

Happenings of Long Ago

The Rabbits We Adopted

PEOPLES COLUMN

The Eccentric welcomes letters for this column. All must be signed, but signatures will be concealed unless you request. Letters must be limited to 400 words.

Michigan's Prison Problem

Before Kim Sigler became Governor of Michigan in 1947, Michigan's prisons were under a six-man policy-making Commission, whose members met monthly and received pay and expenses for time actually spent. That system, adopted in 1937, was heralded as a "model act". But under it investigation after investigation of our prisons had been held, with much publicity.

A former warden of Jackson prison, Harry S. Jackson, had been fired. When Sigler's administration got into office, it wasn't long before reports came to the Executive Office about certain illegal goings-on in Marquette prison, "number warden" Gerald Bush; he finally, under pressure of being investigated formally, resigned.

Over at Jackson prison, (officially known as the State Prison of South Michigan), are approximately 4,000 inmates; it is the largest prison in the United States. It has, necessarily, a hospital. During Sigler's last year as Governor it was discovered that the hospital was not functioning as it should; after many weeks, the one-man Commissioner Joseph Sanford let two of the doctors go, and put a reputable Lansing doctor in charge.

As a matter-of-fact, Sigler had been told that if the Jackson hospital did not get competent physicians in charge, there might be an open rebellion among the prisoners.

So much for this background data. Now there is a movement to restore the so-called "model system". Some of those who support this idea, perhaps with the best of intentions, know very little about how ineffective and unwieldy a mere policy-making Commission, meeting once a month, can be.

Such a Commission gets on the average, too little real information on "how things are getting along" in the institution they are responsible to the people for. Wardens and other overseers produce for the Commission only what they are moved to produce; if they are incompetent, if affairs are not what they should be in any area of the prison set-up, the Commission has no way of knowing except from data given them by the men under their management who, if they are, of course, unaccountable, by incompetent people seldom admit to superior incompetency.

Personally, the publisher of this newspaper, (who happens to know something of the problem, because he served as Sigler's executive secretary for two years), could go along with a three-man Commission to serve full time on the job; to be paid enough to get good men; to keep them out of Civil Service, so that they would be mercurial and responsive to current Chief Executives and Legislatures, (and thus to the people).

Then appoint a Commission of five or more people on an advisory basis, just as the present-Commission functions.

Our whole point is simply this: a one-

man policy-making Commission is helpless and unable to do a proper job; how can they be expected to, when they meet but once a month, and are dependent upon underlings for information? With a non-political set-up of, say, three full time Commissioners, responsible to each current Governor and Legislature, (and with each Executive keeping close non-political tab on the prisons) you may expect and get better, prison administration.

If the record of the past is any promise of the future, the restoration of the 1937 so-called "model system" will be a wrong step; not only for the public welfare, but more so for the inmates who, after all, look forward to the day when they may again step back into society and, as the result of proper prison discipline and education, become law-abiding citizens.

So those two California fliers remained aloft for 1008 hours, thus breaking a former record for single-engined airplanes... since some Americans like to stand outside their tepees, so to speak, and beat their tom-toms, we presume the aerial twin will now try to collect on the publicity noise they have made. But just what did they prove... other than to show they had some sort of stamina?

University of Michigan co-eds have started pledging themselves to refrain from kissing their male escorts good night. The boys are loud in their opposition to this shackle on display of affection. The girls, apparently, are not too serious about it all, and cupid as yet hasn't been heard from.

A Cuban chag has just paid \$54,000 for the original manuscript of Lincoln's Gettysburg address. Collecting rare things may be a nice hobby, and we hope the Cubans will use the money's worth out of the thing. The real value of the address is observed in its acceptance and application of Lincoln's philosophy: too bad, Cuba isn't following that pattern.

By the way, Mr. Average Married Man, have you thought to thank your wife for the splendid manner in which she seeks to manage your household? (Women, we observe, like to be appreciated as well as do the men-folks.)

The Birmingham Eccentric

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50 YEARS AGO

The Eccentric is now of age 50 years, so listen to the wise teaching propounded therein from week to week.

All our subscribers are taking the most wonderful course. String of from 10 to 30 sh a day are numerous, and some instances the number has been beaten.

Whitehead and Mitchell have a surprise in store for their patrons in the new-fangled watch out for it. Hope you see their supply of goldfish? If not call in and see the prettiest sight you have seen in a long time.

The drinking fountain is running again and the horse dung for dogs at the sight of it. The big boys were their thanks to the village for its kind and generous of their wants but the little dogs, that can't reach so high, think of the big boys and get a little away, sadly. They have placed their case in the hands of the Improvement Society with hopes for a speedy recovery.

The little three year old son of G. Dendero of Royal Oak, had the misfortune to fall from a window, a distance of 12 feet, recently. He received a broken arm and other slight injuries. We are pleased to report that the little fellow is recovering nicely.

Police are checking all records to establish the identity of new thieves who robbed the Arthur W. Kirk house on Cranbrook road of the Birmingham Saturday, Officers and two constables were called out to obtain a good set of fingerprints.

Ray Gorman, 29, Birmingham (auto worker), has been awarded \$15,000 in damages. Lewis A. Jaffe and Frank Drouillard, 40, Birmingham, were injured for injuries. Gorman was received when struck by a swinging door in the Huron Motor sales room on Pontiac.

The commission voted Monday night to purchase two new patrol cars for the police department, rather than the one previously requested. The cars they are buying smaller cars than planned, and will increase the number to eight center and wider.

Charley Paddock, internationally known sprinter and called "the world's fastest man" will be the guest speaker at the assembly program planned for Baldwin high school next year. This announcement was made when officials mapped their program for the year.

Nearly 200 Pythian Sisters met here yesterday for the annual convention of their order. This is the first time in seven years that Birmingham has been chosen for the convention which was held in Pythian hall.

5 YEARS AGO May 11, 1944 Baldwin high school students will register next week for the course in their order. This is the first time in seven years that Birmingham has been chosen for the convention which was held in Pythian hall.

The Michigan Automobile Club has awarded safety banners to the vicinity schools for their work in traffic safety during the past year. In Birmingham the award was given to Holy Name, Pierce and Quanton schools at the Bloomfield Hills school. Five additional schools in the area were also honored for their work.

Residents of Birmingham are urged to send more books to the library in service. Miss S. Adeline Burke, librarian, reports that she, librarians, camps and military hospitals, that soldiers may have a constant supply of varied reading materials.

The Birmingham Rifle club will hold a special meeting in the Community House Monday evening to make plans for the summer activities. A pre-Induction course is being planned, and a refresher course will be given to members in the range each Monday and Thursday evening for the "regulars".

Plans are under way for the annual plant sale and pet parade which will feature the sale of the Edith's Guild of St. James Church each year. The affair, this year, will be held on May 18, 19, and 20, and May 25, 26, and 27, with the pet parade scheduled for the final day.

One of our readers has written in to ask what is meant by "equivalent exposure"—a term used frequently in writing about photography.



Dondero Says Marshall Plan Is "Too Big a Gamble at Too Great a Cost"

British factories filled with aviation engines for Russia. "Too Big a Gamble" The congressman is convinced that his position seems inconsistent with his vigorous personal campaign to fight communism.

By Esther Van Wagoner Tufty WASHINGTON — Isolationism rolled up next in Michigan. Only one state, Illinois, reportedly more votes against the extension of the Marshall Plan than Michigan.

Dondero Explains Here is what two of the seven said to say: Dondero: "The more we go into debt the more we weaken the United States. Also I do not like to assist a totalitarian government in Europe. If we spent money to buy bombers and tanks, we would do more to stop the march of communism."

Have You Met The newcomers from Cranston, R. I. Mr. and Mrs. L. LeTourneau and Mrs. L. LeTourneau are residing at 592 Southlawn. Mr. LeTourneau is with the Detroit Procurement Division of the U. S. Government.

THE ECCENTRIC'S Camera Corner

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To The Editor: I have been asked to cover the International Civil Aviation Organization in connection with the campaign of the League of Women Voters, on a better understanding of the United Nations and its possible connection with residents of Birmingham.

It was provided that 30 days after the governments of 26 nations had agreed to the convention, the new organization was to be formally established as the International Civil Aviation Organization. This occurred on April 4, 1947, with 51 nations participating.

Since then ICAO has done much to bring uniformity, regularity and order to international air transport operations, covering such subjects as airline operations, aircraft registration, air traffic navigation, aerodromes and ground aids, meteorological systems, maps and charts, and the standardization of rules of the air.

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