



## The Indianapolis Times

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"Give Light and the People Will Find Their Own Way."

**Railroad Mergers**  
Consolidation of the eastern railroads of the country, if properly safeguarded, is highly desirable from the point of view of the roads themselves and of the public. It would tend to stabilize the major transportation industry when new and competing industries, such as the bus business, are developing. It would reduce costs, especially in accounting departments.

Whether the specific four-system merger plan now put forward by the roads meets the requirements of the public interest is a very technical question which obviously can be answered only by experts. Especially the experts of the interstate commerce commission.

President Hoover is to be congratulated on his efforts to break the deadlock of a decade, and to get action on the general principle of consolidation to which congress and the country have been committed so long. But it is most unfortunate and unnecessary that the President should have gone outside his province to approve in advance the four-system plan of the railroad executives.

It is one thing for the President in the public interest to press for action. It is quite another and unusual procedure for the President to take upon himself the technical and political responsibility of accepting any specific merger system before it has been studied by the proper federal authority.

The responsible federal authority in this instance is, of course, the interstate commerce commission, and ultimately congress.

After long study the commission proposed a five-system merger for the east—as part of its national twenty-one-system plan—largely because the roads themselves had not been able to agree at that time on an acceptable four-system plan. The roads would not accept the commission plan. Now they propose a substitute.

It is to be assumed that the commission will give the new plan, when submitted to it, sympathetic consideration. That should not mean, however, that the President's advance approval of the plan will influence the commission to vacate its own critical judgment.

Before approving the plan, the commission must make certain that the merger system outlined by the railroads will not sacrifice legitimate interests of shippers, labor and the public.

Pending study and decision by the commission and other nonpartisan experts, the public will do well to keep a hopeful but open mind as to the merits of this particular proposal.

### The Reasons Are Obvious

(By William Allen White in the Emporia Gazette.)

The reasons for the Norris fight are too obvious. A few of the most discreditable are conspicuous.

Among others these: The fact that Senator Norris is chairman of the judiciary committee of the United States senate as a Republican makes it difficult and sometimes impossible for the great corrupt influences in our politics to get eminent reactionaries named as federal judges endorsed by the committee on judiciary.

The chairmanship of the judiciary committee commands the bridge-head to much legislation and Norris' ears on guard. To discredit him politically might cost him his chairmanship.

Another reason: The big fight in American politics today is for the control of public utilities in cities. Fifty-two per cent of the American people now are living in cities and the control through regulation or ownership of light, power, heat, transportation, and communication in cities is a major problem.

The ownership of corporations controlling light, power, heat, and communication in cities is drifting into a few hands. Those owners stand today where the owners of the railroads stood twenty-five years ago. In politics this utility ownership is known as giant power. Giant power is after Norris. He is the outstanding fighter in the United States senate, demanding the regulation of giant power.

He is one of half a dozen of the great American senators. To discredit him is a major point of strategy in the fight of giant power to retain its overlordship in American politics.

### A Big Detail

Again George Norris stands firm against surrender on what to some may seem a detail, but what now is, in fact, the chief question in settlement of Muscle Shoals legislation.

Having agreed to government operation of the power facilities at Muscle Shoals, house Republicans are saying "that's what Norris wanted—well, we've given it to him."

Norris knows it is not a detail.

If Muscle Shoals is operated by the government, and the electric energy is delivered to a switchboard, not a kilowatt will leave there to work for the people who have paid for this great power plant if their government does not build transmission lines. Instead, the power companies would get this hydroelectric energy.

There's been enough confusion about Muscle Shoals, and in this confusion many have wandered astray.

But not Norris. He knows probably better than anyone else in congress, what must be done to keep Muscle Shoals for the people who paid for it.

And he knows that building transmission lines, instead of being a detail that can be cared for by some subsequent congress, is the crux of the issue now.

He knows that if these transmission lines are not called for in the very bill which disposes of the power plant that its benefits will accrue only to the power people.

### A Chronic Disease

We are a lawless people, the American Bar Association's committee on lawless enforcement of law reports, and "our lawlessness is not an acute, but a chronic disease . . . an old ulcer of which no doctor can say when, if ever, it will be healed."

The Mooney-Billings case stands like a grim gallows against the horizon, evidence that this is true. For only a lawless people keep men in jail without proof that they have committed a crime.

Sixteen years we have been demonstrating, with Mooney and Billings as the victims, that we feel no real concern for the laws we have written guaranteeing the individual his liberty until proof of his guilt is established.

For sixteen years we have been saying "they should be in jail anyway, because they probably are bad men," or listening indifferently while others said it, and these are the words of lawless men.

Unfortunately, this is not the only evidence against us.

The committee reports that officers round up hundreds of men, look them over, question them, turn them loose or hold some of them for minor offenses not connected with the ostensible purpose of the raid. This is a violation of law.

They pick up men who "look suspicious," they

search dwellings without a warrant; they ignore the law that a prisoner must be brought before a magistrate promptly, holding him for months, sometimes without placing charges against him, sometimes holding him incommunicado; they administer the third degree in a way that sometimes amounts to torture; they use confessions thus obtained as evidence against prisoners.

The Bar Association committee does not attempt to say how generally these practices prevail, but it points out that they are to be found in every state and that they occur in hundreds of cases that never reach public attention.

Neither the American Bar Association nor any other private agency has adequate facilities for probing to the depths of this national scandal. Therefore the President, in naming the national commission on law observance and enforcement, provided that one of its tasks was to investigate the lawlessness of law officers.

On the courage and thoroughness of the Wickerham commission in reporting on the Mooney-Billings case and other legal lawlessness—no less than on probition—the commission will be judged.

### Organized Charity

Practically every one of us who can help is giving thought in these unhappy times to the unemployed. Quick to respond sympathetically to human suffering, great-hearted men and women make some contribution to one fund or another, in the hope that it will help relieve distress. But much of our effort is in a blind, blundering way; and the keenest suffering is done by those who are never reached by organized charity.

Something from the forgotten pigeonholes of boyhood comes back—something which sticks in the mind and hangs on. It was a song. The tune lent itself to the thought:

"Too proud to beg, too honest to steal,  
I know what it is to be wanting a meal.  
My tatters and rags I try to conceal;  
I'm one of the shabby gentel."

Few of us know of the many families suffering during this period of unemployment who fit into that picture. We don't hear of many who have worked always for their living, who have lived comfortably, but who in present circumstances would starve before they would appeal to any of the many, many charitable organizations.

The memory pushes forward that couple from John Boyle O'Reilly's "In Bohemia":

"Organized charity, scimped and iced.  
In the name of a cautious, statistical Christ."

Charity isn't justice, of course. It busies itself much of the time with the professional poor, with those who don't want to earn their living and who won't work for it if work can possibly be avoided. It often fails to find those victims of unorganized employment who are too proud to beg and too honest to steal.

And many who contribute to organized charity and turn their job of responsibility to society over to hired professional charity workers save a drowsy conscience by giving money.

But organized charity isn't organized. If it were organized, justice would find a way of seeking out that vast army of good citizens who are out of jobs and too proud to beg and too honest to steal.

We won't be organized until we provide in some way that those who don't want charity, but do want to work and earn their living, shall have work and be insured against want.

Wise bankers know that character is good collateral; although material security for loans is demanded with it. If some way could be found to lend money on character alone, the worthy class of unemployed could be tided over hard times with loans—all to be paid back when work is obtained.

Rolling funds for such purpose could be used over and over again; for there would be little loss from people of character who are too proud to beg and too honest to steal.

Judging from the cut of some of the evening gowns seen lately, fashion designers also stand to benefit by the bare market.

An 80-year-old Iowa farmer is reported to be cutting a tooth. "Well, by gum!" as he must have exclaimed.

Schoolboys in a Missouri town were found playing marbles with gold nuggets, says a news item. There's a wealth of enjoyment in a game like that.

Having disagreed with Norris that the government should build transmission lines, the enemies of government operation have argued "that's a detail."

Norris knows it is not a detail.

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## M. E. Tracy SAYS:

In Every Age Men Have Imagined Themselves as Traveling a Road Which Led to the End of Things.

**S**AN ANTONIO, Tex., Jan. 2.—The year moves forward another key on the typewriter, since that is one way of keeping the record straight. What a thrill it will be for those scribes who are privileged to write the year "2000," if any ever are.

Please don't dismiss the latter phrase as utterly absurd, without taking a moment to think it over. Seemingly small events have moved men to start a new computation of time. In Greece, it was an athletic meet; in Rome, the laying out of a new "own site, and in Islam, the flight of a preacher.

If some one had told the Caesars that an unimportant trial and execution at Jerusalem marked the end of their era, that some one would have run a very good risk of being crucified himself.

### Commit Same Folly

**I**t is possible to make a pretty fair guess of what men will do within narrow limits, but when it comes to the main drift of events, we are as much in the dark as were our most ignorant and superstitious progenitors. Who saw the World war coming, or if a few did, who visualized Bolshevism, Mussolini and the present depression as its inescapable results? The year "2000"—we not only take it for granted, but as fixed beyond recall, in which respect we are no different, no wiser, and no siller than every generation that has preceded us.

In every age, men have imagined themselves traveling a road which led to the end of things. Looking backward, we find it easy to laugh; looking ahead we commit the same folly.

### Still Off Balance

**O**NE would like to think that we had learned to govern by logic when it came to such an important matter as starting the parade of years, and, chiefly, because it would permit one to assume that logic played a bigger part in smaller affairs.

To contemplate the curious episodes which have inspired humanity to rip up all the milestones and start over again is to doubt whether humanity ever moves in a big way on purely rational grounds.

What men wish for and what they glorify as promising to satisfy it appears always to have been the driving force behind that strange compound which we describe as progress.

Has anything occurred to prove that we have developed and will obey a different or better driving force? Such contraptions as the auto, airplane, and motion picture machine say "yes," but such fantastic exhibitions of mob psychology as lynching in the south, or a gambling craze like that which swept the whole country off its feet last year, say "no."

We have grown wonderfully scientific in spots, or by seasons. But beyond that we remain largely the creatures of desire.

### Man Remains Mystery

**W**HAT we want and the way we think we can get it still dominates our creeds, philosophies and laws.

That being so, why don't we pay more attention to the study of desire, its causes and consequences? Where does desire originate, especially the kind that develops into mob psychology, destroying empires, sweeping aside civilizations, and producing new epochs in human history?

Why were our grandfathers so sure that climbing the "golden stairs" in heaven would compensate for "all the ills that flesh is heir to," while we have come to believe in elevators on earth? What switched the crowd from Sunday school to Sunday excursions to Sunday school long before?

What reconciles 150,000,000 Russians to the idea of going hungry to produce a surplus of what that they are abroad under the market price? What causes us Americans—the elect of an expert advertising machine to stop suddenly in our tracks and wonder where we are headed?

What inspires us to think so largely of roads when it comes to relieving unemployment, or of bonds when it comes to raising money? The mighty smoke screen we have raised with our arithmetic, book-keeping and statistics has served no purpose more definitely than to obscure some of the facts. Man himself still remains the great mystery.

There's a good deal in what Bernard Shaw says. He observed last week that Americans liked to be ridiculed.

The logic of this mental attitude runs all the way through many Americans who regard Europe as a step this side of paradise, and their own land as a scrambled egg.

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A lot of them go to Europe to get a certain thing called "background."

It irreverently is called scenery or furniture.

Every fellow who wanted to knock 'em cold in a business or professional way used to go to Europe even if he could stay only between boats.

Doctors, piano tuners, artists, statesmen and particularly the social lions and lionesses used to regard their books as utterly destitute of bait unless they had a wrinkled sheepskin or a social recognition from "over there."

**B**UT while the social bugs still go across, the professional people have cut it out.

They know there's nothing over there for them that you can't get here.

But the lure of distance will remain with us so long as America remains, for that seems to be human nature.

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There are two layers in human skin?

There is an outer layer, called the epidermis, which is constantly being shed in the form of powder or scales, and an inner layer, called the dermis, having a dense and fibrous texture.

How many watts do stations XEX, Mexico City and CMCB, Havana, Cuba, use, and on what frequency do they broadcast?

Station XEX, uses 500 watts power and CMCB, Havana, Cuba, uses 150 Watts power, and both broadcast on a frequency of 950 kilocycles.

This is why he wanted a great national university.

He dreaded the possible inoculation of the young with European notions.

He wanted the future leaders of his country to have a sense of nationalism; he wanted them to be free from anything approaching a divided allegiance.

## They're Off!

