The Birmingham Eccentric

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GEORGE R. AVERILL, Editor and Publisher
PAUL NEAL AVERILL, Business Manager
JOHN H. HARWOOD, Managing Editor
BERT L. JOHNSTON, Advertising Manager
CLAUDE R. WALKER, Production Manager

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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.

Drunk Drivers Dangerous

Thousands of good people will be killed on the highways of the United States before the year 1940 ends.

There seems to be little public indignation over the slaughter. The average automobile driver, acquainted with the natural hazards of the road, hesitates to incite drastic penalties through the fear that some unavoidable catastrophe will land him in the hoose-gow.

There was a time when high speeds were blamed for most of the accidents but the years have produced better cars and higher speeds. What would have been criminal carelessness in the twenties is considered reasonably safe in the forties and twenty years from now the dangerous speeds of today may be routine.

There are certain recognized criminal acts in connection with motor vehicles, however, that will continue to be condemned. Driving an automobile under the influence of alcohol is an example. It is dangerous, not only to the driver but to all who use the highway. It should be severely punished and yet, in many instances, convictions are hard to secure and punishment is avoided.

The drunks are public enemies when operating automobiles and should be "persuaded" to let others drive in peace. Just because "nice people" sometimes commit this offense is no reason to encourage the habit. It is a crime and should be promptly punished as a crime. To do this will save some lives in 1940.

God and Boyles Mixed

If Governor Dickinson wants to run for re-election, that's his privilege. A great number of citizens of Michigan would welcome his candidacy—especially the Democrats. But if he does run, let's be clear as to the issue to be debated during the campaign. That issue is not God, as the governor seems to indicate; it is good government.

The governor owns no patent on God. He is not entitled to tell the people of Michigan that his ideas as to what constitutes the good life are exclusive, and the only genuine ones. There are plenty of devout persons, as morally righteous as Mr. Dickinson, who wouldn't make good governors. The test of Governor Dickinson's right to another term is not his "attitude toward religion and prayer," but whether he has been an efficient executive.

"The governor," wrote W. A. Markland in The News of Friday, "sees in a general trend back to morality and religion a direct benefit of government in that the people are more ready to accept—and to seek—the establishment of thrift and economy, to eliminate extravagances and nonessentials in both private and public life."

What thrift and economy has this administration practiced? Are there fewer employees on the state's payroll? Are they drawing lower wages? Did the governor assist the legislature in solving the deficit problem by a single dollar? Or did he wipe his hands of the legislature, insisting that it was a separate and independent department of the government? Was it thrift and economy to reinstate the spoils system?

The trouble with Governor Dickinson seems to be that he has got God mixed with Judge Boyles.

By W. K. Kelsey in Detroit News.

IN JUNE OF 1935 there were 11,996 employees drawing pay from State funds; in June of 1939 there were 17,119 employees on the State payroll. The cost of employing these people now amounts to $24,000,000.00 per year. Plenty of these employees are holing jobs because of "politics"; many of them do little or nothing for the taxpayers. One way to decrease the number of employees is to eliminate predatory "political bossism" from State government.

LAST SUNDAY was the chilliest Easter in many years. It probably recorded, in temperature, the degree of warmth among the warring nations of this earth. Easter originated as a day when the world might rejoice over the triumph of the risen Christ; when mankind might utter praise for the inspiration and guidance gained from the life and teachings of the Man of Galilee. Alas! how much easier nations seems to pay homage to the devil by killing and injuring one another.

YOU CAN'T BLAME Postmaster-General Jim Farley for trying to win a high place in the coming Democratic national political set-up. He has been a faithful worker and no doubt wants to be in a position to get another high appointment in national affairs—regardless of whether or not President Roosevelt runs again. That's the way of politics—one has to be aggressive to win and keep a place on the payroll of State or national government.

IT CERTAINLY will require a lot of backbone for the girls who will wear the new bathing suits next summer, according to the pictures we've seen on the subject.

State Barriers And Free Trade

Interstate trade barriers are called a "serious threat to the economic life and business well-being of our country" by Secretary of Commerce Harry L. Hopkins and there are many economists who agree with his assertion.

While no state is permitted to erect tariffs against the flow of goods from other states, there have been developed various devices to restrict interstate commerce.

It is interesting to observe that the complaint against these barriers to trade between the States is that they tend to strangle our commercial and industrial development. Moreover, it is often asserted that the economic progress of the United States and the superior standard of living that exists in this country is due, in large degree, to the absence of such barriers in the past.

The United States is a large area, composed of forty-eight States, united in a free trade union. This, it is said, is a good thing for the nation. The policy of the nation, however, in world affairs is exactly opposite to the domestic policy. We maintain high tariffs that block a similar interchange of goods with other nations.

We have never been able to see why free trade is good between forty-eight commonwealths and evil between as many nations. If high tariffs are beneficial between nations, it would seem to us that high tariffs would be good between States.

Eventually, the world will have to come to free trade if it would have peace between the peoples that compose the nations. Artificial obstructions to commerce retard the exchange of goods upon which economic progress depends. The difficulties that bar free trade today are numerous and not to be lightly disregarded but they must be surmounted in time.

McKay Articles In Poor Taste

Through the columns of Frank McKay's own political sheet, "The Michigan Times," and through the columns of other Michigan papers who chose to play along with the self-appointed political boss of Michigan, Mr. McKay says he is going to tell the inside story of Frank Fitzgerald's death.

At least his series of articles will be interesting reading interesting in the same way that it is going to be interesting to watch the developments of the next few months in the way of pay-offs by the New Deal in order to influence the November vote. Coming from the No. 1 politician of Michigan—of course they will be interesting.

But it would be more than interesting it would be a real scoop—if he would write the inside dope (than whom no one would be more able) under the following titles: "Making $90,000 on the Blue Water Bridge" or "Exacting Toll from State Business" or "Getting 'Approved' Men in Key Positions in Public Affairs" or "Diverting State Buying to 'Proper' Channels" or "Being a Boss in a Democracy" or "Riding Both Horses to Win" or "State Convention Suckers" or any of a dozen other similar articles.

Fitzgerald is dead lamentably, prematurely, but surely dead. Who is he authoritatively dead now any word or thought that may be attributed to him? If half—yes ten per cent—of the promises which have been attributed to him since his death, had actually been made, there still would have been three men promised every appointive job in the state. From every standpoint the attempt to put words into the mouth of a dead man for the purpose of furthering one's one's own political ambitions is in very poor taste to say the least, whether to obtain appointment or to counteract charges of "subversive or subterranean boss rule."

So far as the articles in the "Times" are concerned they will change few, if any, opinions of the man who writes them. Most readers of this sheet are politically minded enough to believe that the writer's cards are not all on the table. It is unfortunate, however, that a few newspapers which have a good reputation for honesty and integrity in their own community will carry his articles to many unsuspecting readers who rely upon their local editor to sort the wheat from the chaff.

No newspaper editor in the state denies the influence of McKay in state politics. Some may believe him to be an honest "boss." But most of those (and fortunately there are but few) who are willing to close their eyes to the thwarting of democratic processes by the "boss rule," which McKay personifies, are willing to do so chiefly because they want to ride with the winner—regardless of his ethical fitness—and they see no stronger boss on the political horizon at this time.

McKay says in substance in his first article that Fitzgerald died as the result of "interpretative news and editorials in a great Detroit newspaper." At least whatever was said then was said at a time when the good Governor could have refuted or denied the implications if he chose to do so. His refutation of charges would have made the headlines in every daily. We said at the time and repeat now that we are convinced that Fitzgerald was determined to make a good record during his second term as Governor. Probably no one thing caused him as much embarrassment and worry and handicapped him more in this noble endeavor than his friendship for the man who now seeks to make political capital of his untimely death. Gratiot County Herald (Ithaca, Mich.).

OUR CONGRATULATIONS to the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce of Michigan, and its active general manager, Ernest T. Conlon, to make Michigan taxpayers aware of the terrific public debt being piled up. All over Michigan, this winter, the Chamber is holding meetings to arouse the people of the need to cut down the tax burden.

SOME DAY, PERHAPS, the good citizens of Wayne County will become sufficiently weary of boss rule to turn the bosses out of office. Then Wayne County will win the admiration and respect of the remainder of Michigan, and the real leadership of the Fourth City will have a beneficial value in Michigan's governmental affairs.

SPRING CLEANING

Congressional Comment by Representative George A. Dondero 17th Michigan District

The Committee on Commerce of the U. S. Senate has given its approval to the resolution to census questions on income introduced by Senator Charles W. Tobey of New Hampshire; this resolution corresponds to the one which I have introduced in the U. S. House of Representatives.

The crux of this situation is in the attempt of an executive agency of the government to broaden the scope of Acts of Congress under which the current 16th census is being taken. The 16th census is governed by the provisions of the Act of June 18, 1929, which provides for the taking of the 15th and subsequent decennial censuses, and the Act of August 11, 1939, which provides for the housing census. Nothing in these acts appears to justify the questions relating to your personal income.

It is this attempt by an executive agency to broaden the scope of its authority, as well as the invasion of our private affairs, that has brought forth widespread protest. In it the people see an extension of government by decree, a theory of government contrary to our Constitution and repugnant to American traditions and ideals.

If the present tendency toward more and more bureaucratic aggression is allowed to continue unchecked, there is none among us who can predict what the ultimate result will be in curtailment of our individual liberties.

Although no action has been taken in the Senate on Senator Tobey's resolution, other than the committee approval, and no resolution has not come up for consideration in the House, the Secretary of Commerce has already altered his original plan and has now decreed that answers to the family income questions may be answered in unsigned sealed letters addressed to the Bureau of the Census.

This change, however, does not supply the authority under which these questions are to be asked.

It is my contention that the Bureau of the Census is without authority under existing law to include questions 32 and 33 concerning the amount of a citizen's personal income and the citizen cannot repel this invasion of his private affairs without facing a fine or imprisonment, or both.

Happenings of Long Ago

Fifty Years Ago
April 3, 1890

What makes Birmingham so attractive to Detroit people? Only one thing is ever mentioned—its trees and its shade. If you want to make your place sightly and attractive, plant some trees near it. No one is too poor for this, and if you want help, the Village Improvement society is ready to help you. You have only to make your wants known to the boys and girls.

We were recently shown a fine collection of shells—not from the sea shore, but from the battlefields of Antietam and Gettysburg. Murderous looking missiles they are, too, give one a vivid idea of the horrors of war. They are the property of J. N. Neth, of Southfield, who collected many of them while in the South last year.

Here's a first class chance to buy two fine building lots on Saginaw street. Two hundred dollars each will take them and they will prove a bonanza to the buyer.

Twenty-five Years Ago
April 2, 1915

That great good big smile all over Stanley Peabody's face is caused by the safe arrival of another baby daughter at his home. All doing well.

Nearly 150 lives were lost in the sinking by German submarines of the African liner, Falaba, and the British steamer, Aguila, bound to Liverpool from Lisbon. The Falaba carried a crew of 96 and about 100 passengers and of this total only 143 were rescued. Eight died from exposure.

In a statement for publication, made in Berlin, the first he had issued since the war began, Emperor William, of Germany emphatically declared the present war was not of his seeking. The Kaiser declared he will see it through to the end, and says that victory must eventually come to the German colors.

Five Years Ago
April 4, 1935

Defeat of Mayor Donald D. James by a single vote for re-election to the City Commission featured the election Monday in Bloomfield Hills. He indicated he would not ask a recount.

Developments during the past week point to the fact that the State has abandoned any intention it might have had to remove Bloomfield Hills city officials for their refusal to spread the 1934 State and county tax, but that it will attempt to compel them to do so by writ of mandamus.

Their goal set at $7,500, approximately 250 workers tomorrow will begin their house-to-house canvass in the 1935 Community House Roll Call.

The City Commission will meet tonight to canvass the results of Monday's election in Birmingham, in which Frank S. Packard was returned as a member of the Commission, John E. Martz was elected as new member and most Republican candidates for State and county offices were given a majority vote of nearly 4 to 1 over their Democratic opponents.

Random Remarks

Marie Curie, French scientist, visiting the U. S.

"French women are still as feminine as ever."

James A. Farley, to Columbia University students.

"I don't care what ticket you vote as long as it's a ticket."

Etore Muti, Italian official.

"Fascist Italy may at any moment find herself facing the necessity and duty of taking up arms."

Hachiro Arita, Japanese Foreign Minister.

"There are inseparable ties binding Japan, Germany and Italy together as the 'have-not' nations."

Burton K. Wheeler, U. S. Senator from Montana.

"From 1920 to 1933, the American people witnessed an incredible era."

Edna Ferber, American author.

"The writer today can write capitalist literature or propaganda—there is nothing in between."

Joseph Goebbels, Reich Minister of Propaganda.

"It's high time that 40,000,000 people stop dictating to 80,000,000 when they should have a cup of coffee."

Thomas A. Buckner, insurance company official:

"There is a slowing down in the demand for capital by industry as a whole."

I'll Leave It to You

BY JOHN DENLER

Statistics show that Saturday night America's number one entertainment night. More people lay aside their cares and go howling on this night than on all the other nights of the week combined. You wouldn't need statistics to convince you of this. Your own experience would be enough. Obvious reason for this is, of course, that Sunday is a working holiday for most people and this offers a perfect opportunity for one to catch up on the sleep he has lost the night before. And here again you would be satisfied to convince you of the fact that most people sleep in late Sunday Mornings.

Denler

As a result of this custom pattern, Sunday has come to be the most wasted day of the week. By the time you have spent an hour or two with the paper—which is filled with a lot of trashy stuff you wouldn't read any other time—the dinner hour has arrived. You eat too much, of course, and by the time you leave the table you are so groggy that you simply cannot resist that impulse to flop down on the davenport for a siesta. By the time you come to, it's getting dark and you wonder where the day has gone. Two or three hours of starting vacantly into space, of listening halfheartedly to the radio, of dozing over the pages (all three of them) of that book you had intended to read, and it is time for bed. You grab a snack from the icebox, turn out the lights, and climb the stairs, carefully turning over in your mind the dozen or so things you had meant to do that day. You determine to do them next Sunday or bust, which means that you are probably due to bust in a week.

Most important innocent bystander that suffers as a result of Saturday night's frivolities is the church. Although a lot of people undoubtedly barbe the best of intentions regarding Sunday morning worship, 10:30 or 11:00 comes all too soon for the bulk of them. The spirit is willing but the flesh is indeed weak.

It is fun once in a while (and now I am getting to the real point of this little essay, if you'll stick with me) to spend a quiet Saturday night at home catching up on your reading and to retire early —say 10 o'clock. I did this last night. It sort of gives you a feeling of satisfaction, first to know you're pouring these hours contructively for a change, and not bankrupting your energies raising whoopee somewhere; second, to be able to spring out of bed at 8:00 on a Sunday morning full of pep and ready to make a day of it.

Try it some time.

Jots in Jest

MOST steel speculators find they've been putting their money on Russian horses—the kind that take a long time to get across the Finnish line.

* * *

Extreme heat, we read, killed off all the prehistoric monsters that once roamed this continent. We are enjoying at present what might be called thriving weather for dinosaurs.

* * *

Confucius can at least make solid his claim to fame. He is No. 4 on the Hit Parade.

Knocking on Wood!

with JOHN H. HARWOOD

INFORMALLY SPEAKING

Women who have a nose for news usually have a chin for telling it.

—o—

Spring will not be officially here until the neighbor neighbor returns the snow shovel and borrows the lawn mower and rake.

—o—

In any argument, you can always tell the one who's in the wrong. He's the one who gets mad and is fierce and unrelenting.

—o—

Spring is the period of extremes. The green things coming up in the garden can be either exceedingly good or very bad, depending on whether they're flowers or weeds.

UNTRUTHS ABOUND

This observer has come to the conclusion that the average person is more misinformed than informed. The ordinary man knows more untruths and half truths than he does the real facts. But let this be emphasized: In a general way, he suspects or vaguely feels the true state of affairs. By some sort of instinct, he knows what is right or wrong about a given public problem, after a time. For example, consider the scandal in Detroit and Wayne County. The average voter has had no opportunity to know the inside of the grafting machinations which have been charged by the grand jury, but people have suspected it for years. Common sense has told them that where illicit enterprises flourish, some one has been paid for the privilege. Yet the people have been slow to act, for oft times party labels and other issues have obscured the question of public officials' honesty.

Where Have The Schools Been?

Why don't the schools burn into student's minds the seriousness of some of these public problems?

It is not an indictment of our school system that class after class of graduates comes forth to take its place among the electorate, seemingly indifferent toward slipshod, corrupt and hodge-podge government?

Yes, the schools are partly at fault—but not any more than we elder people who frown upon the schools mixing into anything controversial. Sometimes, you know, we don't want the truth to be known, and teachers, being human, deem it wise to keep their mouths shut.

Let us say, for example, that the members of civics in the Detroit and Wayne County public schools had taught their students that the presence of bookies, numbers rackets, gambling houses, etc., are prima facie evidence of either corrupt or incompetent public officials, and that the students, in their youthful enthusiasm, had decided to descend on the Common Council, or the Governor and demand that something be done about it. How long do you think that teacher would have lasted? And yet, what is more sensible than to teach active participation in good government?

Fourth Branch of Government

When this observer took his high school American government course, he learned the usual picture of government, with the legislative bodies passing the laws, the executive administering them, and the courts interpreting them. The notion of lobbies and pressure groups was scarcely mentioned (perhaps the textbooks are more informative these days) when as a matter of fact, the lobbies are really a fourth branch of the government. Your scrivener recently borrowed from Baldwin library Kenneth G. Crawford's book, **The Pressure Boys**, and in it read an interesting expose of lobbyists and their methods. Washington swarms with these agents representing the railroads, the utilities, the food and drug people, the moving picture industry, the farm interests, the sugar people, the shipping interests, "Liberty Leaguers," the munitions-makers, labor organizations, and various and sundry "patriotic" groups and societies. Congressmen are their prey, and the pressure boys seek their favors through the wine-and-dine route, by paying to some fancy retainers ostensibly for legal services, and by marshaling the opinions of people back home—you know: "Write your congressman at once!"

This sort of thing is something we ought to know more about, for only through publicity can it be controlled. The problem of pressure groups is one to be faced dispassionately and frankly in the schools. Let students know the problems they are to face as adult members of the electorate, but don't keep the fact from them, for that entails eventual disillusionment and cynicism. It is when people lose faith in their form of government that they are willing to abandon it for the dictates of some Fuehrer.

One Man's Truth . . .

Let this be said, also, for the schools: Often, the truth of a situation, as it may appear to The Eccentric or some one else, may be poison to a third person. In other words, when an issue is still largely a thing of controversy, the schools can hardly be expected to take a bold stand. But they can be expected to wade in and try to get the students to look at both sides of an argument, to let them form their own conclusions. There is no issue where this method of procedure could not apply.

THE CENSUS

This observer can't get very excited about being forced to reveal the size of his yearly income to the census taker. Lots of people know it now: the girl who types out the checks, the boss who signs them, the bookkeeper, the teller at the bank. So what? The fellow who takes the census is likely to be some person who is a total stranger, and who knows full well the penalty for revealing census information.

But we will be darn mad if the list of questions continues to grow every ten years. First thing you know, the census man will be spending the afternoon at your home, and perhaps staying for dinner. Assume that each stop takes an hour, and there are 25,000,000 calls made—millions of dollars of time made unproductive. Appalling!

However, there is one point on which the income question may be held to scrutiny: There are doubts in many quarters that the question has been authorized by law, unlike the other questions on the list. If the Census Bureau is doing something for which it has no legal authority, it should be called to time, and now.

After the Day

Open the window. Let the night come in
To soothe my weariness and bring me rest.
Let the moonbeams slant across my evening psalm,
And the stars shine down while I continue my aim;
Petitioning the God of all for love,
Love that unasked He gives unto His own.
May I not reap the harvest I have sown,
But that which saints and angels reap above.
Open the window. Let the latticed moon,
Shining beyond the trees so silver-bright,
Come in, and the wind with its rhythmic tune
Lull me and calm my troubled soul this night.
What I have sown this day may I not reap,
Grant me, dear Lord, thy gift of quiet sleep.

— BEATRICE MCDONALD

A Conscientious Advisor

Suitor —Sir, I wish to marry your daughter.

Company promoter — In that case. I want to know something of your financial position.

Suitor — I have enough to buy and furnish a home, sir.

Promoter —Good! Sit down. I think I can show you a better investment for your money.

AUTO LOANS NEW OR USED

LOW RATES

BUY INSURANCE ANYWHERE
The Cost may be added to your balance

Wabeek State Bank of Detroit

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