

## Indiana Daily Times

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## The Public and the Commission

The act of 1913, creating the public service commission, says:

Sec. 8. The commission shall value all the property of every public utility actually used and useful for the convenience of the public. • • •

Sec. 11. The commission shall, within five days after such valuation is determined, serve a statement thereof upon the public utility interested, and shall file a like statement with the clerk of every municipality in which any part of the plant or equipment of such public utility is located.

Sec. 61. Whenever the commission shall believe that any rate or charge may be unreasonable or unjustly discriminatory or that any service is inadequate, or cannot be obtained or that an investigation of any matters relating to any public utility should for any reason be made, it may on its own motion summarily investigate the same with or without notice.

The foregoing are the three sections of the public utility law of Indiana which have not been enforced and the non-enforcement of which was primarily responsible for the remarkable demonstration of hostility to the commission that took place in Indianapolis today.

Although the commission has been in existence for approximately nine years it has not now and never has had any systematic program for the accomplishment of its purpose—the valuation of "all the property of every public utility."

Nor has it filed with the clerks of the various municipalities such statements of value as would tend to enlighten the public as to the justness of the rates fixed for utility service.

Nor has it taken up "on its own motion" any question of "unreasonable or unjustly discriminatory" charges or inadequate service.

In other words, the public service commission has for years ignored the mandatory provisions of the law that created it and has also ignored the one optional provision that would tend to make it popular with the people to whom it is responsible.

It is not strange that the citizens of Indianapolis should be stirred to indignant protest against it on the suggestion of a popular leader. It is not strange that wherever one goes in Indiana one may hear the public service condemned, whether that condemnation is just or unjust.

Throughout a period of more than five years rate making in Indiana has been based almost exclusively on the "tentative valuations" established without real hearings by the commission. In each of these orders the commission has endeavored to protect itself by asserting that these "valuations" were not to be taken as the true values of the property used and useful in serving the public.

The commission itself has created a distrust of these valuations by its own words. The public cannot be condemned for refusing to accept as "true values" the figures that the commission itself advances only as "tentative."

Utility rates in Indiana are, with few exceptions, based on these "tentative valuations." The public does not know whether these rates are just or unjust. The commission declines to say whether the basis of its rate making is correct or incorrect.

And the public has grown exceedingly tired of waiting for the "true valuations" that never are produced to show whether the rates they are called upon to pay continuously are just or unjust.

In a statement issued in its own defense, the public service commission says:

"The Legislature of Indiana, acting for the people of the State, passed a law in 1913 which requires the public service commission to grant utility rates which will pay reasonable operating expenses, taxes, provide for depreciation and permit a reasonable return on the fair value of the property. Every member of the commission has taken a solemn oath to 'carry out this law. No one will contend that the law is wrong or that the commission has knowingly or willfully violated it."

The last sentence of this statement disclosed how far from contact with public sentiment the commission has strayed. Willingly or unwillingly, the commission as now constituted and as it has been constituted for years has "knowingly" violated the law that created it by its failure to obey the mandate of Section 9.

And the result of this failure is that hundreds of thousands of citizens are today contending that "the law is wrong."

Unjustifiable, injurious, foolish and ill advised as was the Shank demonstration today, it will not be without its benefits if, through it, the public service commission is brought face to face with public sentiment and forced to carry out the mandates of the law that created it.

## For Fame and Fortune

From the record of fatal attempts at feats with Niagara Falls, one can scarcely imagine that any one would again think of trying a new performance defying the power of these great waters. Yet we have the promise that in June Mile, Eleanor, 17-year-old tight rope walker of Europe, will attempt to cross the falls on a rope—the act which Blondie accomplished fifty years ago.

It is true that she wears a safety device, so that if her foot should slip she would not be swallowed by the raging waters, but we know that it would not be a pleasant experience to fall, even though she would be able to pull herself back on the rope again.

It can hardly be believed that she has ever seen this great mass of plunging water, and doubtless the first sight of it will create some fear which will have to be mastered before she will be able to attempt the performance.

Not so long ago another young girl thought that the successful accomplishment of some dangerous deed connected with Niagara Falls would bring her fame and possibly fortune, and she, like many before her, decided to make the trip over the falls in a barrel—not the ordinary kind of barrel, but a cask in which she could be fastened with straps so that she would not be dashed against the sides of her container.

Not a vestige of fear did she have, she said, until after she fell the first movements of the waters as she started on her terrible journey. Her natural inclination was to grasp something to secure herself, but the fact that she was securely bound gave her no chance to satisfy this desire.

When the anxious crowd at the foot of the falls caught the barrel and breathlessly open it, they found not the pretty young girl who had such a short time before entered jubilantly into the barrel, but one who had the appearance of an elderly woman—gray haired and with skin drawn taut from the tension on her nerves.

What had she gained from her adventure? In a few hours she had lost her youthful beauty and health for the fame and fortune which did not come.

This was much more dangerous, however, than walking over on a tight rope, but great courage is required for either and if this youthful maid of the "aerial realm" does not possess so-called nerves of iron, we would suggest that she consider well before she attempts this dangerous achievement.

## Why Wobble?

Those patriots who are now endeavoring to upset the work of the committee that planned the rerouting of street cars because the proposed Riverside route is approximately two blocks longer than the present one, have overlooked one of the most important advantages of the committee's recommendations.

In planning to route Riverside cars east in Washington street to Meridian, the committee offered an arrangement that made possible a direct transfer from the East Washington street lines at Meridian street, which was much sought by patrons from both the east and west.

If the board of works, which already has gone on record as favoring the proposed route, now weakens and orders the Riverside cars operated in Indiana avenue, it will destroy this transfer point and contribute very largely to an unbalanced operation of cars which the committee worked long hours to obtain.

Mr. Freeman of the board of works participated in this rerouting effort and is familiar with its advantages. Dr. Spencer and Mr. Coffin of the board could do no better than to accept his judgment in determining this point.

## PALS YOU WILL BE A MAKIN' OF SPOOFY AND JIMMY

Beban Keeps His Promise—Betty Is Serious—New Barrymore Movie on View

"Ghosts" sometimes turn out to be mighty good pals.

You can't agree with me? I probably should have stated that the ghosts must be live ghosts.

Ask me whether you believe it or not, I, myself, and a whole lot of others, who could crowd into the Alhambra yesterday afternoon, made pals of Spoofy, Jimmy Gubbins and a chap by the name of Foster.

Jimmy, Foster, and Spoofy were all "Buddies" over there—meaning what the makers of history term "The World War."

The three pals know each other before the war was made 'em buddies. They were captured—thrown in a German prison camp.

The British war office reported them "dead."

The three pals returned to London together. Jimmy Gubbins lived in the Limehouse neighborhood. His mother drank gin in the public house on money she obtained from his insurance.

While Mrs. Gubbins was talkin' to the spirits with the table and the gin she had drunk as "medicines," Jimmy and his three pals pounded on her front door just as she was asking the spirits if Jimmy got his beer regularly "over there."

Three knocks are heard on the door. "Three knocks?" Mrs. Gubbins stutters. "That means he is gettin' his beer."

And so walks Jimmy.

Mrs. Gubbins at first thinks Jimmy is a ghost.

It must be remembered that Mrs. Gubbins was "delighted" to have her boy back, but she tells him that he must be dead officially" because there is just one more installment due on his insurance.

It is not going to tell you the remainder of this charming story as we went into detail when the stage version was the Murat last fall. The movie version was made by the London company of Famous Players-Lasky Corporation.

## Ye TOWNE GOSSIP

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By K. C. B.

TWENTY YEARS ago.

NEXT DOOR to me.

LIVED A little boy.

WHOM I used to meet.

MOST EVERY day.

ON MY way from work.

AND WE were friends.

AND HE'D take my hand.

AND TODDLE along.

TO WHERE I lived.

JUST A few doors off.

AND WE'D say good-by.

AND HE'D oddle back.

TO HIS own front yard.

AND I knew that boy.

THROUGH EVERY year.

FOR FIFTEEN years.

AND I'LL say for him.

I NEVER knew.

A NICER boy.

OR MORE thoughtful boy.

AND ANYWAY.

I MOVED away.

FROM WHERE he lived.

AND THEN one day.

WHILE THE war was on.

HE CAME to us.

IN HIS soldier clothes.

FOR A home cooked meal.

AND A good hot bath.

AND WHEN he left.

I THINN I felt.

JUST A little bit.

AS HIS father felt.

WHEN THEY said good-by.

TILL THE war was done.

AND THE war is done.

FOR YOU and me.

BUT NOT for him.

FOR JUST today.

HE CAME again.

AND SEARCHED us out.

AND HE'S going away.

UP INTO the hills.

JUST A little bit.

OR WHAT he was.

AND WITH the hope.

HE MAY come back.

WITH HIS strength regained.

AND AN hour ago.

AS I write this.

WHEN HE went away.

AND LEFT me here.

HE SEEMED to toddle.

ON HIS weakened legs.

AS HE used to toddle.

IN HIS childish way.

WHEN I knew him first.

I THANK you.

George Fitzmaurice directed it and he has done a most human job of it.

Cyril Chadwick, who created the "Spoofy" role in the stage version, is the "Spoofy" in the movie. Here he is as fine a bit of comedy work to be seen on the screen. Clara Groom is Mrs. Gubbins, the gin-soaked mother, and her work will stand out when the year is over as one of the natural, real and honest-to-goodness characterizations of the year. Her facial expression when she attempts to telephone Scotland Yard and manipulate a glass of gin at the same time, is a work of art. Remember that art is always a beautiful thing. Others in the cast are Anna Q. Nilsson, Norman Kerry, Annette Benson, Dorothy Faust and others.

There are many laughs in "The Live Ghosts," some pathos, much action and above all, it is a real story.

Don't miss "Three Live Ghosts" at the Alhambra this week.—W. D. H.

BARRYMORE IS A GUNMAN AT OHIO THIS WEEK.

Lionel Barrymore will be an Artagnon in "Boomerang Bill" at the Ohio this week if he were not a gunman from South Clark street, Chicago. He was called "Boomerang Bill" because he always bounces back when he was hit.

Boomerang Bill received his introduction to the Bowery on his arrival in Chicago, where things had been made unpleasant for him, when he beat up a young tough who had been "gettin' frisky" with a girl at a dance. The affair had the usual results and Bill finds himself engaged to the girl.

It appears that Lionel Barrymore, great happiness will be theirs and that they will begin the happy everafter life, but a cloud appears on the horizon. The mother of the girl is ill and the girl insists she must go to the country. Bill's heart is touched, but he has no money. Bill never had a job in his life.

His cavalier instincts come to the front

IT IS NOT NEW BUT SURE-FIRE.

The plot of "The Law and the Woman," at Loew's State this week, has been seen scores of times both in the movies and on the stage, but it is sure-fire. The plot is taken over from a stage play by Clyde Phillips.

A man with a past marries an innocent woman, the latter part being played by Betty Compson. Then the woman whose past he has shared comes into their lives as the wife of a ward of the husband. The husband attempts to explain to his ward the character of the woman's wife. A quarrel follows and the young man is later found dead. The husband is accused of murdering him.

Then comes the long legal fight, the sentence to death, the refusal of the Governor to grant clemency and the approaching hour of execution. More than a year passes and the wife becomes a mother, always proving true to her husband.

All hope seems to be lost when the wife decides to make a desperate attempt to save her husband. She bleaches her hair, calms her face and goes to the man who was slain. Through the efforts of effort she gains the woman's confidence and attempts to wring from her the story of how the young husband died, all the time, of course, keeping her identity a secret. This proves more difficult than was anticipated, but finally she is successful.

Meanwhile the husband, waiting in the death cell, hears of the wife's arrival and lives in misery as a result.

The climax comes when the prisoner is freed as he is being escorted to the chair.

The picture is tensely dramatic, and, although the last minute pardon scene is a bit of a letdown, the acting of Betty Compson in a difficult role is good, but equally good is the acting of William T. Carlton, the husband. For

asks for a red rose, the detective mistakes him for a member of the gang.

After the detective arrives at the door and waits for the kidnapper, the officer calls headquarters for final instructions.

Then the transition from a movie play to that of a spoken drama takes place. The screen disappears and in its place is a stage setting of the flower shop just as we had seen it on the screen. The detective is just hanging up the receiver of the telephone when the kidnapper comes in.

Meanwhile the husband, waiting in the death cell, hears of the wife's arrival and lives in misery as a result.

The wife, as we have seen, is a spoken drama.

Mr. Beban is a sincere actor. He doesn't do things half way. He has brought with him the members of the company who appear in the movie in the same roles as they did in the spoken drama.

Mr. Beban is a boy of great emotional appeal. He knows how to play upon the heart. If you have tears to cry over when Mr. Beban tells of the tragic death of his little girl.

Supporting Mr. Beban in person are Helen Sullivan, Charles H. Elder, Dorothy Girell, Gene Cameron, Jeanne Carpenter and Louise Callanett.

As a picture, "The Sign of the Rose" is worthy of the services of Mr. Beban. It is full of stuff that reaches the heart. It is a clean picture—one to which any father can take his children without concern.

At the close of the scene in which Mr. Beban and his company appear in person the company was given a tremendous ovation.

The picture is a success.

The British desire continental composure and stability, even though it involves a powerful and prosperous Germany. British taxes are the most burdensome in all Europe. One reason for the slackening of trade is the near elimination of her German markets. A glance at the export figures before the war and now will tell the story. These markets never were before 191