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 NEXT REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE

Republicans, wishfully thinking that maybe by 1944 the voters will be tired of the dem Democrats, are already casting about for a man to oppose Franklin D. or whomever the President decides shall be his successor.

Senator Robert Taft says he will not run but throws in a plug for Gov. John W. Bricker of Ohio. Tom Dewey, who begins next week a four-year term as governor of New York, says he wants to serve out the full term, but you and I know that if the Peopul call, Mr. Dewey is not likely to resist.

Wendell Willkie is expected to run again, but some of the financial bigwigs are said to oppose him on the grounds that he's too radical for them and that he can't be handled. To me, that's a pretty good recommendation, for who wants a man who can be led around on a leash? And who wants a President so conservative that Wall street gives him its unqualified blessing? Gov. Bricker, it is said, is more to the liking of the Old Guard who thought President Harding and President Coolidge were just about the last word.

Turbulent times are ahead. We need for a President a man who knows international as well as domestic problems. We need some one big enough to hold his own with Stalin, Churchill, Chiang Kai Shek and the other big men who are running the world right now.

And furthermore, we need a man of liberal ideas, for unless there is a pronounced reaction in the next two years, the masses are not yet ready to renounce many of the measures put over by the New Deal. Gov. Bricker, in my humble opinion, scarcely fills the bill.

TO "UNCLE JOE"

Some of you readers may have noticed that we have a new steady contributor, one "Uncle Joe," who rushes to his typewriter the minute he has run through the paper and has looked up such unfortunate choices of words as "intransigeant. "Uncle Joe" does not always agree with us, but for that matter, we do not always agree with "Uncle Joe," so it's a horse apiece! However, as the columns of this palladium are open to all, "Uncle Joe" is accorded several dollars worth of space weekly.

Here is a problem I would like to put up to "Uncle Joe."

As you remember, this indefatigable contributor recently penned us a letter pointing out that strikes in factories aren't as bad as they seem, and further, that inefficient management causes as much or more lost time. Well, for the sake of argument, let's admit that "Uncle Joe" is correct; we will admit that statistics will show that strikes have decreased since the war started and that undoubtedly, manpower has been wasted from lockouts and poor management.

Where do we go from there? If what you say is true, Uncle, what can we do to improve the situation? Statistics won't win the war any sooner, nor in peace times will they raise the standard of living for the working man.

Aren't there a lot of strikes that a little patience might have helped avoid? Are the unions aware that reading of strikes makes our soldiers boil, and isn't it true that in the long run, labor and management alike are going to have to answer to the will of the voters? And incidentally, elections are controlled by the middle classes—people who don't clip coupons nor do they belong to labor unions.

Why doesn't organized labor take the lead in banishing strikes, especially the "quickies," yet, at the same time, insist that management pull on its oar too? And insist that the War Labor Board get down to business and catch up with its work?

Don't you think, "Uncle Joe," that if union leaders put forth as much energy into reconciliation as they do into making belligerent demands that organized labor might lead us into a new era of industrial cooperation?

Why not write us a letter informing us of ways and means in which labor might take the initiative in eliminating the distrust and bickering which beclouds the industrial scene.

THE POINT SYSTEM

When various foods are to be rationed under the "point system," that process in effect does what dollars and cents used to do. Ordinarily, scarcity for an article determines its price; if potatoes are a poor crop, the price goes up because there are fewer potatoes to be had and buyers will bid higher for them. Or, if buyers become prosperous, more of them want to buy butter, for example, and that, too, would force up the price.

However, with price ceilings and many commodities to be put on the rationed list, it becomes impractical to rule that every family may buy "X" number of cans of corn, and "Y" number of cans of sardines. It is much simpler to assign each person so many cans a year, and let him choose what he wants. That is where the points come in, for the points determine in a rough way the scarcity of the article. If canned milk is more scarce than canned tomatoes, each can of milk might be valued at 2 points while a can of tomatoes might be rationed one point. The idea is to discourage people from overstocking on milk to the detriment of their neighbors.

Consider meat. A beef critter has only enough meat for a few porterhouse steaks, so they will cost you more points than round steak. You can take your choice: eat more round steak, or save your points and splurge on porterhouse.

The point system is complicated, but it really simplifies rationing when many articles are affected. It also tends to preserve a variety of choices when you shop.

As prices rose and fell, that formerly determined what people bought, with the richer people buying what they chose. Under the point system, the millionaire and the former WPA worker will get the same number of points.

A State Economy

One practical economy, we believe, that Governor-Elect Harry F. Kelly can effect during his administration is the combining of six State agencies that are related to the protection of public investments.

At present there are six separate agencies doing a job that ought to be combined into one agency; for their responsibilities and duties are very definitely similar in most respects.

We refer to the State Departments of Insurance, State Banking, Michigan Corporation and Securities, Building and Loan, Public Trust Commission, and Supervision of Finance Companies.

If you want some economy in this respect, why not make the suggestion direct to the Governor-Elect, or to your local State Representative and Senator?

(You can put your tax savings, if this is done, into War Bonds and Stamps.)

Buying Real Estate

Since Pearl Harbor, the Army and Navy have bought, or are in the process of buying, private property equal to the combined areas of the states of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Delaware, and almost all of New Jersey, according to the Office of War Information.

This is a tremendous acquisition of real estate, although we should remember that the states mentioned are not very large geographically. Before the war is over, it is estimated, that around 30,000,000 acres of land will be taken over for camps, bases, airfields, ranges and other war necessities. Up to this time, 121,368 tracts have been marked out which include 12,000,000 acres and are valued at $284,000,000.

The American people now seeing the immense cost of building up our Army and Navy should realize that much of this would have been saved if we had maintained a more efficient and larger military force during the twenty years which followed the last World War. In all probability, war could have been averted, if our military forces had been kept modernized and at a large enough size. Much haste and waste in the preparation for immediate war would have been avoided by a careful, gradual process of keeping prepared. Let's not forget that after this war.

ALWAYS REMEMBER THIS: at all times, in every country, there are people who want to destroy liberty; such people are not Nazis, Fascists, etc.; they may not even believe themselves to be un-American. Nevertheless, their economic and political philosophies are such that they believe in impractical "collectivism"; this is un-American, under whatever name it flourishes.

DON'T FORGET, FOLKS, THAT income taxes in this land are going to get higher and higher; therefore, it will be wise to "save for income tax paying day."

ARE YOU STILL CONSUMED WITH that Christmas desire to give something tangible to others? If you are, than you are on the way to becoming a Good Samaritan.

"Upped in Recent Months"

We know of nothing that has happened on the battlefronts to explain the statement of Major-General Lewis C. Hershey, Selective Service Director, that "the actual demand for men in the armed forces has been upped in recent months."

The explanation may lie in the increased production of weapons, or in the decision to initiate military activity on several fronts in the near future. Egypt, the Far East and the Near East, as well as the British Isles, are possible destination for American soldiers.

While 1942 has propably been a year of discouragement to Hitler, it has emphasized the size of the job to be assumed by the United Nations. The quicker our forces are massed and the harder they strike, the sooner the war will end and the cheaper will be the price that they must pay for victory.

FIFTEEN $1,500 STATION WAGONS are used twice daily to transport a number of Washington naval "brass hats" three blocks from their parking lot to their offices, we learn. That's another excellent "example" of personal sacrifice for the whole population. (That $3,000 Baruch parts for the newlyweds, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Hopkins, in Washington recently, is another "example" of sacrifice. Of course, the money was Baruch's, and he's doing lots of good otherwise; but what of Harry and his beautiful ideas of "sacrifice"?)

LAST WEEK A LAPEER COUNTY HEN laid an egg four and a half inches long, said to be enough for the family that owns it. Personally, we think that hen has violated a federal law, and ought to be placed on a rationed basis of production. (We'll wager, too, that one of the fancy Washington theorists would agree to prefect such a plan of rationing.)

Poor Little Fellow

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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 to edit, to make such superficial changes in the wording of copy as 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 criticism or 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.

People's Column

ANOTHER LETTER

Dear Nephew,

Your pal J. H. H. hit the nail on the head when he said that the Americans are overpaid and spoiled. Anything a decent living and only a few confirmed pacifists-against (boos) will find anything desirable along a socialistic state.

The cure can be accomplished only by business changing its standards. In the past, business has been motivated by the thought that the more people spent, the more prosperous it would make them. The future concept of business must be kept in mind and that is, it for the good of the community.

Such businesses as advertising, under the future order, will have a definite place, that of introducing new ideas; however, while advertising for competition is hardly desirable from a financial standpoint, from a strictly economical standpoint it makes very little difference whether I buy Quaker Quinces or Quaker Quinces, as long as I buy quinces. It is becoming more and more evident that manufactured products that are held to certain standards are more or less the same regardless of the brand so long as they are the same grade. We are finding this fact out for the first time since the war started when a certain merchant has, regardless of brand.

I don't mean to pick on advertising only as an example. There are several other ways each as certain elements of the stock market, real estate and almost every other business that have nothing to offer for the good of the public. The one way we have of stabilizing of labor is to put unproductive people to work in industry. This only makes the situation worse. The other concept is long work-week. I H H and I long work-week give old Nephew a workout.

UNCLE JOE

Monthly Rubbish Removal O.K.

(Editor's note: In last week's issue, a comment in "Bits of Business" suggested that the City Administration investigate a possible indirect saving by changing weekly rubbish removal to semi-monthly intervals. This brought the following responses:)

Editor The Eccentric:

Attention living in Dayton a year ago from some is still very vivid. Again the latest Eccentric brought back memories which I can't keep wiping back out of my mind. . . . the twice-a-week and twice-a-month and twice-a-year rubbish removal. Again I say, I'm tired of being a guinea pig. . . . Birmingham is the only place I know of where rubbish is removed once every two weeks. Our orders are to have our rubbish ready for removal every other week. Why can't Birmingham be like the rest of the world? Why can't we have twice-a-week washing today in this city? Why can't we have our garbage collected twice a week? Why can't Mr. Schwallie be expected to put his garbage cans out once a week? Our orders are to have our garbage ready every other week. Why can't we have twice-a-month garbage collection in Birmingham