

Thursday, March 22, 1936

How Long Shall We Prop 'Em Up?

A story is told of a man, under the influence of "red eye," who was seated on a stool in a favorite tavern in Texas. Suddenly, he stood up and yelled: "Hey, you guys, I want to say something." Then he shouted to the crowd: "I can lick any guy in this country, outside of the State of Texas."

HE FINALLY CAME TO. The bartender gave him a towel. He wiped the blood from his face and again got to the stool and yelled: "Hey, you guys, I just want to say I took in too much territory!" The story brings to thought the question: Are we taking in too much territory in assuming the obligation to support, by gifts, grants, "loans," planes and arms, countries which seek independence from colonialism? Or to support countries which impose colonialism?

Perhaps It Should Change Its Name

Civil defense, as most people have to admit, has not received much attention in the United States. The present Federal Administrator of the project, Val Peterson of Nebraska, thinks that the name may be the trouble. "Civil defense," he believes, means "bomb shelters to most people."

familiar with disasters such as floods and fires, they would readily adapt themselves to working with a body which would take hold in catastrophes. A bill to alter the name is expected to be introduced to Congress in the present session. That will give all the would-be authors a chance to try out their inventive talent, and see if they have a better title to offer.

Life Today Is Lived Under Tensions

The other day someone suggested that the theme song for those of us caught up in the hectic rush of modern life ought to be "Tension Tonight," sung to the tune of guess which old favorite. Like many another silly suggestion, this one had a grain of sense in it. Many of us are in a state of tension much of the time. We hurry too much and worry too much and in general do ourselves more harm than good. Even a layman can understand that.

Vegetative disharmony. THE THINGS THAT CAUSE this condition, said the neurologists, are excessive speed, a mania for production and consumption, anxiety, harassment by lights and annoyance by noise. In short, they said, civilized man in the 20th century is a victim of too-muchness. Or, as George Weller of the Chicago Daily News Foreign Service put it in his report on the convention, "We human beings must slow down—fast." Those who act on this advice will soon be able to dispense with the theme song mentioned above. Which ought to be inducement enough.

Politicians Must Weigh Their Utterances

Remember Charles E. Wilson's famous remark: "What's good for General Motors is good for America?" How you say a thing is often more important than what you say. If Wilson had said: "What's good for General Motors' employees, customers, share owners and suppliers is good for America," nobody would have found any fault with it. That, of course, is what he meant, but he didn't use the right words. Now Candidate Adlai Stevenson has repeated the Defense Secretary's remark. But again, he doesn't mean what Wilson meant. He said it sarcastically. Stevenson speaks of General Motors as a corporation,

and not as a mighty complex of PEOPLE who work for it, own it, sell to it, and buy from it. PEOPLE ARE ALL THAT count, and we are sorry to see Stevenson using the old trick of making corporations look like the enemies of people. What's good for the automobile industry, steel, soap, railroads, coal, lumber, clothing, farming and all the rest is good for America. It's time to grow up, Adlai, and not waste the bloody shirt against any legitimate business organized as a corporation. Not even during a political campaign.



NATURE NOW Finds Puerto Rico's Land Shortage Acute

EDITOR'S NOTE: Currently visiting in Puerto Rico, Mrs. Frehe is writing a series of special articles concerning "Nature Now" in that area. By LYDIA KING FREHE, Special Writer for The Birmingham Eclectic

SAN JUAN—I write to the tune of a wind-whipped surf. From my window the white hotels, the blue pools, the night clubs with their casinos are set out in the dazzling sunlight. This is the beach-side of San Juan. It was Christopher Columbus who first discovered Puerto Rico on his second voyage in 1493. But it was Ponce de Leon who conquered the island in 1508 and became its first governor. Today twenty million dollars worth of tourist money to Puerto Rico annually to court the sun and the sea, devoting themselves earnestly to the eternal quest for youth.

THEY COME TO an island roughly rectangular in shape 35 miles wide and 100 miles long. It could be set down within the state of Connecticut with a little space left over. Lying between the Atlantic and Caribbean, it is the smallest and most easterly of the Greater Antilles. This group is part of a chain of islands which in a far-distant geologic age made a land bridge connecting the two Americas. Now only the mountain tops of this ancient terrain remain visible above the earth's repeated upheaval and subsidence. A RUGGED MOUNTAIN range which rises to 4,400 feet crosses the island, leaving only the coastal flats and hillsides for agriculture. If you inquire of the fruit vendor he will say as he peels an orange for you, "Too many people-not enough land."

And this is a truth, for since the United States conquered the island from the Spaniards 65 years ago, the population has increased from less than one million to two and a quarter millions. There is less than half an acre of arable land per person, and it is not enough. Consequently, every scrap of land is used. If there is a vacant spot in parts of greater San Juan, it is not unusual to see a pig, a cow, a goat or a few chickens feeding there. AS ONE DRIVES into the country the land is green with sugar cane, pineapples, coffee trees, citrus orchards and coconut groves. There are no woodlands, except in the rugged hills where agriculture would be impossible. Here less than one-fourth of the once extensive forest remains uncut. San Juan, principal seaport and capital of the island, is the site of international airport and the great University of Puerto Rico. With population of 400,000 it is fast becoming a modern industrial city.

IT IS A CITY of sharp contrasts. The new San Juan with its beach hotels, pastel villas, modern homes surrounded with tropical trees and gardens is one side of the picture. In sharp contrast are the shacks in which live the poverty stricken. Many of these are built on piles extending over the water. They stand roof to roof and are made of old crates, pieces of tin and tar paper, or any waste material available. Between these extremes is the old San Juan, a mixture of modern business buildings and old wooden shops, their doors open to the traffic of narrow and crowded streets. THESE LATTER are paved with bricks brought over as ballast in Spanish trading vessels of the 16th century. They are rough, but still serve their purpose. Puerto Rico faces a new era and is pulling itself up by its bootstraps. The big answer is new industry with the thousands of jobs which it creates. And the bait to the American industrialist is exemption from property and income taxes, plus Governor Munoz Martin's plan of assistance in financing plant construction and personnel.

JUST MAILED a post card. It pictures the big white trade-wind clouds floating above the beach in a cobalt sky crossed with a frond of coconut palm. And the stamp I pasted on the opposite side was one commemorating the 250th anniversary of Ben Franklin's birthday. My card will be postmarked "Puerto Rico, U.S.A.," indicating a status which brings its own measure of pride to every citizen of the island.

ONE THING OR ANOTHER By George Wm. Averill

Typical example of bureaucracy: Taxpayer walks into government office, asks: "Where... "Next window, please!" "... can... "Next window, please!" "... I... "Next window, please!" "... cash... "Why, hello, sit right down... "This check?" "... and I'll see if anyone else can help you."

In a few weeks, we'll see in action once again the two great groups of soil tillers—the farmers and the golfers.

Why make a motorist go all the way to the police station to pay an overtime parking violation? Apparently reasoned the city of Lapeer, Mich. So a fine box has been installed in each block. Traffic tickets are in the form of envelopes, in which the motorist places his money and deposits in the nearest fine box. The Lapeer chamber of commerce provided the boxes.

Whenever there's been a mistake in any of my newspaper copy, I've privately thought there must be gremlins in my typewriter. Now I'm certain of it! However, they're not gremlins, but penguins!

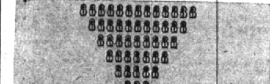
If you see opportunity around every corner, then you may be an optimist. Then, too, you may be nuts.

See for yourself—by putting down an 8, then going back and striking an i over the 8. See what I mean? It can't be done on a linotype machine because it can use only one character per space. So I've had an engraving made of a group of penguins I flushed from cover the other day.

Proponents of water fluoridation feel confident they will win their fight to have dental cavity protecting water delivered into each and every American home. They say water fluoridation today is going through the same stages that water chlorination and milk pasteurization went through before gaining general public acceptance.

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I don't see the three of them grouped at all. Both chlorination and pasteurization render harmless certain bacteria which, if permitted to stay alive and be consumed by humans, could kill. Nothing I've read about fluoridation explains how it makes water purer.



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Best thing for newlyweds to feather their nest with is plenty of cash down—Banking.

Practical Nursing Course Completed By City Residents

Two Birmingham residents have been graduated from the course at the Detroit practical nursing center. They are Mrs. Grace Sechrist, 5715 Middlebelt, and Mrs. Cathryn Ramage, 1578 Humphrey. The one-year course is offered by the Detroit and tri-county league for nursing, a torch drive agency. It includes four months of class instruction and eight months of supervised bedside experience. Enrollments are being taken for the next course, which opens at Northern high school June 25. Interested persons may write to the Detroit and tri-county league for nursing, 51 West Warren, Detroit 1.

Advertisement for The AVERILL PRESS INC. of Birmingham, featuring 'Folders - - - ?' and 'YES... IN BLACK AND WHITE OR 4 COLOR PROCESS'. It lists Detroit salesmen and phone numbers, and describes a complete printing service from typesetting to mailing.

From The Eccentric's Point of View...

City Clerk Irene Hanley reports that almost 12,000 local citizens are registered voters. How many of them do you think will vote at the annual election here April 2? To the person who comes closest to the answer we'll extend his Eccentric subscription two years, free. (Just mail your answer before April 1, to Ye Ed.) Birmingham's city-owned elm trees again this spring will be sprayed against Dutch elm disease. Property owners who possess elms are advised that co-operation with the city on this project will assure better results for all concerned. It is claimed by some that a bachelor is like an upright pillar whose strength and surface too often supports nothing.

On the other hand, there are those who argue that for every bachelor there is at least one happily unmarried female. One big trouble about borrowing trouble is that nobody hangs around with an offer to accept it from you. If you really "want a place in the sun", you'll have to decide to get up from the soft seat beneath the shade tree. Direct sunshine rays don't make 180 degree turns. According to a recent news story in this journal, Birmingham's Al Sundell surely leads a dog's life... and how can he help it, when you recall that he is our local dog warden.

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 March 23, 1906 "On Saturday evening, March 24, there will be a cap social at the U. P. church. Each lady is requested to bring two caps alike. Refreshments, ice cream and cake will be served. A good time is promised." "The St. Patrick Day's supper at the River Lawn farm of Mr. Quorton last Friday night was a success in every way, socially, financially, numerically and culinarily. There, can you beat it? The ladies passed over \$20 and had food left over, almost enough for another blowout on St. Patrick's Day."

15 YEARS AGO March 20, 1941 At Saturday's Republican caucus in Bloomfield township, Supervisor Perry Vaughan was nominated for his 11th term. "Another veteran, David Anderson, treasurer, was nominated for his 10th term." "Outlook for a good water supply is very favorable," reported Birmingham Village Manager Harry Starr. The city is bringing in a new water well on Lincoln avenue, and erecting a 300,000 gallon water tank. "Birmingham should have all the water it wants this summer, for any and all purposes," Starr added.

30 YEARS AGO March 19, 1928 Without opposition, Morris A. Wattles was renominated to succeed himself as Republican super-

Large advertisement for electric ranges featuring a large illustration of a range and the text: 'For the price of a pound of salt you can cook three complete meals for a family of four on your electric range. And, remember, only an electric range is "white-glove" clean. Two good reasons why smart homemakers say: "You can Live Better... Electrically!"' It also includes the slogan 'SEE YOUR DEALER OR DETROIT EDISON.'

Advertisement for 'The Birmingham Eccentric' by George Wm. Averill. It includes contact information for the publisher, a cartoon illustration of a man and a woman, and a caption: 'How do you like my den? All my life I've wanted a room full of money. It's only stage money but it does give a feeling of security!' The ad also lists the magazine's address in Detroit, Michigan, and its circulation statistics.