

Another Eventful Year Has Become History!

At the conclusion of today, Dec. 31, 1952, another eventful year will have passed into the pages of human history.

Years hence, when the record is read by future generations, it will reveal the usual statistics relating to mankind's good and evil deeds. Perhaps, too, historians may be able to detect a slight improvement in the over-all progress of people . . . in spite of the continued existence of man's inhumanity to man.

But on the individual basis (about which historians pay little attention), some folks have improved their lot very much, some very little or not at all, and many somewhere in between.

INDEED, AS ONE grows older and runs the gamut of human experiences, one is inclined to the belief that security and happiness, in and of themselves, are not guaranteed with the advent of one's birth. Security and happiness are conditions that must be achieved by personal efforts. Even when achieved, they must be fought for

to be retained. Yet, in our own United States of America, we have much to be grateful for. We still have more freedom than any other people on earth. We still have before us unparalleled opportunities for personal and national progress.

WE STILL LIVE in a land where one can afford to trust his neighbor . . . and we have emerged, as a nation, with an historic necessity to do what we can to help other freedom-loving nations achieve security and happiness.

The year 1952 reveals itself as a period when goodness was never more challenged by the forces of evil. And may we expect that 1953 starts that period in human affairs when mankind will begin to make countable steps toward putting down the forces of evil . . . to the end that men and women, boys and girls, may truly come into that promised land . . . of which Christmas is the epitome . . . of "Peace on earth and good will to all men . . ."

Quitting Socialism

Some time ago Charles E. Wilson, former Defense Mobilizer, made public an idea that had been germinating in his mind since 1946. It is that all federally-owned businesses be sold to private enterprise. This would be done by converting the businesses concerned into stock companies and selling the shares to holders of government bonds.

Since then, it is reported, Mr. Wilson has received a flood of mail from all over the country and from all kinds of people endorsing his proposal and expressing their willingness to exchange their bonds for the shares of stock. And on top of that, the proposal has received warm praise and support from those who want to see this country free from the blight of socialism.

IN A RECENT article, Pathfinder magazine observed that Mr. Wilson's plan has six great points in its favor, running as follows:

It would reduce the national debt by 10 per cent, for a total of some \$27,000,000,000. It would reduce the interest on this debt by about \$750,000,000 a year. It would produce a larger tax yield from properties which are now wholly or largely tax-

free and, in addition, are supported by our taxes.

It would give more people a share in U. S. production. It would break the trend toward socialistic ownership of enterprise. It would slow up the bureaucratic drive for more big government.

THE SOCIALIST GOAL has been to gain a political monopoly of essential resources and services, notably electric power, on a piece-meal basis. Mr. Wilson touched on this in the speech in which he disclosed his plan.

He said, "Down in Washington I've watched our creeping paralysis of socialism at work . . . We have to launch a second-era of trust-busting and we need a bigger stick than even Teddy Roosevelt could swing. If the concentration of power by business was bad for our country—and it is—then the concentration of power by government is equally bad. And it is . . ."

It's hard to see how anyone who believes in freedom and opportunity—in all the ideals and principals this country is based on—can quarrel with that. Mr. Wilson's plan for stopping socialism cold is the soundest one yet proposed.

Pioneering Is Unlimited

Some people falsely believe that the era of pioneering in this country passed on when every part of the nation was explored and populated. Those pioneers did their type of pioneering . . . but there still remains (and always will in a free land) the need for more pioneering in those areas that create and distribute wealth.

Economic and social pioneering, of an enduring nature, will cease only when a nation completely gets into the hands of bureaucratic planners.

In brief, only when free competition, within the pattern of capitalism, is smothered with the blanket of totalitarianism will pioneering cease to have accepted values.

From The Eccentric's Point of View . . .

Those days of mist and rain that preceded Christmas were not too well thought of by most of us, for we'd rather have had some nice white snow to blanket the earth. Yet, from the standpoint of Birmingham's water supply, the rainfall was better than snow. For rapid growing Birmingham faces a constant lowering of the water table . . . so rainfall is, indeed, a needed blessing here.

It has been said that approximately 1,000 different kinds of skilled and semi-skilled jobs, not including professional or supervisory skills, are required to produce one modern aircraft. This certainly proves the interdependence of human beings.

It is said that the most ill dressed but best known figure in American life these days is the national debt. It no doubt needs the vigorous exercise of economy thinking by all of us—taxpayer and taxpayer alike—to reduce its corpulence.

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Human nature being what it is, it is not exposed that wide publicity relating to the arrest and conviction of certain types of law violators will prevent others from currently doing the same evils. You may eliminate all the moths in your home one day . . . but a few weeks later more will appear.

Perhaps it is true that one characteristic most people are not too extravagant in using is good old common sense . . . served with plenty of the sauce of calmness. Most of us really know its value . . . maybe the fast tempo of modern life prevents us from its wider use.

The federal government is, of course, knee-deep in bureaucracy; but that doesn't necessarily mean we have efficient and economical government.

Pity the human being who, like a porcupine, always bristles with some negative attitude toward others. Like the porcupine, he probably gets no pecking.

So They Say . . .

Carlos P. Romulo, Philippine delegate to United Nations, speaking of U. N.: "Give us your faith, your support, believe in us, and I am quite sure we will live up to your highest expectations."

Reuben Oppenheimer, Baltimore lawyer: "Most Government lawyers are capable and sincere, although their ranks contain a few rotten apples."

Mrs. Frida Beckman, 79-year-old high school senior. "You're never old if you keep your mind and eyes open."

'Dunno, Son, I Lost the Way!'



Happenings of Long Ago

Bits of News Gleaned from Old Files of The Eccentric—The Items That Make Up The Historical Background of The Birmingham of Today.

50 YEARS AGO

January 3, 1903

You cannot trade Canadian coin for paper money, for Uncle Sam's postage stamps or any other supplies. Hear that now.

Coasting is all the rage. The boys, girls, Wm. O. Reynolds, city marshal and Messrs. Goodwin are all up in the air over this coasting business.

Miss Mollie Smith, the faithful assistant at the postoffice, whose pleasant face and sunny manners are so well known to the people of Birmingham and vicinity, was the recipient of an elegant umbrella as a Christmas gift from the four rural route carriers.

Rev. Mr. Bertram will begin special services in the M. E. church a week from next Sunday evening. It is hoped that the social interests of the season will be laid aside for the good of the soul.

Will the fire marshal or fire department look into the dangerous works, especially the using of an old large dry goods box for an ash barrel and kept on the second floor, in the largest building—and this, too, in the largest block in town. If this is continued the insurance companies will take up their agencies in the village. J. A. Bigelow.

30 YEARS AGO

December 29, 1922

One Detroit hire detective in his mind about Christmas "cheer". After hiring a cab to bring him to Birmingham, he was running up a bill of about \$12, the gentleman found himself in jail because his total resources were 17 cents. He was in court on probation after promising to drink no more "hard liquor."

Bids have been asked for the annual audit of the village books. An audit by some interested party is provided for in the Village Charter.

Plans are completed for the third annual winter sports carnival to be held here New Year's Day. Activities will get underway promptly.

HORSE SENSE AND NONSENSE

BY ALICE E. MORGAN

Uncle Abner sat by the fire one evening, talking about holidays. He went 'way back to the days when he was a little boy and told us about the way Christmas was then.

"Maybe it was better than now, maybe not," he said. "We didn't have all the things to buy that we have today, course. I remember Ma making dolls for the girls.

"Pa'd whistle the beads, arms and legs out of soft wood. Ma'd make the bodies out of corn husk, cover 'em with cloth and then make the clothes. Right pretty they were, too.

"For us boys, Pa'd make skis out of barrel staves and he'd make our sleds, too. One year he made bows and arrows for us. These were pretty special 'cause he figured we were old enough to know how to use 'em, and he put steel tips on the arrows. We were the county big shot, believe you me.

Uncle Abner told about the carols sung at the little stone church, too.

WHOLE FAMILIES would pile into the big sleigh and with the horses snorting, and prancing and the harness bells jingling, start out on their three or four mile drags. They'd sing all the way there. They'd sing an hour at the church, mostly at song, and then sing all the way home.

"That was fun," Uncle Abner said, "but what I remember best is the church. 'That poor little church really kidded. Every family for miles around came to the big mad man. The kids, everyone of 'em had so many clothes they were about twice as fat."

ONE THING OR ANOTHER. By George Wm. Averill

Grand Trunk Western Railroad officials look for no cooperation from right-of-way trespassers living in the northeast section of Birmingham, particularly in the area north of Maple and east of the railroad.

However, O. C. Marquess, superintendent of investigation for Grand Trunk, has promised an on-the-spot survey by the middle of January of the fence along the right-of-way north of the Birmingham commuter station. This stretch of fence has several breaks and holes in it, making it possible for pre-school children to get onto the tracks with no effort at all.

In Marquess' file on this problem is the following statement dated Dec. 9, 1952:

"TO ILLUSTRATE the attitude of some of the residents in this younger wild to advise that some time ago one of our officers noticed two women in this area crossing from one side of track to the other.

"When stopped by our officer, they emphatically stated that they would not walk the extra one mile or so in order to use the public road in crossing our right-of-way. It will prove a period of light exercise, sports and good fellowship for the group during the winter months.

"THE HAZARDS of trespassing on our property were, of course, explained to this youth, who did not seem to think there was any particular harm or danger to himself in so crossing our right-of-way.

"Our representative then called on this boy's mother, who stated that she was aware of the fact that when she was unable to drive her son to the bus line, that he took this short cut across our tracks.

"She also stated that this fence has been either cut or down in various places for the past 15 years, and that she often walked across our tracks at Yorkshire road to visit friends on the opposite side of the tracks, as she was not going to walk the extra distance as long as the fence was able to be gotten over or cut.

"Mrs. _____ then was informed of the bad example this set for the younger children in this area, as well as the hazards involving the

possibility of young children being injured while crossing the tracks. He made last week before the bloody results of their stupidity.

"HER ATTITUDE to that was that if small children were properly supervised by their parents, they would not be out where they would be subjected to injury." (End of statement.)

To me, two things are apparent from this statement. First, that the trespassers are deliberately ignoring the hazards they are creating for these young children.

Secondly, they are attempting to rationalize their trespassing actions as harmless on the basis that all intelligent parents should have children who do everything they are told, or lacking this upbringing, the parents can maintain a constant 24-hour watch over everything their children do.

A much higher, more impetuous fence seems to me to be the answer to stopping the trespassing from one side of track to the other.

"No need or dying accident victims who have to be pried out of crumpled automobile wrecks; No battered pedestrians who have to be loaded onto stretchers or carted away dead to the morgue;

No "bad news" calls which turn joyful homes into scenes of sorrow;

Why is J. I. Hudson's surrounding its branch store in Southfield township with 70 to 80 lively competitors?

Northland's vice-president and general manager, Horace Carpenter, Jr., answered this question in a talk he made last week before the B'ham Rotary club.

"The average woman must step in three stores to compare prices, and merchandise before she ceases to be a shopper and becomes a purchaser," Carpenter said.

"Therefore, we are renting space to competing stores so women—and men, too—can shop around Northland, not merely come a buy."

HE EXPLAINED Hudson's was renting space to the best and most aggressive competitors for another reason—unless business is good for these competitors as well as Hudson's branch store, the opposition wouldn't be able to pay their rents and the entire project would soon be operating in the red.

Carpenter revealed that rents for first-floor space range from \$5 to \$6.15 per square foot per year.

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