want another 1929.

(5) Combined with a limited embargo should be a cash-and-carry provision.

(6) There should be a well-financed and intelligently-handled program to counteract foreign and domestic propaganda. This writer, for one, would be willing to donate hard-earned cash toward such an end.

There, in the well-known nutshell, is this commentator's solution for keeping the United States out of war.

John the Baptist and Jesus

The International Uniform Sunday School Lesson for October 8.

Text: Matthew 3:1-17

JOHN the Baptist, who came from the wilderness into cities and villages of Judea, proclaiming that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, was a forerunner of Christ.

John the Baptist, and Jesus were related by family ties and by a long course of preparation—nearly 30 years, in fact—during which time each must have been known to the other through their family contacts.

There is no reference to these things in the Gospel of Matthew, from which our lesson is taken, but the story is related with great exactness in the first chapter of the Gospel of St. Luke. It tells of the announcements of the birth of John to Zacharias and his wife, Elizabeth, and of the coming birth of Jesus by the Virgin Mary. Luke also tells of the relationship between the two women and of the coming of Mary into the house of Zacharias and Elizabeth.

These details throw a great deal of light upon the more meager and matter-of-fact narrative in Matthew.

* * *

ONE does not know just at what stage during these 30 years of preparation John withdrew into the wilderness. His life was probably always to some extent a life apart. His parents were old, and his father was engaged in the service of the temple. The sense of holiness and destiny attaching to the announcement of his birth would tend also to strictness in preparation. Even before he entered the wilderness, John was probably something of a recluse and ascetic, not taking very active part in the throbbing life of the time.

On the other hand, Jesus would seem to have been always very close to the life of the people. We have the record concerning His life and His home, that He "increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man." The picture in which artists have portrayed Him as a carpenter in the home or workshop of His father, however much they may be inaccurate in detail, are probably accurate in their main suggestion and setting.

He was brought up neither in the wilderness nor in the busy city but in Nazareth, a hill town, a busy place in a populous district, but nevertheless in an environment where His contacts with the daily life of the people and with the surrounding country were of the sort that one finds so strongly emphasized in all the references of His later teaching. He found in the out-of-doors not the wildness of the desert, but the glory of the lilies of the field and of the waving grain.

These differences are significant. They emphasize, for one thing, the difference between preparation and fulfillment. Here is a place for asceticism and sacrifice. There are things that can be done only at great cost and effort, and Jesus Himself was to make the supreme sacrifice. But the profound emphasis in the life and teaching of Jesus was not on the barrenness of the wilderness or upon life's negations, but rather on the richness and abundance of the full life, the life of joy in nature and in grace.

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.

To the Merchants and Businessmen, and to the Civic, Patriotic, Service, Fraternal, and Educational organizations of Birmingham:

Dear Friends:

The members of the City Commission join with me in thanking each of you for your cooperation and interest in our Civic Loyalty Day celebration. The parade you organized and presented was the best and most inspiring public exhibition we have ever seen in Birmingham. Many of you also supported and assisted in our afternoon tours and the evening program. It is a fine tribute to the civic loyalty of the people of our city when an occasion of that kind produced such a fine response.

It is our hope and belief that the spirit of civic loyalty in Birmingham will continue to grow, encourage still better local government, furnish a pattern for others, and make our city an even happier and more prosperous place of family and business life.

JOHN E. MARTZ,
Mayor.

H. G. Wells, British author:

"I know my people, and if they say they are ready to fight three years, then they are ready."

Allan Roy Dafoe, Dionne quintuplets' doctor:

"There should be a law against uncles, aunts and grandparents fondling an infant and particularly against kissing it."

Happenings of Long Ago

Bits Of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric—The Items That Make Up The Historical Background Of The Birmingham Of Today.

Fifty Years Ago
Oct. 10, 1889

Mr. Parkinson of Detroit has rented and moved into Mr. Slade's home on Middle street.

R. Bird took a tumble in his barn on Tuesday last, falling from a high beam striking on a hay rack and thence to the floor. Rather a risky act for a man of his age, but aside from a lively shaking up Robert is not much hurt.

The other day we noticed Tom Hanna gingerly handling over some old clothes and on inquiring found they were the ones left by the burglars in trade for his new suits. Tom says you can't say there's no flies on those clothes, and stick to the truth or anywhere near it.

In last week's issue our Royal Oak correspondent said Warren Rose was up to Pontiac charged with selling beer without a license. Mr. Rose says he don't run the Halfway House; he don't sell beer; he wasn't arrested and didn't come back from Pontiac leaning on the constable's arm. All this is true and we are glad to make the correction. It was Alf Lewless and the cost of the suit was $4.50. Alf still runs the Halfway House and on Friday evening, Oct. 11, gives a grand opening ball. All invited.

Rev. N. Freeman and wife of St. Clair were the guests of Mr. C. Harris last Monday. Sunday evening Mr. Freeman preached to his old congregation at the Baptist Church. Mr. Freeman has a nice charge at St. Clair and is progressing finely.

The meanest man in seven counties—well, we have him—the man who ridicules a public improvement because it was secured through the work of a woman.

—o—

Twenty-five Years Ago
Oct. 9, 1914

On the Battle Front, via Paris, Oct. 6—The allied armies, after having permitted their adversaries, as they thought, to exhaust themselves by continued attacks, took a most vigorous offensive today. The British and French encountered such a strong resistance, however, that their most advanced detachments on the western wing were compelled to fall back.

A monument has been erected in Berlin to General von Hindenburg, the inscription on it describing him as the liberator of East Prussia. Numerous other honors have been conferred on him.

Dr. and Mrs. Neff, of Conn., and sons, Mortimer and Irvin, are expected at Bigelow's Bungalow, Oct. 12.

Owing to the European war, ice cream soda has doubled in price. Since Oct. 1 it is 10 cents per soda.

Fred Mallender is still raising strawberries and sending them away. Last week he sent away two quarts of as ripe and fine strawberries as you ever saw or tasted, and raised out doors, no hot-house business.

Political posters have found their way to the telegraph poles on Woodward avenue. These, added to the glaring posters of the State fair still allowed to adorn the poles, make a beautiful advertisement for Beautiful Birmingham. All we need is a dozen Bull Durham posters and a few Dutch Cleanser ads.

The marriage of Miss Florence Smith and Mr. Christopher D. Seeley took place, Oct. 1, at the office of Justice A. W. Campbell. Dr. P. D. Hilty and William Campbell were witnesses.

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Five Years Ago
Oct. 11, 1934

Baldwin Public Library Board voted Tuesday night to extend a unanimous invitation to Miss Adeline Cooke of Kaukuana, Wis., to fill the position of librarian left vacant by the resignation of Mrs. Nancy B. Thomas.

The enrollment in the classes being held under the city's FERA adult education program has reached 135 and new registrations are still being taken, it was announced late yesterday by Robert D. Lynd, administrative supervisor.

Rudolph J. Zabel of Birmingham was one of the 144 student lawyers who successfully passed the Michigan state bar examination taken by the 220 candidates last September, according to an announcement from Lansing.

Separate suits will be filed for the cities of Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills in their fight against the 1934 equalized property valuation of Oakland County, according to Frank W. Atkinson, Bloomfield Hills city attorney who has been retained to handle the case.

The Big Beaver School, which had been running on a half-day schedule for the past week because the wells which supplied it with water were nearly dry, returned to a full time program yesterday when arrangements were completed for the trucking of 1,500 gallons of water daily from Clawson.

Congressional Comment

by Representative George A. Dondero, 17th Michigan District

I have received hundreds of communications regarding the repeal of the arms embargo. Over 95 per cent are opposed to its repeal. In order that the people of my district may know my position in this issue, this general letter is being forwarded to every newspaper circulating in the 17th Michigan District.

The Neutrality Act was passed to keep this country out of war. It had my support and vote, including the embargo on arms. The Act was passed almost unanimously by Congress after complete and thorough consideration, when war did not exist. It gave notice to the world in advance what our position would be in case war broke out. Now war has broken out and its repeal is asked. To change our position after war has been declared is in itself an unneutral act.

In December, 1914, after war had broken out in Europe, Congress attempted to pass an embargo on arms. Great Britain at once protested to our American Ambassador in London that it would be a violation of international law and considered an unfriendly act toward England. Our State Department, through Secretary of State Bryan, concurred in the position taken by England and the entire matter was dropped. This is exactly the situation today.

Let us keep our men, money and munitions at home. Let our thoughts be of America first. I believe that most desired end can best be attained by holding fast to the position we took when war did not exist, namely by keeping the Neutrality Act as it is.

I am conscious of my responsibility to my constituents, my country and my God, whose guidance I humbly ask to maintain peace and security in our beloved America. I pledge my every effort to keep the United States out of war.

ELECTRIC CLOCK

The old clock was a useless tool.
It sent the children late to school
And me to church long ere the bell had rung
To walk about, or sit among
The empty pews.
It made me burn the cakes
And pies, and underdo the steaks.
Oftimes it made the dinner late.
The children said, "It's out of date.
Extremely antiquated
And must be relegated
Into the loft", so up it went:
And then they spent
Their savings for a modern clock
That deigns to neither tick nor tock,
That doesn't make the faintest sound
And won't be set and won't be wound.
When I am here alone I bring
The old clock down. It's such a friendly thing
And really lots of company
For lonely sort of folks like me.
—Beatrice McDonald

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