

Without personal courage to carry on despite temporary setbacks, no person is going to get towards happiness. Courage is worth more than scholarship.

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# The Birmingham Eclectic

PART TWO

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## There Is Reason for Confusion over Anti-Monopoly Drive

### Differences Over Competitive Mode Is One Factor

By JOHN H. HARWOOD

The other day, one of the Detroit newspapers printed a picture of a Detroit electrical contractor indicted for alleged violation of the anti-trust laws. The man's face bore a bewildered look, and it's no wonder. This monopoly business is especially the business man who believes that he is against monopoly, and yet can see nothing wrong in getting together with his competitors to stabilize price. After all, who is more interested than "a so-and-so" in cutting price cutters?

The average business man is quite convinced that the United States is the home of rugged individualism (despite New Deal paternalism) and he believes firmly that our capitalistic economy is briskly competitive. The economist, on the other hand, will tell you that, except in the agricultural markets, real, thorough-going competition is a rare article—something you read about in text books.

2 Kinds of Competition

Here is the catch: the business man and economist are talking

about two different kinds of competition.

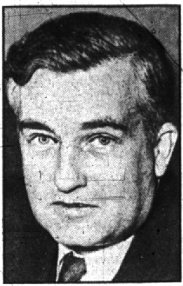
For example, in the automobile rivalry between Chevrolet, Ford and Plymouth, you will never read an advertisement that "one make is lower priced than another; nor have automobiles varied much in price in the last 10 years. Price competition is strictly avoided in the open; rather, the emphasis is on quality. Manufacturers have chosen to keep their cars around \$700 to \$800, and as manufacturing economies have developed, the savings has been put into refinements and gadgets rather than into a lower price. The result has been more product for the money the like of which no other manufactured product in the world can duplicate. This kind of competition is generally accepted as normal by business men.

The economist thinks more in terms of price competition. "Price cutting" is not regarded as some unnatural phenomenon to be shunned like the plague. Nor does the farmer think his fellow farmers are malefactors when the price of wheat falls 80 cents a bushel, although he may grumble a good deal. No one has ever heard Timothy Cornish shout to his neighbor across the fence: "You are a chiseler! The price of wheat has been \$1 a bushel and you sold yours for 80 cents. You're cutting price!"

The farmer's complaint

The farmer sells his products in a market that is almost 100 per-

### Asks Vast Powers for President



New Secretary of the Navy Charles Edson proposed to Congress vast expansion of President Roosevelt's peacetime powers over factories, materials, ships and resources. Edson was recently named to fill the vacancy left by death of Claude Swanson.

cent competitive, yet he buys in markets that are only semi-competitive, and therefore has had to pay higher prices. No wonder the farmer has been complaining; yet good, staid, business men have been soured at the thought of raising farm prices by restricting the planting of crops. The business man is right, of course; yet the farmer is right, too.

Nothing has been stranger in the whole controversy than the position of the New Deal. First came the NRA which was, about as monopolistic as anything anyone could devise, and pruned by the name of the Supreme Court for throwing the Blue Eagle into the ashcan! Yet, the NRA embodied many things which industry had been doing right along. For example, it encouraged every industry to get together and draw up a code of fair practice and to establish fair prices and fair wages. That sounded good to a lot of people at first when people with patriotic fervor decided that we could lick the depression by controlling the chiseler and wage-cutter, and by halting a demoralizing and chaotic business which was subject to criminal penalties.

Bureaucratic Control

The whole thing was impossible for a reason of the vast detail subject to bureaucratic control. From an economist's standpoint, the NRA was ill-advised because it tended to eliminate competition and to freeze prices, something all right for a collectivist state, but a condition utterly impossible in a capitalist nation. Why? The average knows why only vaguely be-

cause the schools have never taught economics to any extent, and the result is that basic economic theories are less known than rules of Latin syntax and the sonnets of Keats. It is no wonder that the Townsend Plan and schemes like Ham and Eggs Every Thursday corral thousands of shoppers. Suffice it to say that the capitalist system is based on the idea that through competition of buyers and sellers and the concomitant rise and falls in prices, the flow of goods is regulated, bringing to the public most of the necessary goods and services at the lowest possible price. As a nation progresses industrially, with new methods and new economies, goods are produced cheaper and the savings passed on to the consumer make it possible for him to buy more and in greater variety, resulting in a constant rise in the standard of living. There should be no rivalry between man and machine. An industry which requires new machinery and reduces the labor cost for each article manufactured in a constant rise in the public, enabling the public to buy more, so that in the long run, and in the mass, there is no such thing as technological unemployment. This competition and free fluctuation of prices is the fundamental law of capitalism.

Price Fixing

But unfortunately, a great many of our capitalists don't want to know the law of capitalism, and they prefer price competition, and call the fellow who effects an economy and pays higher prices. No wonder the result is that in vast areas of our industrial life, price competition has been ousted by the thought of raising farm prices by restricting the planting of crops. The business man is right, of course; yet the farmer is right, too.

When the average business man thinks a monopolist he thinks of a fellow who tries to corner the market, drive all his competitors out of business, and then jack up the price of his product. The result of monopolist is a rarity when we talk of monopoly nowadays, we usually mean a monopoly that is, control by the few.

Now, the New Dealers, with their checkered history of real and phony economic policies, are going after the oligopolists, using the Sherman anti-trust law as their weapon. The oligopolist, which incidentally, has never been really enforced.

Whatever good may be accomplished by the New Deal, its antagonism to business in many other respects. Anything that the New Deal may do, whether or not it is good, will be opposed by many on general principle and for reason of politics. And who will blame business for its distrust of the erratic economics of the New Deal?

### Volleyball Group Resumes Its Activities

The Birmingham Y. M. C. A. Men's volleyball group resumed its weekly activities at Barnum School gym Monday night after a two weeks' lay-off caused by the closing of schools during the holiday season. The group plays each Monday evening from 8:15 to 10 p. m. during the fall and winter months and invites any Birmingham resident who enjoys this sport to join.

### LEAGUE STANDINGS

Team	Won	Lost	Pct.
Milks	2	0	1.000
Boys Club	2	0	1.000
Pecks	1	1	.500
B. A. C.	1	1	.500
Polygon Club	0	3	.000

Tonight's games: 7 p. m., Pecks vs. Polygon Club; 8 p. m., B. A. C. vs. Fisher Central of Detroit; 9 p. m., Milks vs. Boys Club.

Friday, January 10, 18 games will be played as follows: 7 p. m., Polygon draws a bye (an out-of-town team will be invited to oppose Polygon Club to complete the night's schedule of three games); 8 p. m., Boys Club vs. B. A. C.; 9 p. m., Milks vs. Pecks.

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### President of Duns Scotus Defends Wagner Act Principle in Talk Here

Last Thursday night at the Baldwin Public Library, the Rev. Fr. Sebastian Erbacher, president of Duns Scotus College, spoke on "The Catholic Attitude toward Industrial Relations." This meeting, sponsored by a non-sectarian group, was very well attended. Henry M. Foley introduced the speaker.

### Boys' Club-Milks' Teams to Battle For First, Tonight

Fisher Central, of Detroit, will meet B. A. C., a Birmingham V. Basketball League team, in the feature game on tonight's schedule at Baldwin High School gym, 7:30 p. m. The first game on the schedule will play at 7 p. m. between Polygon Club and Pecks, and the league-leading Boys' Club and Milks' Teams will battle for top honors in the 9 o'clock tilt.

Starting Lineups

"Duke" Potero, Boys' Club manager, will probably start the Melrose Athletic Club team, and forwards, with Porteous and Roberts at the guard positions and center taking the place of the Milks' quietest. Starting lineup for Milks will no doubt be between Polygon Club and Pecks, Wedge, Peck forward, is also a member of this team, which includes the former T. B. Ray star, Jimmie Hoek, a high-point man when on the latter team. B. A. C. will find itself pitted against all or more than it can handle if all reports are true.

Last week's contests were one-sided affairs and packed little interest except for the early minutes of the Boys' Club-Peck's game in the second quarter it became apparent that Peck's did not have a chance against the fast Boys' Club team, which took the contest 35 to 17. Polygon Club fell easy prey to B. A. C., 34 to 13 but without doubt the most disappointing contest was the weak showing of 23 Peck's to Fisher Central. Peck's against Milks' who trounced them 43 to 23. McCullough sank six field goals and one free shot to account for more than half the visitors' points while Upward and Miller had a field day with 15 and 17 points respectively for Milks.

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### Attention of General Public

Attention was called to the rights of the consumer and general public as well as those of management and labor. The audience was urged to take a keen interest in civic affairs, as well as national and international. Fr. Erbacher felt the United States could avoid foreign political entanglements but could not so naturally from the rest of the world.

### Pavement Is Laid, 2 Mishaps Occur

Laid pavement on Hunter boulevard was at least partly to blame for two crashes which occurred Jan. 6 and Jan. 7.

Although maintenance of Hunter boulevard was turned over to the County Road department by the local City Commission, the city does make an effort to sand icy spots. City Manager Egbert declared: Both mishaps happened at Hunter and East Maple. At 12:40 p. m., last Saturday, L. E. Wagner, 37, of Royal Oak, going south on Hunter, and John C. Wise, 54, of Pontiac, traveling south at an angle, collided, with slight damage resulting.

At 8:05 p. m., Sunday, Claude Bissell, 53, of Flint, rammed the rear of a machine driven by Wilbert Watson, 23, Pontiac, which had stopped for the red signal. In both cases, ice was blamed.

Maybe

They say you learn a lot from your boss if you'll just become a patient yes-man. In other words yes, and know.—Brooklyn Eagle.

WISH GRANTED THRICE  
Warester, Mass.—Hoping for a son to be a companion for their 3-year-old daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Armand Lavigne, of Jefferson, got their wish—in triplicate. Triplets, all boys, were recently born to Mrs. Lavigne.

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Pittsfield, Mass.—Four times a grandfather but never to a grandson, John E. Fitzgerald has offered \$100 to any of his daughters who gives birth to a son.

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