Editorial Page of The Birmingham Eccentric

A free, responsible and aggressive Press is democracy's first line of defense

Knocking on Wood

with JOHN H. HARWOOD

THE WAR'S GRAND STRATEGY

THE world is wondering what will be next in the grand strategy of the war. Even the experts don't know for sure whether and when Germany will try to invade England. My barber thinks that Hitler is not likely to attempt a trans-channel surface attack for the reason that British planes are pounding the east channel ports so hard with their bombs that the Nazis are having an impossible time getting ready, let alone doing the actual job. He thinks that a drive in the Balkans is next.

That's my barber's opinion. Frankly, I am not quite so willing to follow his lead as I once was. For he felt, like many other experts, that England was all washed up when the Nazis succeeding so easily in conquering the Low Countries and France. But two things are certain in my mind:

First, Hitler is not likely to attempt an all-out attack on England until the Balkan and the Mediterranean situation is cleared up in other words, not until the Greco-Italian war is completed and Mussolini is chased out of Africa. For the Germans are too smart to make the same mistake twice, and fighting a war on two fronts would be a mistake, just as it was in the World War. Hence, the massing of troops in the Balkans is probably a device to subdue the Greeks into giving up, if they won't, Hitler will try a blitz, and drive some of the Axis greetings out of Mussolini slipped in Africa and stumbled in Albania. However, Hitler will want to keep the war cauldron bubbling in the Mediterranean to keep extended the British battle lines, and so deprive Gibraltar may engage.

Second Certainty

Second certainty is that no all-out effort will be made in the spring to starve England into submission by mine attack, both submarines and long-range bombers on British shipping. Losses will mount of course, for not yet in this war has the fact been anything like it was in the World War. But the greater that menace becomes, the greater will become each country's protection. Convoys may eventually get air-protection far out at sea with, accompanying ships carrying catapults and fighter planes.

The rest of the spring forecast is all Conjecture. I am not even sure that Hitler will try to invade England. The important factor, I believe, is new military devices the Germans may have perfected. It is logical to suppose that the Nazis have new planes, for no radical improvements have been made in their current models for several years, and since the supply of early models must be ample, what have the German plane factories been doing all this while?

Hitler does have new equipment, it is obvious to expect that he will try to use it providing he can ever mass enough boats in the channel ports to transport soldiers. An all-out attack would logically, too, include gas.

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War determines not who is right, but who is left.

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Mosquitoes were unknown in England 500 years ago. Well, how would you like to be a mosquito trying to make a living when everyone wore suits of armor?

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On Saving the World

One can certainly admire Winston Churchill's integrity and common sense. His recent speech smacked of courage and determination, but he made no promises to save the world, however.

Compare it with President Roosevelt's speech in which he made the fanciful promise of bringing the whole world "freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, freedom from fear." A noble thought, but how could any person with his feet on the ground make such an all-inclusive resolve?

To my knowledge, no one has yet caught Mr Churchill in a contradiction such as the one revealed when Willkie said that American "flying fortresses" were in service in England. The President and the Secretary of War had previously denied such a charge as being ridiculous. Of course, it is possible that the Air Corps sent the planes around without saying anything about it!

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Food Profiteering

Some have expressed the fear that in this war, there will be food profiteering. We doubt it. In no field in this nation is competition more keen than in the distribution of food; it is industry in the percentage of profit sense. Moreover, we don't know about the control of meat prices. It is said that the big packers can control changes by the rate at which they release carcasses from storage.

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Milk Price-Fixing

Dairymen are hot on the trail of a new state price-fixing law to replace the one thrown out by the Supreme Court. Behind the fixing was delegated to persons who had a financial interest in the price set. I believe there is an argument for the setting the price paid farmers, although it sets a bad precedent, but I am unalterably opposed to setting of the retail price. There is too much duplication of services, too much waste, too much bodge-podge in the distribution of milk for the state of Michigan to guarantee the milk distributors a profit. Now, the only people guaranteed a profit are the public utilities and they must suffer more or less regulation, as is just and proper in the public interest.

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"FANTASIA"

The new symphonic motion picture, "Fantasia," which I witnessed in a pre-view last Friday evening, is a captivating departure from the usual concert and the movies, and I can recommend it to any one who likes fine music. I doubt whether more pictures of this type will be made for the chief attraction is novelty, but nevertheless, Walt Disney and his associates deserve plaudits for their imagination and skill.

For those who have not already seen or read about "Fantasia," I might explain that it consists of a super-super sound reproduction of the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Stokowsky. As each movement is played, Disney's animated cartoons depict with beauty and humor various themes and dramas. Mickey Mouse appears in one number, "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," by Dukas. The pictures do a great deal for Igor Stravinsky's blare, crashing "Rite of Spring," depicting the birth of the planet, and the beginning of life, winding up with the dinosaurs and their extinction. Very convincing.

Deems Taylor gives a brief descriptive talk before each member.

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If Your Card Is Lost

"Don't get a new social security number if you have lost your old card," advises Richard H. Hendrick, manager of the Pontiac field office of the Bureau of Old-Age and Survivors Insurance. "If you have lost your card get a duplicate through our office in the Peoples State Building," he advises. There is no charge for duplicate cards.

The Great American Home

"Oh, look, grandma! The dog is wearing one of the sweaters you knitted."

Good Government Bill No. 1

The new consolidated revenue collection bill which would put collection of more than $100,000,000 of tax revenue in one streamlined department, headed by a director appointed by the Governor for 10 years, but removable only by the State Supreme Court after proof of misfeasance or malfeasance in office, has been introduced in both House and Senate.

It is the first of the "Good Government" Bills which taxpayers and believers in good government all over this State have long been waiting for. They will not allow the 1941 Legislature to toss it aside as lightly as the 1939 body did toss aside a similar bill.

When taxpayers from every county in the State visited the Capitol on February 4, it was to tell the Legislature that this bill typifies the kind of government they wish to see Michigan adopt without further delay. Michigan is the last of the large states to modernize its revenue collection system. It has been losing no one knows how many millions of dollars through inefficiency and spoils patronage methods.

The public has pledged the Legislature through the taxpayer movement that it is going to pay constant attention to the affairs of its government hereafter. The public expects the Legislature to reciprocate by removing partisan obstacles and petty bickering from the path of such bills as this one.

America's Answer After the War

"America's answer to post-war competitive problems must be increased efficiency," says Harold G. Moulton, president of the Brookings Institution. "Both during the war and after, unceasing attention must be given to the problem of reducing the cost of production."

From the domestic point of view, there is still another need of almost equal importance. That is to hold down and, if possible, further reduce the cost of distribution. It is apparent that if a saving made in the factory is dissipated by waste in the complicated distributive process, the consumer is not benefited. And in the case of many widely-used commodities, the distribution cost is as large or larger than the manufacturing cost.

And here is where mass merchandising enters the picture. It is as essential a part of our economy as mass production. The two go together—either would be ineffective without the other. It is to the everlasting credit of American retailing that mass distribution has been brought to a higher peak of efficiency here than anywhere else in the world.

Says Fascism Is A Corpse

Leland Stowe, veteran foreign correspondent for The Chicago Daily News, says that unless "strong German aid is sent soon to the Italian Army, Italy will be completely out of the war."

Mr. Stowe has been on the Greek battlefront since the Italian invasion began and he asserts that there can be no discounting of Greek success. The Greek Army, he says, has completely defeated Mussolini's legions and but for bad weather "Italy's humiliation would be complete."

Mr. Stowe says that "there is no more Fascism in Italy, only a Fascist corpse being held up by the Nazis." He gives three causes for the Italian debacle: (1) The Italians thought the war would be a parade; (2) they had poor staff work and made many blunders; and, (3) they misused their air power, employing it to terrorize civilian populations instead of destroying concentration centers and communication lines.

DETROIT WANTS to decrease its automobile fatality and accident record. There's only one real way to do this, and that is *to make people obey traffic laws!* Enough arrests for traffic violations will cause people to operate their cars under control. People really want to drive carefully, but they have to be kept under constant threat of police authority.

FROM 1930 TO 1940 the population of Washington, D. C., increased enough to place that city from 14th to 11th position among the nation's large cities. Thus do we witness that the power to tax is the power also to increase payrolls, which results in increased population where such payroll is expended.

Armchair Philosopher

Success Stuff Is the Bunk!

A friend of mine is a very successful executive. He draws a five figure salary. Visiting him in his office one day I mentioned a new book on the philosophy of success which I had found inspiring.

Suddenly my friend slammed his fist on his desk and exclaimed: "Success stuff is the bunk!" Then sitting back in his chair and relaxing he went on: "There was a time when I read all the books on how to succeed that came from the press. One day I woke up to the fact that if I spent as much time actually trying to succeed at my job as I did reading success books I might actually get somewhere. When I came to think about it I couldn't remember that Ford or Edison or any other big men had spent much time reading about how to become successful. They were too busy succeeding! They had one supreme obsession—their jobs. So I stopped dreaming and reading success psychology and concentrated all my energy on doing the things I knew I ought to do to be successful in my work. That decision was the turning point in my career.

Here in a nutshell, it seemed to me, was the simple answer to how to succeed. And my friend was living proof that his plan worked. As I rose to leave I remarked: "You may not read success stuff, but you've just helped me write some!" As he reached for his paperweight I ducked out the door.—S. L.

Going Where?

In the Senate of the United States a resolution has been introduced calling on the belligerent powers of Europe to announce their war aims. The aims of Hitler and Mussolini have been widely publicized as a decree to destroy democracy and fasten the doctrine of fascist totalitarianism on the world, just as is the publicized intention of Stalin, the wily "neutral," to fasten the collar of Communism on the earth. The immediate objective of Hitler, of course, is to conquer England.

On the other hand, the immediate objective of England is to save herself and keep the Nazi armies off the island. It is to aid in this that Great Britain is now calling for assistance from the United States. But we have never been informed just what further aims the British have except for the publicized intention of ending Nazism and Fascism in Europe.

Now if we are to render all-out aid to England, Greece and China we ought to know just how far these nations, especially the British, intend to go. Do they expect to repel Hitler, then to reconquer France, Holland, Belgium and Norway from the Nazis? Do they expect to restore Poland, including the part now held by Russia, and to force Stalin to return the seized provinces to Finland and to relinquish his grab-holds on Latvia, Lithuania and Esthonia? Then do they intend to drive the Nazis out of Hungary, Austria, Rumania and Bulgaria and to restore these nations to political independence on France and Britain? These are some of the possible intentions of Great Britain on which Mr. Churchill ought to throw some light.

Certainly if this ambitious program is to be entered into once the Nazis have been turned back in force after an effort to cross the British Channel, then certainly Uncle Sam will be called on not only to furnish money, tanks and airplanes, but boys.

The aim of the people of the United States in aiding Britain is or at least should be primarily to defend ourselves. Does this defense include the restoration of Europe to its pre-1939 boundaries? Here is something we ought to know about.

Community Council Explained

Last evening, various community leaders met to hear the scope and purpose of the Community Council explained. For it is reported that some people had misunderstood.

The body is not the City Commission, which is composed of seven men elected by the people. In fact, the Council is a non-political body formed of representatives of nearly every club and organization within Birmingham, including the City Commission and the Board of Education. Its purpose is to give direction to and coordinate efforts for civic betterment, a laudable purpose none will deny.

To organize the Council and to nurture its development has been no small task, for new ideas often require salesmanship. The leaders therefore deserve commendation for their efforts.

History of Liberty

Liberty has never come from government. Liberty has always come from the subjects of the. The history of liberty is a history of resistance. The history of liberty is a history of limitations of government power, not the increase of it.—Woodrow Wilson.

ALF LANDON, Republican Presidential candidate against Roosevelt in 1936, doesn't believe that the United States "security and freedom depend upon Britain's victory in this war. We were interested in Mr. Landon's remarks, until we read that he "tops Roosevelt as they try to take over the oil industry." Most of Mr. Landon's personal fortune, we understand, comes from the oil business.

IN SPITE OF THE NUMBER and variety of hats that adorn the tops of women's heads, we've never seen so many bare-headed women in the winter time before. For most of these so-called hats aren't hats at all—just decorative arrangements of fur, feathers and felt.

THIS TENDENCY BETWEEN States to erect tariff or trade barriers is against the spirit and security of a united states. The U. S. Constitution strictly prohibits the erection of such economic walls between States.

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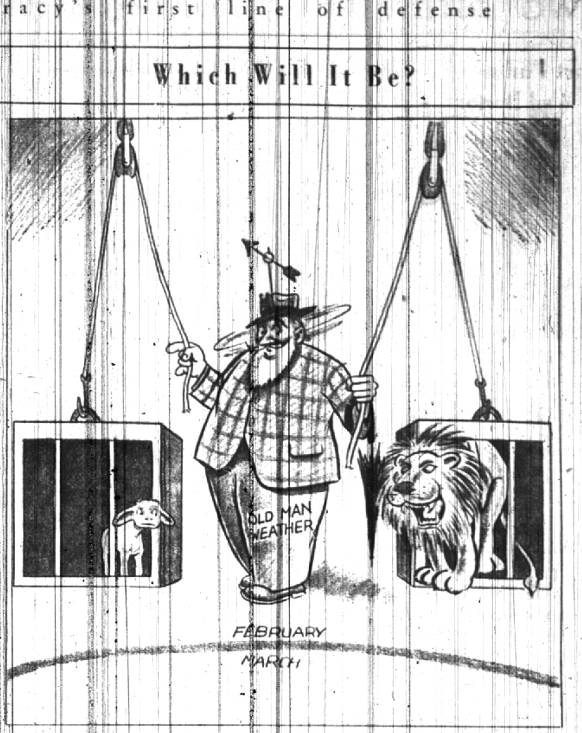
NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish letters of events which have news value and which are written by persons who are not members of the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be in the Eccentric office before noon Wednesday. The right is reserved, however, to make such editorial changes in the copy submitted as are necessary to the style of the paper and as are required by laws of the state. Business or personal criticism is discouraged in the editorial columns. Letters of a personal or political nature should be addressed to the attention of the publisher.

The Eccentric will be glad to publish letters of any person, firm or corporation which may appear in the columns of The Eccentric, provided such letter is signed and bears the author's name and address. The Eccentric will be glad, upon request, to withhold the name of the author from publication if the request is made in the letter. The Eccentric will be glad, upon request, to withhold the name of the author from publication if the request is made in the letter. The Eccentric will be glad, upon request, to withhold the name of the author from publication if the request is made in the letter.

Which Will It Be?



Gardeners' Corner

This column is conducted for The Eccentric's readers by Mrs. Max T. Baker, Box 746, Bloomfield Hills. Questions on gardening matters may be addressed to Mrs. Patten and they will be answered in this column, Gardeners' Corner or directly by mail.

Indoor Gardens

The rigors of a winter indoors are almost hard on plants than the zero weather on their hardy brothers. Steam heat with its accompanying dry germ-laden dust will often be the death of certain plants unless you help out with sprays and sponges. It is time to look over your house plants and window gardens with an inquiring eye. If you have not been doing so regularly, spray the leaves that are smooth and brush with a small brush those that are hairy. Sponging with soapy water is in order for ivy or other leaves that show signs of any stickiness for fear that might be a disease. Never use oil or any substance that may tend to seal the pores.

If you see any signs of aphis, mealy bug or red spider, use a spray. Ready mixed sprays can be purchased in small amounts.

Plants that are or have been growing vigorously may try a light feeding. Use no more than the suggested dose, for roots are damaged by too strong supplies of nitrogen. Pinch back that is, nip off the ends of growth that look weak and "leggy," and remove any dead leaves or faded blooms. Loosen the soil at the top of the pot. Last, but not least look to see if any of the pots are too full of roots. If they are turning brown on