

Our Operation of Michigan's Prisons

As a person, Garrett Heyns, warden of the Ionia Reformatory, is a nice chap. As an expert on the operation of prisons, we don't agree with the reverend ex-preacher on all points.

The other day Mr. Heyns (also known as "Doctor Heyns") publicly declared himself in favor of restoring Michigan's former commission-type of prison management. He argued that under such a pattern there would have been the riot that occurred in the prison near Jackson some weeks ago.

It was under former Gov. Kim Sigler's regime that this old commission-type was discarded and in its place a single commissioner appointed by and responsible to the Governor. Also, instead of the former policy making commission, Sigler agreed to having a commission (which now exists) but only advisory in nature.

THUS, THE MICHIGAN prison system now is responsible directly to the governor in office, and not through a staggered-term form of policy making commission which, in the case of the prisons, exerted but little direct and helpful influence on the prison system.

At that time, prior to the change, Garrett Heyns was in charge of the entire Michigan prison system, and responsible only to the commission whose members had staggered terms—which is to say that not during any one year or governor's single term would a majority of the commission membership change. (This was presumed to "take our prison out of politics.")

But it didn't then, and won't now, if it were restored . . . and Mr. Heyns should know it!

THE TRUTH WAS THAT, when Heyns was director, he had more than he could cope with. He is not an administrator by nature. Rather, he is a kindly disposed sociologist, ministerial type of chap. While he was director, Michigan's prisons were not in very good condition. The caliber of more than one warden was below what it should have been (thanks to a benevolent but highly impractical civil service system).

Indeed, an investigation during Sigler's administration showed that conditions in both Jackson and Marquette prisons were intolerable. A certain amount of graft had been going on in the industry department at Jackson, and at Marquette prisoners were used, it was revealed, to build an official's hunting cabin.

BESIDES, AT THE SOUTHERN prison near Jackson, medical conditions were found far below standard. Numerous other negative situations existed within the prison system.

Heyns obtained little helpful aid from his policy-making commissioners, most of whom were mere political appointees without any real contributions to make, anyway.

In "the old days," the commission operated along the line of "passing the buck." Under the present system, the current governor can be held responsible for what goes on, as he should—by the people who elect him.

IF THE PEOPLE are mad about what happened in the recent riots, they'll take it out on Gov. Williams. Under the for-

mer commission system, a governor would merely "pass the buck" to the commission, the people would accept the situation . . . and prison conditions would not get any better.

Of course, no system is better than the people selected to operate it. However, we do believe with most of the experts in the field of penology and of government, that a straight-line responsibility to the governor's office better serves the public interest, especially when it comes to operating a system of prisons.

'Planned Society'

In language that most people should understand, Ernest R. Breech, executive vice-president of Ford Motor Co., recently addressed members of the Detroit Ad-craft Club. The theme he developed related to the practical inability of a planned economy and a free economy to sleep comfortably together in the same bed.

Mr. Breech, whose business experience has brought him into large contact with the operations of private enterprise, commented on the dangers to the people of the United States of allowing bureaucratic planners in Washington to gain too much control over the nation's business and industrial life.

INSOFAR AS PLANNING itself goes, Mr. Breech stated that planning is back of the economics of both the Russian Polit-buro and the British type of Socialism; and that insofar as personal economic freedom goes, it is not found in either of the two foreign ideologies.

He sees the same ultimate result in the United States unless the people determine to oppose the drift to centralized planning power, now so evident in Washington, D.C.

When we say that the Soviet system has failed, or that British Socialism has come near to destroying the economy of Britain, what we mean is that planning has failed—because it is impossible for controls and the free, independent spirit of humanity to exist together in the same national community. The struggle must always end in the defeat of one or the other," declared Mr. Breech.

TO ANY REASONABLY CLOSE observer of civics and economics, to the operation of civics and economics, to the operations of government and private business, it must be evident that Mr. Breech's theme is based upon truth and facts as gathered over generations of human experiences with all types of controls, in and outside of government.

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ONE THING OR ANOTHER

By George Wm. Averill

Remarks at Random

It should only take 5 to 8 weeks to get 16 Mile road better than Adams and US-10 ready for traffic, once the weather dries out, according to Leon V. Bishop, Oakland county road commission engineer.

"It's been pretty wet lately and the crews haven't been able to get much accomplished. Some drying conditions will permit us to move ahead rapidly," he explained.

Apparently it depends on which side of the fence you want to argue as to whether the 1925-26 city street had to be approved by Mayor 24.

Birmingham city commissioners at their May 12 meeting, finally decided to approve the budget that night because it was discovered that the present charter sets May 24 as the deadline for approving of same.

It was brought out that the new charter amendment, passed at the April 7 city election, doesn't take effect until July 1. That is, the old charter provision governed the adoption date of the next city election.

HOWEVER, SAID commissioners neglected or missed a look at the section of the charter immediately above the one they were discussing.

Section 12 of Ch. VII sets the adoption date, but Sec. 11 declares: "On or before the first day of May each year the city manager shall prepare a proposed annual budget in reasonable detail for the ensuing fiscal year. . . . The manager of such budget and information shall be available for distribution. . . ."

When The Eccentric called this fact to the attention of city officials the middle of April, it was pointed out by them, "Why, no, the new date is the first Monday in May."

THUS IT WAS on May 5, in line with the still-to-be-effective charter amendment or four days after the old charter deadline, that the proposed budget was submitted.

So it appears that the side of the street you are found walking along today depends on which side of the street you prefer today.

When you demand the "civil rights" you think you should have, you have no right to include among them the right to force yourself upon another person.

It's been my observation that when Birmingham citizens want to

accomplish something, the task is as good as done. The only trouble is in trying to get the citizens to make up their minds to do it.

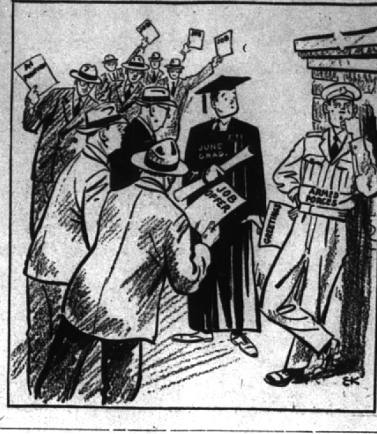
We've often heard that the way to lose weight is to avoid sugar, eat less meat. The problem these days, what with the high food prices, is to find a way to eat enough so we DON'T lose weight.

If someone is smarter than anyone else around him, the world will find it out in due time—there is no need or use in telling people about it.

People's Column

The Remains of the bones between the streets, led citizens will be best advised to be buried in 1949.

Editor's Note to "A HARASS-ED HOMEOWNER": Your letter has been received, but it will not be printed unless you identify yourself to The Eccentric.



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

June 6, 1902

W. I. McClelland is the busiest man in town and doing well. Having sold his mowers, binders, etc., he is now just about ready to start talking par farmers into buying potato diggers.

Master Harry Spicer, son of Wm. Spicer, is suffering from a broken leg, the accident occurring in a very curious way. The lad was sitting in a tree when a horse passed beneath him, kicked up its heels and struck him in the ankle.

We are pleased to report the safe return from California of Wm. Black of Troy. He found all the Michigan people and was treated most cordially by them.

At last a good word can be spoken for English sparrows. They are said to be fond of locusts and will undoubtedly be of help to us should the 17 year variety, reported in Michigan, decide to come to Birmingham.

Our state fair dates have been announced. J. F. Rindel has handed us special invitations to attend this great exposition any time during the days of September 22-26, 1902.

20 YEARS AGO

June 9, 1922

Hundreds of local women have expressed their intention of attending the free, three-day school of cooking which opens here today. Nationally known experts will give instructions in the classes which are being sponsored by The Birmingham Eccentric.

Answering charges in a neighboring community that "blind pigs" exist in Birmingham, Police Chief John Hackett today said he would make a contribution to any charity selected by the informer who would point out one place where a man could go to lay his money on the table and buy a drink.

Ray A. Palmer, John Martz and John Rosso have become candidates for office with the Birmingham board of education. All three denied that they were seeking office or that they had had any

voice in circulating the petitions in their own behalf.

Birmingham's new postmaster will probably be appointed soon according to information received at this office from Congressman S. H. Person yesterday. Person said the appointment was expected to be made and approved within the next week or 10 days.

The removal of 24 dead or diseased trees has been approved by village officials. E. G. Olin, forester, said they constituted a hazard to the public and were providing excellent breeding places for insects which would destroy other trees if not removed.

5 YEARS AGO

June 12, 1947

A tennis club has been formed for Birmingham players, with plans to use the Kingswood courts. The development of the club has been handled by John Shiner, under the auspices of the Birmingham Sideline Quarterback club.

Mrs. L. B. Sappington, Mrs. Peter Loomis and Amos Gregory have been re-elected to the Birmingham board of education. Lee Durham, only other candidate, was unsuccessful. The election polled the largest number of votes recorded here in many years.

Herbert H. Gardner, president of the Birmingham and Ferndale National banks has been named graduation speaker for the Lawrence Institute of Technology ceremonies. Gardner will speak on "You and the Future."

Construction contractors working in Birmingham will no longer get all the water they want for a flat fee of \$2.50. Commissioners approved a ruling that calls for the installation of a city water meter 15 days after the water supply has been made available at a construction site.

Excavations remaining unfilled or uncovered for longer than 90 days can now be classified by the city as public nuisances and may result in the property owner being brought into court on a show cause order. This is a ruling adopted by commissioners Monday night.

HORSE SENSE AND NONSENSE

BY ALICE E. MORGAN

KEEP SWATTING!

Something must be done about the dust on Birmingham's streets! Why don't our residents keep the weeds out in summer and the walks cleaned in winter and why do they throw papers and trash on the street?

When is the police department going to be where the trouble is? How long will it be before there are adequate schools for the number of children there are to attend them?

We wait much longer before Birmingham has a library big enough to hold all the books it should have.

Why isn't something done to make the hill and bridge on Willis safe on the amount of traffic which uses it?

Is Birmingham going to let the bugs kill all its trees and do nothing about it?

Do all these things sound familiar to you? If you listen closely when you attend city commission meetings they do. If you pay attention to John Doe when he sounds off on a street corner or in your favorite restaurant, you have heard them all before.

SURE YOU HAVE—but every one of the foregoing questions were taken from our files of 50 years ago!

Village fathers (we weren't a city, yet) were hearing from every side that Birmingham was growing too fast. The "old timers" didn't like it a bit. They hated to lose the atmosphere which was so dear to their hearts.

They raised Cain with the constable when he was busy on Maple and some inconsiderate person stole a horse over on Franklin. They wailed loudly when the dust cloud floated from beneath a buggy wheel and settled on their

horsehair sofas and mahogany tables. They appreciated the efforts of a few ladies to provide them with good reading and loudly wanted to know why they were not more good books available.

They pointed out that they did not like the idea of their boys and girls going to a school that was too small and had too few teachers.

They felt the bridges crossing the gully at several points were inadequate and every time a couple of bugs locked wheels someone pointed to the village president and spoke his mind.

CITY COMMISSIONERS of today have nothing on the village board of long ago. Apparently, as Birmingham has grown it has clung to a particular set of problems and taken them right along.

Looking back over the years we are somewhat reminded of a night we spent in camp a long time ago. Outside were thousands of mosquitoes. They visited us, one or two at a time, and every time we managed to "remove" one pair a couple more surged into the room to take up the siren song of their predecessors.

Hopes as it seemed at the moment, we kept swatting and finally dawn came, removing the pests from our immediate presence.

Maybe if city officials will just keep swatting away until some day break over this horizon and Birmingham will be rid of its mosquitoes—at least until the next night.

★ Snipe a Minute . . . Members blabbe . . . As the chairman glowers: They keep the minutes But waste the hours.

What Price Broken Bones? If someone falls in your home or on your property, they'll probably check first for broken bones . . . then . . . LOOK FOR SOMEONE TO SUE! Your only-sure protection from this threat is a Comprehensive Personal Liability policy. It costs very little—\$10 a Year. It protects a lot—the whole Family. See us for complete details. HUGH C. WHITE, 217 Pierce St. Birmingham, Mich. Multiple Line Insurance Agency. Telephone Midwest 4-3610.

Messy Chores ELIMINATED with ELECTRIC INCINERATOR or DISPOSER. You pick a winner whichever you choose. Let an electric incinerator take over your messiest household chores. Completely automatic . . . it reduces anything that burns to handfuls of mineral-rich ash (fine plant food). No work—no worry—no watching—even bones. Your neighborhood plumber, electric appliance dealer, or Edison office is eager to tell you about these wonderful conveniences. SEE YOUR DEALER or Detroit Edison.

HELPING YOUNG FOLKS IS A JOB WE LIKE. We're always interested in helping the young folks around here to get along in life. We welcome them and help them every chance we get. They help us, too, by banking here as they grow older and making our bank better able to serve the community. Come to see us whenever we can be helpful to you. THE BIRMINGHAM NATIONAL BANK, BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN. Member Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Member Federal Reserve System.