*Perhaps you know many people who, so interested in their own personal world of business and pleasure, pay little attention to the obligations of free citizenship. They have mutinied on the Ship of State, refusing to perform their duties as "civic sailors."*

# The Birmingham Eccentric

PART ONE

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## THIS and THAT

By G. R. A.

*(While GRA takes his annual Florida vacation, his column is being written by his son, George Wm. Averill, managing editor of The Eccentric.)*

**Let's Get Rid of Hidden Taxes**

If my car's motor is acting up, I take it to a garage where the mechanic locates the trouble and makes the necessary repairs. He hands me one bill totalling $7 for the actual new parts and labor charges. I pay it at the front office and go on my way.

But to make me feel I was getting a bargain, the mechanic could have billed me $4.25 for repairs and labor in fixing the motor. But he would have collected 75 cents from me as a charge for opening the garage door, 50 cents for opening the hood, 25 cents for having to use his flashlight while under the hood, and $1.25 for storage while my car was in his garage.

Either way it cost me $7 but for some reason businessmen prefer the first method, and so do their customers.

**Could Collect Nickels and Dimes**

To obtain the necessary revenue to supply police and fire protection, street, sewer and water installations and repairs, the City of Birmingham once a year sends out tax notices. These notices are the taxpayers' prorated share of the costs of his city government.

The city could, however, charge residents for every call to the police or fire departments, boost parking meter charges, and devise other ways to collect many nickels and dimes so the tax notices would be much smaller.

The residents would pay the final costs anyway, whether they did so in continual dribbles or in one billing. But the city and the taxpayers, for some reason, have decided the one bill method is best.

But when it comes to the costs of state and federal governments, the method changes. We are nickel-and-dimed to death just to make it appear, falsely, that individually we each pay only a small share of these state and federal governmental costs of operation. Someone else, it is the impression, is the guy who carries most of the load.

**Time to Stop Kidding Ourselves**

It's time we stopped kidding ourselves on that score.

The customer ALWAYS pays.

Our free enterprise system was not set up so that every manufacturer, processor, wholesaler or retailer can magically absorb costs. He's GOT to pass them on to the consumer to stay in business.

And if state or federal government is going to tax manufacturer, grower, wholesaler or retailer, these taxes naturally form part of the total retail price.

These are HIDDEN taxes. They are not APPARENT to the consumer who buys the item. But the consumer PAYS them, regardless.

**Politician Wants Costs Hidden**

Naturally, the professional politician, whether in state or federal government, is greatly concerned with keeping government costs HIDDEN. It's much easier to tax close to the source, for those taxes become lost in the shuffle before they reach the consumer.

The taxpayer, then, is deliberately misled on actually how much HE is really paying for the cost of government.

The professional politician or bureaucrat is AFRAID to come to the taxpayer once a year and ask for the money with which to carry on governmental operations. He knows if government funds were obtained solely from an income tax once a year, that income tax bill would be high enough for the taxpayer to be concerned about.

It would mean the taxpayer only had ONE revenue producing item to watch, and he might begin to question unnecessary government expenditures.

**System Costs Us Extra**

Consider, too, the EXTRA costs such a hidden tax system imposes. Business alone includes its government tax collection role as an item in its overhead cost. If it didn't have to keep track of these taxes, it wouldn't have to be included in the overhead. It wouldn't have to be added to the price, and consequently the consumer would pay less for the product.

Many government bureaus have

(See THIS & THAT, Page 2)

**MOST BIRDS WON'T FLY IN YOUR WINDOW**

. . . But here's a canary that found a new home with the speed of its fluttering wings. Just minutes after the Eccentric hit the newsstands — this bird was sold!

FOR SALE—PETS

CANARY, good singer, and cage for sale. $7.50. Telephone 3913-W.

IF YOU have ANYTHING to sell, buy, rent or trade — the Eccentric Want Ads are your best bet. They're money makers!

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## Kass Heads Community House Board

### Annual Reports Given at Meeting Monday Night

Charles B. Kass was elected president of the board of directors of the Birmingham Community House Monday night at the regular monthly board meeting.

Kass, who previously filled an unexpired term on the board, was re-elected for a three-year term as a board member. He served as Roll Call chairman the past two years.

Other officers elected were Mrs. Peter B. Loomis, 1st vice-president; Covert Robertson, 2nd vice-president; Clyde C. Bennett, treasurer; Mrs. Harris Machus, recording secretary; Mrs. Ewald Schaffer, corresponding secretary.

Preceding the board meeting, the annual meeting of the Birmingham Community House Association was held with Mrs. Howard J. Liverance, retiring board president, in charge. From opinions voiced by members of the association, it was one of the most interesting annual meetings ever held.

**Change in By-Laws**

Minutes of the last annual meeting, read by Mrs. Loomis, secretary, were approved.

George Dixon explained a change in the by-laws whereby the House fiscal year was changed to a calendar year basis.

One of the highlights of the past president's detailed report was a comparison of present House activities with those of 10 years ago.

"It was considered a big year in 1940 when the House had 70,000 guests," she said. "In 1949, there were 170,000 guests. Meals served jumped from 13,000 per year to 40,000 during the ten-year span."

Arthur S. McCall, treasurer, explained house finances.

**New Report Procedure**

Mrs. Velma Isley, house director, introduced a variation in presenting the House staff with their reports. Instead of long statistical reports, the information was amusingly divulged to the audience through an informal roundtable conversation.

Mrs. Isley mentioned some of the improvements and repairs to the House during the last year, and told of some of the pressing needs of the near future.

Mrs. Carol Plumstead, assistant director, stated there are 12 full time employees at the House and 4 part time. Eighteen local women assist as waitresses when large groups are served, and 36 high school girls and boys assist when needed.

Mrs. Plumstead also told of the welfare and good neighbor work done by the House, and the constant lending of sick room supplies,

(See KASS, Page 2)

## *New President*

CHARLES B. KASS
Elected at Annual Meeting

## Bell, Van Dusen Decline to Run for Re-election

Mayor Donald S. Bell and City Commissioner C. Theron Van Dusen announced this week that they will not be candidates for re-election to the city commission when their terms expire April 10.

They were elected to the commission for the first time in April, 1947.

Petitions for two candidates were filed this week at the city clerk's office. They are for Chad M. Ritchie, 1150 Puritan, and Dean, G. Beier, 1727 Washington blvd.

Ritchie, 47, is trade mark service representative for Michigan Bell Telephone Co., while Beier is an associate with the Pontiac law firm of Howlett & Hartman. Both are seeking their first terms as city commissioners.

Bell remarked, "I think one can be on the commission too long. It's a good idea to get away and maybe see things from a new angle, to let someone else get on the commission and see what they can do with the problems."

Explaining his views in a written statement to The Eccentric, Van Dusen declared:

**Moving from Birmingham**

"Feb. 25 is the deadline for candidates for election to the Birmingham city commission to file their intentions and petitions with the city clerk. That date is rapidly approaching. The spring election is April 3.

"I believe it is appropriate for commissioners whose terms are expiring to state whether or not they intend to run for reelection.

"I do not intend to run for reelection, for the reason that we (the family) have deferred our plans for building a new home in Birmingham and will be living on the farm in Metamora.

"My three years on the commission have been a most interesting and illuminating experience. No public servant need expect much thanks for his efforts—but he does derive a measure of personal satisfaction from having given freely of his time and his abilities to the work of his city government.

**Should Be Interested In City**

"I heartily recommend the job to any good citizen.

Van Dusen expressed a desire to see at least four "able" candidates on the April 3 ballot.

"Birmingham is fortunate," he stated, "in having a great many people of exceptional ability in all lines of endeavor—who make their homes in our community.

"Whether they earn their living there or not (and most of them do not), they certainly should be interested in keeping Birmingham a good place to live and raise their families.

"It has been my observation that rather few of them ever attend a commission meeting to see what goes on in their city government — unless perhaps it is a hearing

(See CANDIDATES, Page 2)

## Methodist Building Fund Receives $100,000 Grant

A $100,000 grant from the Kresge Foundation to the First Methodist church of Birmingham was revealed to the congregation Sunday morning by the Rev. Arnold F. Runkel, pastor.

"The grant is conditioned upon the church's successful financing of the total project on or before next December 31," Rev. Runkel explained.

A special quarterly conference of church officers has been called for next Wednesday to hear the report of the building council headed by William DeLee. This report will be disclosed to the congregation at a later date.

Prior to Sunday's announcement, the church had raised or pledged $130,000 toward the project, Rev. Runkel said.

## Bell Official Defends New Office Here

### Not 'Extravagant', Says Engineer; May Need New Addition

**Special to The Eccentric**

LANSING, Feb. 2 — The Michigan Bell Telephone Company today was on record with a vigorous expression of pride in its contribution to the telephone and civic development of Birmingham through its new building and dial improvement program in the community.

Raymond Foulkrod, plant extension engineer for the company, in testimony before the Michigan Public Service Commission, lashed back at a charge by the staff of the Michigan Public Service Commission that the Birmingham project was extravagant.

Foulkrod testified during hearings on the company's pyramiding application for a general rate increase. The testimony was in rebuttal to that of C. J. Hackett, Chicago, consultant to the Commission staff, who criticized the company's construction program several weeks ago.

**$276,176 Over Estimates**

Because of Birmingham's "community of interest" with Detroit, Foulkrod said that the dial improvement program there and in other suburban communities had been held up pending the development of a device that would permit suburbanites to dial Detroit numbers direct. The perfection of automatic message recounting equipment provided the answer and Royal Oak was the first suburb to change over to dial service.

Foulkrod said the cost of the Birmingham building exceeded original estimates by $276,176 but sharply questioned the ability of any organization to keep costs below that level under circumstances of inflation, material shortages, and other unforeseen difficulties beyond the company's control.

"We had to have a building," he said. "We built it. The result is a distinct asset to the city of Birmingham and the state of Michigan.

"The building is designed to serve the community of Birmingham for many years in the future. The commercial quarters are designed for ultimate commercial usage and it is expected that it will not be necessary to enlarge them at any time. They are being used efficiently today.

**See New Addition in 1951**

"The central office equipment space will be completely filled in 1951 and we anticipate that it will be necessary to begin an addition to the building in that year. We are at a loss to understand a Commission staff statement that space in the building is not being efficiently used.

In more than $200,000,000 worth of new construction by Michigan Bell in the post-war period, Foulkrod emphasized that costs to the company had exceeded original estimates by only $6,000,000, or 1.5 per cent. He pointed out that the deviation was mainly in buildings where the work was done by outside contractors under conditions or rising prices and wages in the building industry.

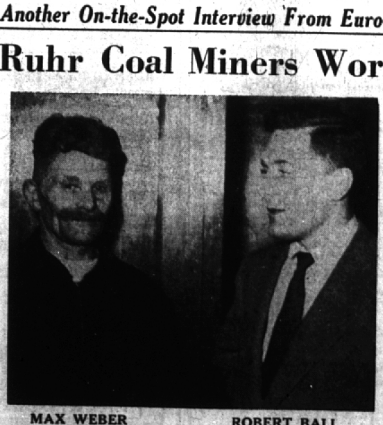
Foulkrod found himself in complete disagreement with Hackett's theory that the company should not undertake any construction project unless it were assured an immediate profit.

"Our first obligation," he reminded the Commission, "is to provide good telephone service to the people in our territory at the lowest possible cost. If we abided by the no profit, no project theory, many thousands of Michigan people would not have service today and thousands of others would not obtain it in the future."

## *Another On-the-Spot Interview From Europe*

# Ruhr Coal Miners Work Hard for $2.50 a Day

BY ROBERT BALL
Special Correspondent for The Eccentric



MAX WEBER — ROBERT BALL
At 62, German 'Kumpel' still in the pits

DORTMUND, Germany—"Kumpel" is what the Ruhr coal miners call themselves. The name, which means "companion," is more than a simple designation. It implies membership in a fraternity of hard work, dust, and danger, of long hours and low pay.

Max Weber is a real "Kumpel," like his father and grandfather before him. At sixteen he started as a breaker; now, at sixty-two, he is still in the pits.

**Self-confident, with a strong pride in his work, Weber accepts with a shrug the new demands that Europe's crying need for coal places on him and his fellow miners.**

**Gets $2.50 a Day**

In "Dorstfeld I-4," the mine in which Weber works for an average wage of $2.50 a day, the work goes around the clock.

Two day shifts break and load the coal, while the night shift, on which Weber works, moves the conveyors up to the coal face for the next day's breaking.

The pay of all the miners is figured not hourly, but on the average amount of coal that is broken.

The worst working conditions that Weber remembers were under the Nazis.

"They had us working three-quarters of an hour extra on each shift," he explained. "Side by side with Russian prisoners."

Weber is scornful of the Nazi

(See MINERS, Page 2)

All makes of inner spring mattresses repaired. ROYAL MATTRESS COMPANY. PHONE B'HAM 1-0788.

# *Arrival of New Pumper Drops City to Fifth Class Fire Risk*

NEW TRUCK UNDERGOES SEVERE PUMPING TESTS AT QUARTON LAKE
Harvey Renshaw watches gauges during trial (Joe Wheeler Photo)

## Lower Rates to Benefit Public Bldgs.

### Single Family Homes Are Not Affected, Fire Chief Explains

By George Wm. Averill

When $16,675.95 rolled into Birmingham last week Wednesday, in the form of a spankin' new 1,000-gallon per minute pumper for the city fire department, Birmingham became the first Michigan city of its size to drop from sixth to fifth class fire insurance rates.

The bright red pumper, with glistening chromium-plated accessories, is now parked at the fire station in the Municipal building, alongside the 27-year-old 750-gpm pumper it replaces. The old pumper will be kept in reserve to handle third alarms or to provide more water and hose connections on first or second alarms, if needed.

**Schools, Churches to Benefit**

The lower fire insurance classification will mean an average five per cent reduction in fire insurance rates on public buildings, schools, churches, business and industrial structures, Fire Chief Vern W. Griffith explained.

"Some single family dwellings on the fringe area of the business section, subject to greater fire risk and rates higher than sixth class, will also benefit," Griffith said.

He anticipated the contents of these buildings will enjoy about a three per cent rate reduction.

Although the city now is in fifth class, most residences will still have to pay sixth class rates for fire insurance.

**Lowest Rate for Homes**

"At the present time, this is the lowest rate for which single family homes can be insured anywhere in Michigan regardless of how low a grading a city achieves," Griffith explained.

The department now has four modern pieces of fire-fighting equipment — the new pumper, another 1,000 gpm pumper bought two years ago, an aerial ladder truck, and a 1-ton truck used for grass fires and rescue runs.

Fire insurance grading is a method of computing a city's physical ability to cope with fires, the chief said. It is a national procedure standardized by the National Board of Fire Underwriters.

Rural areas or small communities with little or no fire protection are in the highest classification, or 10th class. All fire insurance rates are based on classification, with 10th class costing the most.

**Water Supply Considered**

"Proper fire protection not only includes fire engineering, but also adequate water supply and distribution consistent with its growth," Griffith pointed out.

He said the regrading of the city was started the middle of last month by the Michigan Inspection Bureau, the Michigan branch of the National Board of Fire Underwriters.

"In the next week to five weeks, all of these eligible fire risks should be enjoying this new fifth class rating," he said.

Many factors resulted in this lower grade, Griffith stated.

"First and foremost is a consistent low annual fire loss. The fire equipment and the effort of members of the fire department have been responsible for this low loss, together with all of the citizens in the city who have cooperated in fire prevention.

**Planned Service Improvements**

"Another important factor is the planning and authorization of equipment by city officials for the development and improvement of water and fire service.

"It is a distinct pleasure and honor to be the head of the fire department when, for the first time in the city's history, it has reached such a low grading for fire insurance rates.

"I wish to thank publicly the city officials, members of the Michigan Inspection Bureau, and the members of our fire department who have expended extra effort this past year to bring about this regrading in so short a period," Griffith declared.

Prior to 1913, when the first volunteer fire department was organized, Birmingham was in 10th class. From 1913 to 1927 it was in 8th class. In 1927 the city dropped to 7th class, then to 6th class in 1941.

## *Women's Finance Forum Planned by B'ham Nat'l Bank*

The Birmingham National Bank announced this week a Women's Finance Forum, consisting of a series of six meetings, will be held in the Baldwin Public Library auditorium at 10:00 a.m. each Wednesday morning from March 1 to April 5, inclusive.

Qualified speakers will cover each of the six topics discussed, with adequate time provided for a question and answer period, the duration of each session being limited to 90 minutes.

The series to be sponsored by The Birmingham National Bank, is free to all interested women who want information about financial planning and investments. H. H. Gardner, president of the bank, said, "It is not a course in household budgeting, but covers the following broad subjects: personal financial planning, life insurance and social security, investment in bonds and preferred stocks, investment in common stocks and investment trusts, investment in income real estate, mortgages, or home ownership, and wills and estates."

Because of limited seating capacity, the bank is restricting registration to 150 women. Registrations will be accepted in the order received. Cards of admission will be mailed upon receipt of applications, which may be made either by mail or in person at The Birmingham National bank, on and after February 20.

## *$5,500 Will Buy Special Sewer*

It will cost 8 home owners in the Belmont subdivision about $600 each to get a proper sewer installation for their properties, City Manager Donald C. Egbert estimates.

He told the city commission Monday night that the best way to solve basement floodings for those lots on the north side of Oak, west of Chesterfield, is to replace the old subdivision sewer with a new one.

He is going to meet with the property owners to discuss the matter further.

## Traffic Tickets Win Approval of All Involved

Mrs. Gertrude Watkins, 587 Henley, was the first person to be issued a ticket under the uniform traffic policy which went into effect here Feb. 1.

Mrs. Watkins was stopped the first day after she had driven her car through a stop sign, and was issued a three-point warning ticket. While this particular ticket did not carry a fine, it placed the first mark against her driving record.

Under the new policy, a driver may, after four moving violations in any 12 month period, be called before the traffic safety division of the state police. The final result, whether or not the driver loses his license in such an event, would depend upon the decision of the division after they had reviewed the four offenses.

**Drivers Favor New Ticket**

Local police have reported that motorists are accepting the tickets with considerable favor. One man, arrested for speeding, watched his costs soar as the various phases of his violation were checked until they had reached $9. As he commented on this, he was informed that the same offense, had it happened Jan. 31, would have cost him $20 under the old policy.

Officers report that all motorists ask for full explanation of the tickets, and as soon as they have the details, express themselves wholeheartedly in favor of the new system.

The men who are working the city's traffic details consider the new tickets much more fair to the driver, better for the officer, and much easier on the traffic court judge when cases come to trial.

**'Repeater' to Suffer Most**

Police Chief Ralph W. Moxley commented: "The whole thing is fairer, all the way around. A motorist's 'crime' has several factors entering into it before he pays his fine. What may have brought a fine, before this policy, may bring a warning only.

"If a violations came to court, the whole record is there in black and white, made at the scene and at the time. No one has to draw on memory for details which might easily be forgotten. No motorist need have the feeling that judge and jury favored the word of a uniformed policeman against his own.

"I think that as time goes on these tickets will prove more and more popular. The careful motorist will also be well aware of the fact that it is the repeated violator who will suffer the greatest. Every ticket issued becomes a permanent record against that particular driver."

## Thin Ice Endangers Quarton Skaters; Fall Injures Youth

Tom Nakkula, 17, of Dearborn suffered head injuries Sunday when he fell on the ice at Quarton lake. The youth was playing hockey at the time. He was taken to St. Joseph Mercy hospital by ambulance, where he was treated for a severe scalp wound and released.

Shortly after the accident, police officers and members of the Birmingham fire department, with their loud speaker, cleared the lake of skaters.

Police, who had been checking the area, reported the ice was thin in several areas and that there was an unusually large number of skaters on the lake.

## *Local Coal Supply Will Carry City Balance of Month*

A survey of the Birmingham coal situation Wednesday morning showed a supply at both coal yards which, under present weather conditions, should carry through the balance of the month. Both Parks and Cox coal companies reported enough coal on hand for normal consumption, but said they did not have the kinds people want.

Norman Wolfe, assistant superintendent of schools, said there was sufficient coal for the next 10 to 14 days.

"We had two cars arrive last week, but since we have not been able to build up any reserve, it goes quickly. Quarton has a hand-fired boiler and is pretty well fixed. Hill, Barnum, Baldwin, Adams and Pierce, stoker-heated, are faced with the limited supply," he said.

At the city hall, City Manager Donald Egbert said they were now buying locally. Ordinarily coal is bought by the car load, but local purchases have had to be made since the regular supplier could not furnish it. To date, he said, they had experienced no great difficulty simply because local dealers have been so cooperative.

## Comparative Street Costs Under Study by City Engineer

A comparative study of installation costs of concrete streets and two-inch bituminous concrete is being made by the city engineering department, City Manager Donald C. Egbert revealed to the city commission Monday night.

"If our paving programs are large enough, we believe it might be better to install concrete streets with integral (rolled) curbs in residential areas," Egbert stated.

"Our cost studies are not complete, but I believe our final report probably will contain a recommendation to change our present procedure from gravel and two-inch bituminous to solid concrete."

## Underground Water Survey Dependent Upon Cities' Needs

City Manager Donald Egbert met with John Ferris of the U. S. Geological Service, and representatives from nearby communities at the municipal building last week Wednesday to discuss possibilities of an area survey of underground water resources.

Egbert said no action could be taken until it is known how many other communities in the area care to participate in such a program. If there are enough willing, the federal government will make the survey to determine how much underground water will be available in the future, he said.

The federal government will assume approximately half of the survey's costs, with the balance to be allocated to the participating municipalities, he explained.

## *Consumers Asked for 1950 Outline*

The Consumers Power Co. has been requested to outline its 1950 Birmingham main replacement program to city officials, City Manager Donald C. Egbert said Monday.

"The main replacement on Woodward avenue appears to be progressing satisfactorily, and I am advised the work on N. Woodward will be completed in a few days," Egbert said.

## Beresford Shows Steady Improvement

Latest report from St. Joseph Mercy hospital say E. M. Beresford is improving slightly. While his condition is still serious, he is showing daily improvement, and it is believed his complete recovery is assured.