

City Retirement Costs Increase Later

Several weeks ago Birmingham's Mayor Charles Renfrew, in discussing the proposed addition of federal social security to the existing city employees' retirement plan, said that no added cost would be incurred unless Congress increased the present two per cent of payroll now paid by both employee and employer.

The Mayor overlooked the fact that the federal law, as of 1950, already included in it a formula of progressive tax increase by both parties. When applied at later dates it would increase the city's cost.

THE FEDERAL SCHEDULE presently is two per cent: From 1950 to 1964, inclusive, the rate will be two and a half per cent; from 1965 to 1969, inclusive, three per cent; 1970 to 1974 three and a half per cent; after 1974 four per cent.

While it is true that the Congress, at any time, may increase, decrease or suspend provisions of the law, it is evident that, as time goes on, the rate will be increased within the whim of the Congress then in office.

This proposition of adding federal so-

cial security benefits to the existing local retirement plan will be offered local voters, before it can be made effective.

AT PRESENT, BIRMINGHAM'S annual cost of contribution to its own retirement plan fund is \$68,811. Because it would decrease its percentage of payment to this fund if the federal social security plan is added, the total first year's payment to both funds by the city would be \$68,465, according to figures revealed by city treasurer Russell Berger. This lowered figure also is possible because the police and firemen wages would not be included in the federal plan.

However, as outlined above, if and when the Congress allows the 1950 law to remain operative, the city's costs will increase on the federal level; this increase, added to the stabilized local retirement plan fund cost, will then increase the cost to the taxpayers.

When the plan later is presented for balloting, this newspaper will keep you posted on the then current statistics of the proposition.

"Top Secrecy" Can Stifle Democracy

The problem of keeping information vital to the security of the nation out of reach of unfriendly powers presents a complicated picture. In order to keep an enemy guessing, it is necessary to keep the nation's public guessing, and to keep an enemy ignorant is to keep the country's citizens ignorant also. But this is a democracy in which it has always been said that the people have the right to know. This is a self-ruling nation whose system is based upon an informed majority opinion.

Security, however, has necessitated the censoring of information, the suppressing of certain facts and the enormous categorizing of material into secret, top secret and confidential files. The government is separated by a great body of knowledge from the public.

SOME CRITICS of this relationship feel

that the public is protected at the price of perpetual ignorance and complacency and at the risk of the total loss of democratic powers.

It is unrealistic to assume that the public need be told every detail of defense, that all the abstract and concrete data concerning thermonuclear science be made known, that every diplomatic conference be made public. But the critics have a point. The citizen must be vigilant that the enormous power exerted by officials does not extend beyond security areas. No system of informational spoon-feeding or milk-sopped, easy-to-take news will flood the press as long as the public protests such measures.

Security within reason is what is desired. An unreasonable security occurs when censorship secures a non-reasoning public.

Gerontomatriarchy

Before many years the United States will be well on the way to becoming a gerontomatriarchy. The Population Reference Bureau at Washington, which analyzes population trends, has either discovered or created this word, and says that it describes the present population distribution.

What it means is "rule by elderly women." There is a constant increase in the proportion of persons over sixty-five, and the largest number of people surviving this age are women.

Elderly women already own large amounts of stock and real estate. If the increase remains steady it is possible that eventually the over-sixty-five ladies will own controlling interest in many companies.

The Population Reference Bureau has made no attempt to say whether this is good or bad. Apparently that depends upon your age and whether you're a man or woman. It looks good for the long-livin' ladies. The rest of us better dust off the roses and candy routine and face up to it.

Little (in the) Red School House



HORSE SENSE AND NONSENSE

By ALICE E. MORGAN

One more week and one more year and one more Halloween party. The biggest ever and surely stacking up there right along with the other "best" ones.

Y'know, watching that thing grow, from the first very casual committee meeting where nothing much seems to happen, to the cleaning up of the last crushed cup and bit of dropped hair, is an experience in itself.

People wander into the committee meeting as their jobs will let them, for all are businessmen and women. Some bring up the question of rights, tables, good prizes, and someone in the "audience" says "The dog that pretty well whipped right now."

YOU'D THINK they were preparing to be hosts to maybe half a dozen people for a casual snack after, maybe, watching the fights. No one can possibly guess the hours of planning that have gone into this meeting by the two or three people who have the whole thing at their fingertips. The hundreds who attend there have been already schooled in their jobs by others who have gone before them, and the whole thing actually seems aliphical, to the stranger.

Then comes the big night, and the chaos is terrific. Kids and parents mill around, apparently no one having the vaguest idea where to go nor how to get there.

SCHOOLS stand in groups—it says in the directions—but to the observer they seem to be very small schools—there are so few kids in the groups.

Suddenly the big truck moves slowly from the curb and the first high school band sets the tempo of the parade.

Along the streets proud parents parade, along with hundreds who just plain like to watch pa-

ONE THING OR ANOTHER By George Wm. Averill

What kind of questions do college students ask when they have the chance to interrogate an important business executive?

Robert F. G. Copeland, 516 Hupp Cross road, Bloomfield Village, director of produce advertising and sales promotion for Ford Motor Co., recently found out.

They ranged from the philosophical to the highly practical, he discovered while serving as an "Old Master" earlier this month at Purdue University.

COPELAND SPENT THREE DAYS chatting informally with undergraduates and drawing on his lifetime of experience to provide answers to the hundreds of questions tossed at him at random. "These young people are wonderful!" the Ford executive declared. "Their questions are direct, sincere, and intelligent. They reveal today's college student as a serious, well-informed person. And they're not always the easiest thing in the world to answer, either," chuckled the advertising and sales director.

"The only singular thing I could use in answering their questions... the only thing these youngsters seem to lack, in fact... is experience," Copeland declared.

ASKED WHAT KIND of questions he encountered while visiting the Purdue fraternity and sorority houses and residence halls, Copeland said: "They ranged from the immediate and practical to the theoretical.

"One student asked whether it's better to work for a small company or a huge one like Ford. He wondered whether a man might not "get lost" in a giant corporation. I told him that a big company is made up of many small departments, each very much like a small company, with exactly the same room for advancement.

"And I told him that in a company such as Ford, a young person could try several different types of work before deciding on his career, without ever quitting one job and looking for another.

"Then another student wanted to know if there was really any short cut to success. He seemed pleased rather than disappointed when I said there wasn't any I knew of, and that hard work was the 'high road'.

"ONE OF THE YOUNG LADIES asked me what part a man's wife plays in his success. I told her that my experience showed me that a happily married man was a better worker than any other kind of man, but that no wife could 'make' her husband successful by direct efforts in that direction."

Noting that the questions he encountered went far beyond the vocational, Copeland said that he was asked questions about Communism and the Fifth Amendment, including the provocative query, "Should an avowed Communist be allowed to teach in a college or university?" (His answer: "No. We need to study Communism, but not from their viewpoint.")

Finally, the Ford Motor Co. executive smiled as he remarked that several students were up in arms about a recent magazine article which claimed Ivy League colleges are producing better graduates than any other schools.

"From what I saw at Purdue," the "Old Master" said, "there's little truth in that statement!"

SUMMING UP HIS experience with Purdue's unique Old Masters program, Copeland declared it should be introduced at other colleges and universities.

"After all," he commented, "Purdue has had a 'first' on this for six years. Now the other schools should have a chance."

"The program is an excellent one," Copeland concluded. "It gives students a chance to ask anything they like of the men who are today occupying the seats these same students will occupy tomorrow. It also makes the 'Old Masters' recognize that this upcoming generation is a fine generation, made up of youngsters with sense, sincerity and integrity."

From The Eccentric's Point of View...

Twenty-eight leading American economists recently told U.S. Commerce Secretary Weeks that 1956 will be more prosperous than 1955 thus far has been. That's welcome news to us citizens, of course—even though some philosophers will regret that such continued "good times" will create more millions of people to the "religion of materialism."

Utah's Governor Lee recently announced his refusal to pay his current income taxes on the grounds that the federal government has no right to give some of his taxes away to foreign nations. The Gov-

ernor has thus used his high office as a sort of national "sounding board" to rally supporters of his idea, perhaps later to seek a change in administration policies on this subject. Lee's action is but one phase of a growing criticism in this country against the extravagant use of the income tax law to play the part of both domestic and international Santa Claus.

Time (and we don't mean any magazine) may tell many things, but if you really want it to "get around", tell it to certain women.

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 Nov. 10, 1905

A very pretty home wedding took place on Wednesday at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Frank P. German, two miles west of this village, when their daughter, Winifred, was united in marriage to Dr. John M. Rainey, of this place. Miss German is a very estimable young lady and Dr. Rainey is a successful dentist.

It took the greater part of all last week to formally dedicate the handsome and practical new courthouse by the thousands of delighted spectators. It took all the time of Wednesday and Thursday for exercises by many of the notables of Birmingham were present and enjoyed it.

Last Sunday over 40 friends of Mr. and Mrs. Harf, who live on the Eastside farm, came out from Detroit by trolley and were met by a big platform wagon with seats and Mike Fitzgerald, taken out to the farm and had a fine day's visit. 12 stuffed chickens, 40 doz. eggs and liquid refreshments made a day long to be remembered by the city folks.

30 YEARS AGO November 6, 1925

Bible study will be added to the course of the Royal Oak high school next semester, said Frank Hendry, disclosed yesterday after Stanley Graves of the Highland Park had addressed the Exchange on the desirability of including this in the curriculum.

Miss Mary Isabelle Davis, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Manley D. Davis of Oak Knobs, has asked eight of her friends to be her guests Saturday night at the fancy dress masked ball given by the Bloomfield Hills Country club.

What is believed to be a record for the sale of washing machines in the smaller communities has been established in Birmingham by the Hestermore Electrical Co., which reports the sale of 35 Maytag electric washing machines during the past three months.

15 YEARS AGO November 7, 1940

Funnist night after the election

Advertisement for The Averill Press Inc. of Birmingham, featuring a map of Michigan and text: 'Three Detroit Salesmen... TR 5-2629... Plant MI 6-2000' and 'The AVERILL PRESS INC. of Birmingham. A COMPLETE PRINTING SERVICE—FROM TYPESETTING TO MAILING.'

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Meet Your Michigan

Series of small illustrations and text boxes about Michigan history and industry, including 'WORLD'S LARGEST ROCKET PORTLAND CEMENT MILL', 'THE OLD ROGERS COOKS', 'BATTLE OF THE BIRMINGHAM', and 'MICHIGAN PRATHER TREES'.

Advertisement for an electric clothes dryer, featuring a woman holding a map of Michigan, a thermometer showing 'FAIR', and a cartoon character saying 'Be wise! Live Electrically!'. Text includes 'FORECAST: Fair weather 366 days next year With an ELECTRIC Clothes Dryer' and 'You'll never have to worry about cloudy skies when you dry your clothes electrically...'. Product name 'Electric Dryer' is visible on the dryer unit.