The Birmingham Eccentric

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THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 1940

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.

Why Not Hire Married Teachers?

Shall the Birmingham Public School Board revise its policy of not engaging women teachers who are married, thus opening up positions for members of the feminine sex who have been brave enough to venture upon the sea of matrimony?

This question is now before the Board, occasioned by the fact that one of its present able teachers got herself a husband during the term of her year's contract and, before the end of this school year in June, must be notified as to her qualifications to come back next September. Unless the Board revises its attitude, she will not be re-engaged; this policy, too, prohibits hiring married teachers at the beginning of the school year, and was inaugurated back in 1934, when the depression was impressed so deeply upon our national economic life.

The opposition to hiring married teachers, you recall, is based upon the notion that a married woman is supposed to have a husband; that the husband is working; and that in times of unemployment two bread-winners in one family is one too many—especially if the lady in the case is being paid from public funds.

On both sides of the debate, of course, are many arguments. Those against hiring married teachers of the gentler sex feel that other people, especially young normal college graduates, are deprived of the chance to earn a livelihood.

Those who are not opposed to having married women as teachers also have various arguments to support their case.

So far as we can see the problem, we believe that the teaching profession is so all-fired important that, regardless of whether we are in a depression or an era of prosperity, the vital question comes down to this: is the human being, be she a lady or be he a man, possessed of scholastic qualifications, human understanding and sympathy, empirical experience, and the God-given quality of being a inspirational counselor to youth? If she or he is, then she or he ought to be hired.

Besides, any woman possessing these qualifications, and also brave enough to place her personal destiny in the hands of a mere man, shows additional good sense, and her job as teacher will make her more tolerant of the shortcomings of her spouse—and that makes 'em better wives.

No Third Term

Honestly, Folks, after pondering the question of whether or not President Roosevelt will seek a third term, here is our conclusion: F. D. R. will not openly or willingly seek a third term because, in spite of his tendency for experiment and his association with radical groups, he is too deeply steeped in American tradition to flaunt Washington's attitude toward a third term. Washington, you remember, refused a third term because it suggested a sort of personal monarchy, the very condition against which the Colonies rebelled. It is the real test of a true patriot to refuse a third term, and we believe that F. D. R. is patriotic enough to carry on the Washington tradition.

Inhabited For 2,500 Years

It is interesting to report that Harvard University geologists, after an extensive study of the Lindenmeier Valley in Northeastern Colorado, are satisfied that men have lived in North America for twenty-five thousand years.

What amazes us is not the antiquity of man or his long residence anywhere on the face of the globe, but rather the slowness with which human beings solve the fundamental problems of their existence. No one knows how many civilizations have flourished and collapsed in the long record of the human race, nor can anyone tell today what the future holds for present civilizations.

While it is interesting to discover new facts about existence in former eras and to speculate upon the "shape of things to come," the people of today must concentrate upon the problems of the hour. In testing possible solutions, it is well to weigh the basic principles involved with the knowledge that comes from the past and to be certain that they do not conflict with basic human instincts.

WE ARE GLAD TO LEARN that a group of Michigan citizens, aided by experts, is going to study Michigan's poor penal system. Taxpayers maintain a costly system of law enforcement, to capture and punish criminals; then why not do something constructive for these inmates so that when they are released they may assume decent and self-supporting places in society? We do not suggest the pampering of inmates, but we do agree that they are entitled to as much consideration in the realm of curatives as the sick are in our hospitals.

Birmingham Loses In Scavenger Sale

While we have every sympathy for the owner of a homestead whose property is menaced by its sale through the State, due to delinquent taxes, we cannot refrain from mentioning the injustice of the Scavenger Tax Sale law which is being carried out throughout Michigan this Spring. This Scavenger Tax Sale benefits, perhaps more than 90 per cent, those who deal in speculative areas; in fairness, of course, to "speculators," we are willing to admit that the legitimate subdivider, offering property for which there is a near-immediate human need, is not to be classed with the pure speculator who buys up farms and subdivides them about as a stock market broker might have acted in the late 1920's when he listed and sold illegitimate foreign bonds to a gullible American public.

But this Scavenger Tax Sale Act, created by the Michigan Legislature, was, in our opinion, fathered and stimulated by real estate speculators who, unable to meet the taxes on their properties because the properties were not purchased, pushed through Lansing a bill that made them beneficiaries of a privileged class; the bill absolutely was unfair to those who had paid their taxes. It was unfair because delinquent taxes are counted as assets upon a community's books, and belong to the citizens of that community; to allow delinquent speculators to get their property back for as little as 25 per cent of the last assessed valuation (even though the delinquent taxes amounted to many times the assessment and whose fault was that, if not the subdividers themselves, who sought the public improvements that created the taxes?), is certainly not fair to those who paid their taxes in full.

More than a year ago The Eccentric sought to get together enough city and village and public school officials to change the original Act so that these units of government might bid in desired properties, using their delinquent taxes as credit; several meetings were held in Lansing before Senate and House taxation committees; but the speculators won, and the people who paid their taxes have lost.

Take the case of Birmingham, as an example. Last week local property went on the auction block. Three thousand one hundred and ninety-three parcels of property were offered for sale; buyers took 2,142, or 67.8 per cent of them. The property offered is on the city's assessed valuation books at $658,201.00; it brought, at last week's sale, $175,643.00, in cash or pledges. (Owners are allowed to re-purchase their property by paying ten per cent down and the remainder in ten years.)

City Treasurer Harold H. Corson has stated that Birmingham's ultimate loss in delinquent tax accounts receivable, as the result of the Scavenger Tax Sale, will run between two and three hundred thousand dollars. The loss to the Birmingham public school district has been estimated by Business Manager Louis M. Randall at approximately $150,000.00.

That loss, of course, must be made up by people who actually do pay their taxes, for the City and school district must pay their debts from funds received by the tax route.

Thus moveth the dizzy world of alleged legislative relief.

The legislators said "we are trying to save the poor home-owners," but the records reveal that less than ten per cent of delinquent property belonged to persons who actually live upon the land affected; the legislators argue that by the Scavenger Tax Sale "we are returning property to people who will pay their taxes currently, starting anew"—yet ten years are allowed for buyers to pay, if they formerly owned the property; and there is nothing in the Law that even requires them to pay current taxes, only a ruling and enforcement of it by the State Land Board assures payment of current taxes.

The Eccentric, as we said in the opening paragraph of this editorial, is in sympathy with any legislative move that offers help to stricken owners of homesteads, or even legitimate vacant property; but when a law like the Scavenger Tax Sale Act becomes a statute to relieve speculators from paying their justly acquired obligations, we cannot refrain from offering criticism.

Don't you who have paid your taxes feel that way, too?

Federal Grand Jury Coming

News from Washington that a federal grand jury is to be convened in Michigan in a week or two, to investigate possible conditions of graft or connection with underworld characters by some State and County officials, covering the period from 1932 to date, is welcomed by a great majority of our citizens.

The additional fact that the investigation will be conducted by O. John Rogge, the FBI's ace crusader who wrecked the political machines of Long in Louisiana and Pendergast in Kansas City, is also glad tidings.

It is believed that the grand jury being conducted in Detroit by Judge Homer Ferguson has unearthed evidence to aid Mr. Rogge, whose chief attention will be to scrutinize the income tax reports of certain politicians in Michigan, plus recent-rich shady characters.

In the face of an apparent breakdown of law enforcing machinery in certain sections of Michigan, the appearance of Mr. Rogge as an agent of the federal Department of Justice is justified. We hope that he takes off his coat and rolls up his sleeves and makes the dirt fly!

And, from this point of vantage, we expect to see plenty of dirt.

IT IS ESTIMATED by the University of Michigan Bureau of Government that Michigan is losing $15,000,000 annually because of laxity in its tax collection methods. That means that many persons escape paying their share of the cost of government. The best remedy for this situation is the creation of a single tax collecting agency for the State's government. (Why doesn't Governor Dickinson pause long enough between sermons to say something about improving the efficiency of Michigan's government?)

Knocking on Wood!

with JOHN H. HARWOOD

INFORMALLY SPEAKING

The only place where a sitdown is regarded as a profit builder is in a henhouse.

—o—

There is a question as to which is the most courageous—the man who dies for his country or the one who goes on living for it and keeps on paying the taxes.

—o—

We often wonder what would have become of the world if Hitler had slipped off the ladder while painting a house.

—o—

Children are natural mimics. They act just like their parents despite every attempt to teach them good manners.

PARTY LEADERS

According to theory, the "people" control political parties and administrations. Actually, that theory is only partially true, as it was pointed out last week in a talk at Pontiac by Dr. James K. Pollock, eminent political scientist of the University of Michigan. The real decisions on candidates and issues are made by party leaders long before the election. Obviously, it becomes a matter of importance who the party leaders are. If the party is run by men who are in politics for private profit, government will mean one thing. If party leaders are men who are in politics with higher motives, then government is likely to be something else.

It is not hard to find examples of these two types. Frank D. McKay, the Grand Rapids man who has had his fingers in Republican affairs for a long, long time, is the type of politician who finds his many connections exceedingly profitable. Politics have paid big dividends to Frank McKay, and no doubt his operations have been entirely within the law. But Frank McKay doesn't care whether the people of Michigan get good government. That is beside the point, and the result is that Michigan just now has three administrations: a Governor, a co-governor and a shadow governor.

To find an example of another type of leader, this observer need look no farther than across the office to the desk of George R. Averill. This commentator is no sycophant and never intends to get into that groove, but can appreciate having associated with a man who has convictions and knows what he's talking about, and isn't afraid to say and write what he thinks.

George Averill has no personal axe to grind in politics. He interests himself in government solely because he sees a chance to work for something worthwhile. To the professional politician, that may seem incredible.

The point is, as Professor Pollock pointed out, we need more men who are willing to break away from their personal affairs to serve as delegates to county and state conventions, to interest themselves in party affairs at their roots. Otherwise, the state conventions and some county conventions will continue to be in the future as they have in the past. Charley McCarthy rallies with Eddie Barnard and Frank McKay pulling the strings.

AN OPEN LETTER TO HITLER

Dear Adolf:

As a rule, the writer of this column is not given to writing letters to such personages as Der Hoch Reichschancellor, but because the persons in the high and mighty places are sometimes just as dumb as their lowliest subjects, I am presuming to give you some sound advice.

In the first place, I don't think you have what it takes to win this war, and I know darn well you won't win it if the United States lines up against you. Thus a major consideration in your high policy should be to avoid stirring up the animosity of us Americans, who, while we may not be so hot in a Blitzkrieg, are mighty tough fighters when we get going.

So here is some advice:

(1) Don't pull any more atrocities such as the unspeakable conduct of your military forces in conquering Poland. The truth is bound to leak out.

(2) Refrain from bombing and machine gunning civilians and places housing civilians. It really doesn't serve any good military purpose and may make us mad enough to send our forces Over There again. We Americans are just that emotional and sympathetic. The war in Spain proved that direct warfare carried out against civilians doesn't weaken their morale.

(3) You might just as well become resigned to the fact that the Allies are going to get plenty of wonderful airplanes made in the United States. Your saboteurs, if any, can not stop it, so they will be wasting their time if they try to blow up factories. That was proved in the last war. Besides, if you try such stuff as that, it will serve well to arouse our dander. As a matter of fact, you would do well to have your agents follow British agents around to make sure THEY don't pull any phoney sabotage—not that they are likely to, but it won't hurt to watch 'em. There is such a thing as phoney sabotage, as the burning of the Reichstag palace in Berlin will recall to your mind.

(4) Keep your submarine away from our coasts. We have a lot of fearful citizens here who can visualize one sub as threatening the existence of the whole U. S.

(5) Don't bother to cook up propaganda that President Roosevelt and his amateur ambassadors are trying to involve us in the Allied cause. That may be true, but we don't like outsiders to tell us about it. Of course, we give you the very devil and call you all sorts of uncomplimentary things, and so we should say nothing when you knock our Administration. But there is a difference. If we get mad about it, we can do something about it. You can't.

Yours truly,
J. H. H.

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 Editor:

Since 1930 I have been studying more or less consistently the economic status and hopes of thousands of American families and have been in close, human contact with a few.

The national unemployment in 1930 caused me to take some courses in Economics, and my main interest in this theme has not deviated.

What can we do to relieve Uncle Sam of the Relief load he has to carry? Besides the countless families depending on him, there are as many whose annual wage is inadequate for decency and health.

This inadequate annual family income has forced thousands of wives and mothers into seeking gainful work outside of the home, the husbands may be sick, jobless, dead, or alimony dodgers.

I feel that one of the most constructive jobs that socially-minded citizens could promote would be the securing of an adequate family income for the husband and father, so that the mother could stay home and bring up the children with Christian standards of living. I like positive, constructive democracy. That would lighten our taxes for delinquency and crime.

If this is just a vision of what could be and if Government spending for relief is so unpopular, what other course can we pursue to lessen unemployment and deterioration? "An idle mind is the devil's workshop," "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" are as true today as long ago. These are human beings, "even as you and I," who need our consideration, they are not inanimate parts of a machine that can be shelved and forgotten, or dross that can be thrown in a dump. So many articulate people seem to lose sight of fundamental human needs of great sections of our population in protecting legal rights of one group. And our youth, 16 to 25, out of school, looking for jobs, have little political pressure, compared to that exerted, say, by the aged in pension increase demands, or the labor unions in protecting seniority rights. Pressures of these groups have become necessary for existence of millions of our older citizens.

I am trying to present a case for our wishful, trained and untrained unemployed younger Americans whose ideals and hopes need thoughtful deep consideration and enough genuine concern to stimulate constructive action in their behalf.

If jobs continue to be held and defended when not economically necessary, and doors shut in the faces of these younger Americans, then society itself must assume a much greater share of the blame and for the moral, spiritual, emotional and economic decline of its coming generations, and cease putting all the blame on the parents and the home.

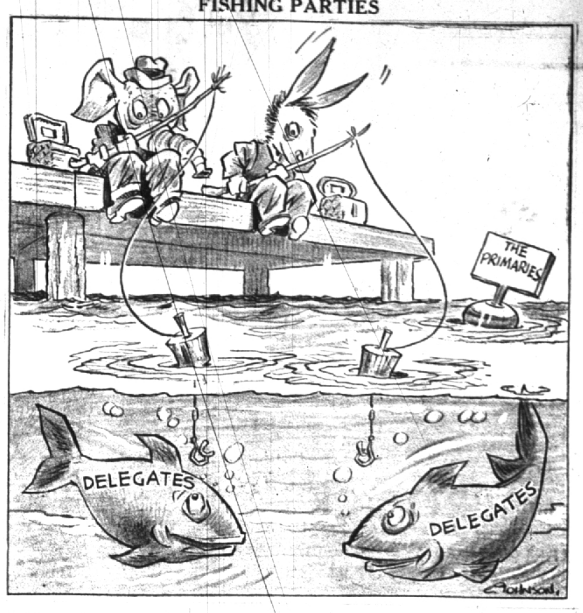
The Baldwin Library has three magazine articles pertinent to this muted question. March, 1940, Harpers Magazine, "Office Women and Sex Antagonism," by Elisabeth Cushman. February 1939, Atlantic Monthly, "Men, Women and Hate," by Karl Menninger, a psychiatrist. January, 1940, Good Housekeeping, "Children don't vote," Henry F. Pringle.

GERTRUDE CORSON.

New chairman of the Michigan stream control commission for 1940 is P. J. Hoffmaster, director of the Michigan department of conservation. He succeeds State highway commissioner Murray D. Van Wagoner.

The U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey reports cost recently has shown a disproportionate increase much greater share of the blame and is now too abundant for the welfare of other waterfowl more desirable to man.

FISHING PARTIES



BARTER

I gave him all the junk I had
And begged him for a broken vase.
The family think I am a trial
Because I litter up the place:

But it was blue as summer skies,
He said, "you get it very cheap."
I'll bet two cents he picked it up
On someone's rubbish heap.

I wonder if his wife is tall,
Or short the same as me,
And likes to rummage through the junk
For bits of trumpery.

She'll find my tarnished earrings
And a lot of other stuff,
Those slippers with the toes clear out
And my old ragged muff.

I hope she wears my size in shoes
And that she's not too fat
For that old purple party dress,
And likes my winter hat.

—BEATRICE McDONALD

WABEEK STATE BANK OF DETROIT

"A friendly bank"

Statement of Condition at Close of Business, March 26, 1940

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Frank Couzens
Henry T. Ewald
Leonard L. Healy
Geo. B. Judson
Clarence E. Wilcox
William R. Yaw

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Henry T. Ewald, *Vice-President*
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Clifford H. Hyett, *Assistant Cashier*
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Lou A. Wilson, *Assistant Cashier*
Arlie R. Trahern, *Assistant Cashier*

RESOURCES

Cash on Hand and Due from Other Banks	$7,933,218.02	
United States Government Obligations, Direct and or Fully Guaranteed	953,000.00	$ 8,886,218.02
Other Securities		2,355,695.75
Loans and Discounts		3,871,912.21
Real Estate Mortgages		301,816.39
F.H.A. Insured Mortgages		2,999,037.28
Overdrafts		378.29
Banking House and Site		18,270.54
Furniture and Fixtures		42,539.50
Prepaid Expense		27,150.24
Income Accrued Receivable		39,558.37
Other Resources		226,034.85
TOTAL RESOURCES		$18,768,611.44

LIABILITIES

Capital		$ 1,200,000.00
Surplus		320,000.00
Undivided Profits		153,692.78
Interest and Expense Accrued Payable		20,717.37
Other Liabilities		343,606.13
Deposits—Commercial, Bank and Savings	$12,200,722.75	
State of Michigan Deposits	120,552.44	
Other Public Funds	4,183,895.78	
Cashier's, Certified and Dividend Checks Outstanding	225,424.19	$16,730,595.16
TOTAL LIABILITIES		$18,768,611.44

United States Government Obligations carried at $415,000.00 in the above statement are pledged to secure Public Funds on deposit.

Main Banking Office in the Fisher Building
Downtown Office in the Ford Building

BRANCH OFFICES
141 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale • Wabeek Building, Birmingham