

Knocking on Wood

with JOHN H. HANCOCK DETROIT'S GAS CONTROVERSY WHAT Detroit does is probably none of this column's business; nevertheless, many Birmingham people are following with interest the efforts being made to put Detroit in the gas business. Some people are horrified at the thought of more government in business; others are not alarmed at all, believing there is nothing sacrosanct about the extension of governmental services. I believe there are principles which govern the case.

It was Adam Smith, I think, who discussed that subject in his "Wealth of Nations," published in 1776—one of the earliest books in the field of economics. Smith said that normally, the production and distribution of goods and services should be left to private persons, who, in their desire for profit, would compete with one another and satisfy the people's needs at the lowest price possible. However, he noted that there are certain services which are to be done in which there is no profit; and there it is necessary that the government step in. The same reasoning can be carried a step further: When private business fails to serve the public in proper manner, it is the duty of government to have a right to do something about it.

If that premise can be accepted, the Detroit gas controversy amounts down to a question of fact. Are the services which are the present company satisfactory? If so, then it would be foolish and wrong for the city to invade the field. If not, then Detroit has a perfect right to go in the business and sell that fuel just as it sells water, with considerable success. What, difference is there between the principle governing two fluid products, both of which are sent through pipes in the ground?

We Wonder, Too! "The American Automobile Association says a man can park a car properly, but that a woman cannot." How does the AAA know a woman can't park a car? A woman can park a car as well as a man. It is not then Detroit's business to tell a woman how to park a car properly.—St. Louis Star-Times.

Whose Battle? The oft-heard phrase that "Britain is fighting our war" recalls opinions held by the British after the World War. I remember that it used to be a subject of small talk to argue about who won the war; the Canadians would stoutly maintain that "we had 'em licked anyway; you Yankees just helped a little; and what's more you got in sending us supplies, including shells that wouldn't go off."

Then the most amazing viewpoint expressed was that of blaming the United States for not arriving sooner. Lacking the Kaiser just as much our obligation as theirs, was the argument. I then wonder that the British had few qualms about repudiating the war debt.

Have You Met... Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. A. Davidson, now living at 986 West Lincoln Avenue? The Davidsons moved here from Ferrisville because they like everything about Birmingham. They have two children, Lynn and Eric. Mr. Davidson is a commercial artist.

Mr. and Mrs. B. L. Fairbank, 712 North Street, who are moving from Boston, Mass., to Birmingham with their two year old son, Nathan. Mr. Fairbank is in the promotion department of the American Airlines in Detroit.



"It's a sweater my girl knitted. I have to wear it because she's coming to see me today."

Our Nation Will Be Free If We, The People, Will It So!

Passage of the Lease-Lend Bill by Congress last week has placed in the hands of the President of the United States more power than any occupant of that office has ever had; in some circles, much fear is expressed over the granting of this power—some even holding that "real democracy in these United States has vanished and never will returnally, this newspaper, while lamenting the inability of Congress itself to retain its powers regarding emergencies and wars, does not wake up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat, haunted by the fear of domestic dictatorship. Congress still remains in office and ought, if the need arises, to exercise its legislative control over the President, should it appear that he and his aides are doing things that definitely endanger the basic fundamentals of democracy that make the United States the best country on earth today.

Emergency, one has to forego many customary methods; one has to accept emergency techniques. By passing the Lease-Lend Bill Congress has, of course, abdicated some of its constitutional duties; it has in reality turned many of its responsibilities over to the President. This act, in proportion to Congress' abdication, made a kind of Dictator of the President.

Well, Congress and the people still have the right to observe the President in action, and to curb his movements, if some of them seem contrary to the interests of the nation and its perpetuity as a democracy. Then, when the emergency is over, Congress and the people have the problem of restoring the customary democratic processes to the nation.

All this talk about "forever losing our freedom" is, we think, merely negative and melodramatic. Of course, if Congress and the people don't love freedom enough to fight for it—should any President refuse to relinquish his emergency dictatorial powers—then we will have a permanent Dictator. But we don't believe that either the President or Congress intend to exercise permanent dictatorial powers in the Chief Executive.

So, folks, now that the President has the power he has sought, to the end that Britain may defeat Hitler and Mussolini, let's put our shoulders to the wheels of production, and turn out armaments in quantities and volumes than any other nation, or group of nations, on earth.

Let's watch carefully the President's moves, and comment or criticize as we react to these moves. Let's admit that we are in a real world emergency; that we are willing to trust the attitude of the President toward the United States, as we draw in our hearts and minds, alone will survive. And we believe that for the perpetuation of freedom—even if we have to fight foreign or domestic foes to win and keep it.

Camille Huguemans, former Speaker of the Belgian Chamber of Deputies, suggests that Belgium ask to be included in the British Commonwealth of Nations and requests that statements of other smaller European nations are thinking similarly. This is a remarkable development, indicating what may happen in Europe if the British win their fight against Hitler. The smaller nations of that region are following the suggestion of the Belgian official in order to assure themselves of the protection of a fighting people.

The British, by their heroic courage in the face of a tremendous discouragement, have secured respect toward them and their country. The manner in which the dominions have rallied to the defense of the empire attests the successful development of an English-speaking league of nations.

After the war other peoples, remembering the assistance they find from Congress in this war, we hope our lawmakers will begin to consolidate their thinking on this subject: "When Britain finally wins, what major part will the United States be allowed to play in framing the demands upon the vanquished so that they will not be repudiated by another possible Versailles Treaty?"

COMMUNITY ACTION Genius has always come in groups because genius is not a matter of individuality. Competition with fools is not bad—fools teach the inability of repeating their performances. A man loses his individuality when he loses the ability of strengthening his own and bolsters their, until in his soul there grows upon ideal. A man loses his individuality when he loses the silver speech of Socrates. One set never flourishes alone—they go together, each man doing his part, and this one act is simply Expression—the expression of Mind speaking through its highest instrument, Man.—Robert Hubbard.

Some Praise For Coach Whitney

Coach Frank Whitney and the members of the Birmingham High School basketball team certainly deserve credit for the outstanding game they have played during the present season. Including the tournament contests, the squad can boast a record of 34 wins against 10 defeats, and in our opinion that's head-up basketball for any man's team.

The 1940-41 season which has just drawn to a close is a small but important one for the ten years of service which Frank Whitney has given to the boys of Birmingham. As coach of basketball and track, he has produced outstanding players and teams. His record is indeed one to be envied by any high school coach in Michigan.

Whitney's real success does not lie in the fact of just securing successful athletic teams. His true value has been in the lessons in character and sportsmanship which he has taught in all boys who have worked under his guidance. He has been a real force in the life of many a boy who has attended Baldwin.

In actual training Whitney has not limited his efforts to the physical development of the youth. It can truthfully be said that, by his own example, Whitney has implanted in the minds of his boys the idea of clean living. His efforts in promoting schools, summer recreational programs and church groups has brought his efforts to an ever-increasing number of boys.

Today he is one of the most successful personalities in the Birmingham school system. On behalf of the community we thank him for his efforts and hope that the youth of Birmingham will be benefited for many years to come.

Information Without Understanding De Robert M. Hutchins, President of the University of Chicago, says that his university graduates have far more information and far less understanding than in the colonial period. There can be little doubt of the fact that the process of specialization in intellectual pursuits has developed considerable more detailed information on a great many subjects and that specific individuals, by their chosen fields of study, have far more information than was available to their predecessors. We are rather inclined to agree with his thought that the very process of specialization prevents an individual from developing a balanced information which is necessary to any comprehensive understanding of human beings, their environment and aspirations.

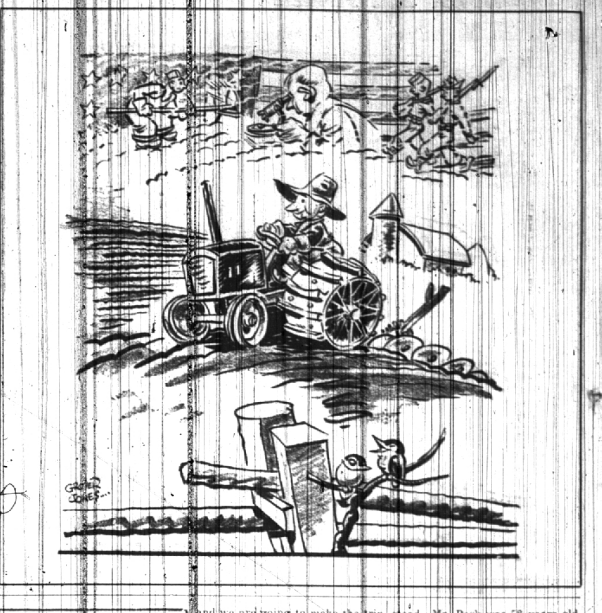
Somebody Reads the Bible In 1939, according to the Census Bureau, about 48,454,815 copies of the Bible were published. Among all the countless books that were published, 2,348,000 duplicate Bibles were published. Estimates published separately numbered 1,268,931 volumes. Part of the Bible sales are an estimated 3,361,235 volumes and some 909,031 Biblical volumes were not classified. Taken together, there were 9,273,846 volumes of Biblical literature published. This compares with 2,456,395 volumes for law, 1,042,602 volumes for medicine, 2,989,400 for history, 2,832,682 for science and 2,389,400 for fiction. These do not include the 6,114,506 volumes that were published under the general head of religion and philosophy.

The Bible, it seems, continues to gain readers. In Detroit, we find that some people consider an old-fashioned Bible, in fact, the figures suggest that, somebody will be reading the Bible which is a comforting thought.

UNITED CONSERVATIVE traveling about these United States, to place before the natives a convincing case about their wonderful climate. Yet Ed has come to this conclusion: "If we could eliminate about six weeks of Michigan's worst weather, we'd be as much of an earthly paradise as any other section of the country—including Florida and California."

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He, Too, Serves Uncle Sam



Mr. Park was 38 years old. At the regular meeting of the high school Literary Society, Lesley Tracy read an essay on "Preparedness." Other entertainment included musical selections by Miss Lorraine Bayne, and the Misses Hasset and Green. A Millionaire's Club was formed, slightly for Royal Oak and Highland residents only. Applicants for membership were required not to possess a million dollars in real estate. The First National Bank announced the purchase of a new Burroughs bookkeeping machine which was of many citizens of Birmingham faster and more accurate service. The public was invited to see it on Friday afternoon, and offered a reward of 50 cents to the finder.

50 Years Ago March 17, 1891 A petition calling for a vote to erect a \$1,500 to build a Town Hall in Birmingham was presented to the electors and freeholders of this town. The Town Hall was needed as a place to keep records and books and for voting. August Miller, who was one of the best loggers in Birmingham, had the unfortunate habit of keeping his tongue between his teeth. One day at work he slipped, while carrying a handpick, striking his jaw on the handle, his tongue protruded between his teeth. When he saw it up with six stitches. When that Dr. C. M. Rayburn had to stitch that bit of raw, oozing, water-soaked skin.

5 Years Ago March 19, 1936 An announcement of the marriage of Miss Marjorie Gillen and Theodore F. MacManus came as a surprise to her many friends in Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills. The appointment of William L. Story, Bloomfield Hills, associate architect for Edward H. Laird, landscape architect was announced this week. Mr. Story studied landscape architecture at Michigan State College and at Harvard University, where he received his Master's Degree. "Regent" the prize St. Bernard dog, belonging to Dr. and Mrs. B. L. Langston was recently named American Kennel Club Champion. Report cards for Baldwin High School students were held up, as a result of action taken by the School Board in regard to student fraternities and societies. Students were compelled to sign statements saying they were not connected with such organizations before they were given their cards.

Well, maybe it is not actually as cold as I am trying to make you believe it is at times but I can well remember the morning it was so cold while we were killing we passed momentarily and I chafed to heat a remark which was very amusing but I was afraid to snicker, my face crack, and that is true.

WABECK STATE BANK OF DETROIT WABECK RELOANS TO SALARIED EMPLOYEES WITH SATISFACTORY CREDIT RATING Wabek State Bank of Detroit BIRMINGHAM OFFICE—WABECK BLDG. FERRISVILLE OFFICE—141 WEST NINE MILE RD. MAIN OFFICE—FISHER BLDG., DETROIT DOWNTOWN OFFICE—FORD BLDG.