

The Birmingham Eccentric

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1940

NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish articles of events which have local interest and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be presented before noon on Wednesday. The right to accept or reject, however, to make such editorial changes in the copy submitted as are necessary to the style of the paper and as are required by law of the state. Because of the mechanical situation in the composing room, headlines written after the close of the staff cannot be used. Any erroneous reference 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.

Federal indictment of Michigan's Republican "boss" Frank R. McKay, of Grand Rapids, to get the "def" with 12 "Uncle Sam Indicts Michigan 'Bosses'" and near-prominent politicians of this State last week, removes the cover from a mystery package that has puzzled this commonwealth for many years.

It will be for all including those indicted, that federal Department of Justice prosecutor, O. John Rogge and his staff of able investigators, have come forth with these long-awaited indictments.

It is equally sad, however, that, despite the attacks upon "bossism" in Michigan for many years, no machinery of justice within Michigan has had courage to do the job itself, which only means, folks, that the law enforcement machinery of any State, or lesser unit of government, is easier to corrupt, or make dormant, than is the long arm of Uncle Sam.

While it is true that more indictments do not correct the situation, in the light of Mr. Rogge's crusading in Kansas City and New Orleans, it is hard to imagine that some of the Michigan indicted citizens can expect to escape some manner of penalty. Good sportsmanship, of course, suggests that one ought not even mentally connect an indicted person with court trial, has proven the charges set forth in the indictment. In general, we too, subscribe to that belief.

On the other hand, having personally been close enough to Michigan's government and many of its politicians, we cannot believe that Mr. Rogge's efforts in this State will be wholly without effect.

We have, for many years, been among the leaders of a newspaper group in Michigan that attacked "bosses"; we have asked more than one Governor to launch an investigation of State purchasing methods; we have suggested that some statutory representative of the people look over indicted persons and court trials; we have participated in efforts to have the Republican Party itself purge its ranks of unworthy political manipulators.

Then, for the past year, we have labored with other Michigan newspapers in the creation of the Fourth Estate Group of Michigan, whose endeavor was to "run on house" in Lansing.

Mr. Rogge's entrance into Michigan, months ago, was a welcome activity to our Group. With out any personal malice toward any individual, we hope and pray for the stability of American democracy—that Mr. Rogge's staff will be able to accomplish justice for the whole people, even though a federal prison must open its gates to the guilty.

You who read The Eccentric know how, for years and years, we have sought to interest high State officials in the matter of "political bosses"; you know, too, how discouraging it has been to us in any support from such officials. Even pious Governor Dickinson, under whose auspices administration much of alleged wrongdoing had been going on, according to Mr. Rogge, even this great churchman manifested disinterest in our charges.

About the only public servant in Michigan today who ever raised his voice against "boss control" of State affairs is Vernon J. Brown, Republican Auditor-General of the State. Since he was re-elected November 5, and will serve another two years, Republicans in Michigan have a right to look to him for party leadership in purging Michigan of all political predatory interests.

"The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine," is a fitting epitaph for all who, after Mr. Rogge gets through with them, are penalized by the immutable laws of justice.

In the meantime, we'll all have to wait for the final verdict, as the federal courts move to try the various indicted individuals.

We note that Birmingham's Board of Education is basing its next year's budget on the hope that 85 per cent of the taxes levied will be collected. Well, we join the Board in its "hope"; but supporting more than mere "hope." When will the school people, plus interested citizens, get down to basic practicalities and insist that official Michigan economize on less deserving projects than the public schools? Such economies could be reflected in more revenue for the schools, without increasing the burden of new taxes upon the people of this State.

For two years the citizens of the United States have been told that many foreign evil influences are at work in this country; investigations of the Dies Committee have been going on, with plenty of "smoke" in the air. Isn't it about time that this Committee proceed, officially, to make a full report to Congress? If such bad influences are at work to undermine American democratic institutions, then why not kick 'em out—as soon as possible?

Michigan's League of Women Voters, through its president, Mrs. Charlotte K. Ormond, is opposed to the plan

Ladies, Please Help To Lower Taxes!

The Michigan Public Expenditure Survey to have Michigan's next Legislature "use the ax—cut the tax, five or ten per cent."

Mrs. Ormond, in a letter published in last week's Eccentric, objects to any wholesale attempt to decrease the State's financial support of deserving projects, yet she agrees that something may be done to guarantee that taxpayers get value received for their tax money.

Essentially, we don't think that the League of Women Voters is opposed to lowering the ever-increasing State tax burden. Mrs. Ormond suggests that we need a survey by non-partisan, competent, and trained experts of the whole tax structure. . . . she also believes that, to gain State economy, we need an alert and interested group of tax-conscious people, organized to fight increased taxes.

Well, the Michigan Public Expenditure Survey group is organized to attain decreased taxes. Composed very largely of people who "know their way around" in legislative maneuvers, the Survey organization doesn't have the naive faith revealed by Mrs. Ormond that a "non-partisan, competent and trained" group of other prominent experts can get as far, as quickly, as several hundred thousand signed petitions dumped into the laps of the next State House and Senate membership.

While we understand Mrs. Ormond's fine beliefs and faith in the "expert" method, from long experience we also know that public opinion, organized, will work wonders in political circles, where mere truth and rationalizing will get very little distance.

How did the State's tax burden increase? Largely by "pressure groups," plus extravagance in State governmental personnel and purchasing costs. It is practically impossible to get the whole people to agree upon a definite budget decrease from the coffers of any unit of our government; about all one gets is the "pressure" type of action upon government—a type that nearly always asks for something that will increase the tax burden.

We believe that the Michigan Public Expenditure Survey plan is a practical one if it gets the next Legislature to cut State costs five or ten per cent, then that will be an arbitrary decrease; there will still be enough money left to pay all the legitimate costs of government, including cordily aid to all dependent groups of our citizens.

Unless such action is taken, we see no chance to lower the average citizen's contribution to State government.

Right now our Legislature is in the same position that a family might be in, whose income was made too thin and unbalanced by the many factors that are possible within a family; somehow, the man or the wife, or both, have to say: "From up on our expense sheet, going to be lower; by making the necessary adjustments we can do the job; maybe we'll have to do with less help, spend less on the table or for clothes or amusements; we'll have to see that hunky son Joe gets a job; that son-in-law Bill carries part of his way through; we won't deny giving Betty any needed help, or Grandpa and Grandma any of our protection; but we'll cut out some of the frills, and then with some old-fashioned common sense we'll all be in our financial stability and our self-respect."

In the meantime, we hope the League of Women Voters will pursue its studies relating to government, with a practical emphasis on "how can we help to balance the budget of every unit of government with which we have any connection?"

THAT ANNUAL Thanksgiving Day football game between Royal Oak and Birmingham, played last night on the Pierce Field here, was more of a mud contest than a football game. Many of the players could not be identified by their numbers, due to the generous application of mud. The uniforms, Royal Oak won, 3 to 0, on a field goal by the team.

THIS YEAR there was little, if any, frosty night before the Royal Oak-Birmingham Thanksgiving Day football game. Pleas made by the faculty of both schools, plus removal of the muddy and other refuse, came from the alms, resulted in none of the previous "carnage." That's fine, boys and girls—keep up this spirit and when you become adults maybe you'll play life's game with more sportsmanship than your elders now do.

MICHIGAN'S THANKSGIVING DAY for 1940 has been voted, and the turkey pronounced very good. So was the dressing and cranberry sauce. (The nation's quadrantal applause treat always abounds at election time—with plenty of "pork" on the menu for both sides.)

OUR CONGRATULATIONS to Mr. and Mrs. Luther D. Allen, of Bloomfield Hills, upon having attained their 50th wedding anniversary last week. This couple have lived all of their life in Bloomfield Township; they have seen it evolve from the days of the tall candle to the modern electric lighting system; they remember the "horse & buggy" days, as contrasted against today's streamlined super-speed; they have lived during one of the most interesting periods in world history—what wonderful memories and contrasts must be theirs!

BIRMINGHAM MERCHANTS, prepared for one of their biggest and best Christmas seasons, are showing hundreds of attractive gift items. While they admit for ultimate variety, they never will be able to compete with the "home-town folks," they do hope that the "home-town folks" will inspect local merchandise showings.



Writer Urges Michigan to Think Of Economic Results of War Boom

By GENE ALLEMAN
Michigan Press Association

LEAVING "Britain backs Michigan plant," there is danger that the ability of this State's industry to meet the needs of the war effort will be in jeopardy. A collapse of the exchange will be no less disastrous than a great military victory.

It was our own ambassador to London, Walter Hines Page, recently said that our own government's arms contracts, totaling \$12,500,000, include a third of a billion dollars in allocation to Michigan industrial plants. British arms, such as the machine gun plant near Plymouth (in Wayne county), will swell this total.

Economic maps and charts for the nation, such as the Business Week feature, invariably show Michigan to be a "bright" spot. The state is enjoying an unusual prosperity.

Christmas retail sales are climbing upward. Alfred Sloan, General Motors' magnate, terms the boom "synthetic."

We present the above interpretative picture at the risk of being subjected to "name-calling," a fifth columnist, a defeatist propagandist, and so on. And so pardon a personal note. It was in 1938 that our family forefathers, two brothers, fled from Germany to America to escape German oppression. They fought as Americans in the Revolutionary war. In 1917 we enlisted on our 18th birthday, served overseas in England, and returned home after 18 months of military service.

We desire to repeat an earlier observation: Michigan's getting more than the average state, an economic stake in war trade. Let us share the values of the possible consequences while there is still time to do so.

Results of Mexico's election are economic, financial, or social—rather, they were thinking of education in general.

Fifth Column

NONE of London's buildings is more than 200 feet in height. Under the provisions of the zoning law Adolf Hitler would like to enforce there, this would be reduced by 200 feet.

The life expectancy of the average auto has increased to 8.53 years—somewhat higher than the life expectancy of the average pedestrian.

The Duc de Guise bears a heavy burden. For years he has been pretender to the throne of France; now he also has to pretend there is no France.

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An armed German aviator, forced to land in London by parachute, surrendered to a housewife who threatened him with a broom. Could he have been a brush salesman before the war?

Finland's Keipin's Bow (pointing to cigarette stub on floor)—"Smile, this yours?" Smith—"Not at all, sir—you saw it first."

Getting It Straight She said: "Did you get hurt when you were on the elevator?" Jack—"No, it was while the eleven were on me."

Knocking on Wood!

with JOHN H. HARWOOD

ARE THE SCHOOLS A FAILURE?

WE HEAR considerable talk—in fact it's a perennial criticism—that the schools aren't measuring up to their job, that the curriculum is wrong, that the instruction is superficial, and that in brief, things aren't as good as they used to be. Even members of the Birmingham Board of Education adhere somewhat to that view, we have discovered.

The writer got his inspiration for this column last Tuesday evening, while attending the Board of Education meeting at the old Hill School. Howard Crull, superintendent, was giving his report, and among other things, mentioned that greater emphasis is being placed on the program of health education, calling attention to the great number of youths who have been disqualified in the draft for physical reasons. He said that the schools are somewhat responsible for improving the health of the students.

John Harvey Roscoe decided to make something out of it, probably for the sake of living up to the doctrine and keep issue with Mr. Crull.

"I'm thinking to Do Too Much."

John Harvey Roscoe decided to make something out of it, probably for the sake of living up to the doctrine and keep issue with Mr. Crull.

What About the Frills? Then we had heard about the frills in education. There again, the problem is not simple. I think everyone agrees that the simplest way to keep young people out of trouble is to keep them busy doing worthwhile things. In simpler times and in the days of larger families, "worthwhile" meant largely W.O.R.K. But today, with largely W.O.R.K. and a lot of leisure time, the problem is not so simple. So we have the Scouts, V.M.C.A., summer camps, play groups, year-around sports, high school plays, music, and every sort of club imaginable.

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