



# The Indianapolis Times

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

## The Highway Tragedy

That a committee carefully selected for that very purpose has given an alibi to the state highway commission does not erase the real facts of inefficiency or worse.

That department takes twenty millions of dollars of the money of the people. It is presumed to build roads. It has built friendship of a dubious nature and political fences for the obscure and the selfish.

A minority of the senate investigators called attention to the fact that the commission has failed in the real reason for its existence, which is to collect federal aid, and because of that fact the state has lost the use of many millions of federal dollars to which Indiana is entitled.

The conduct of the commission has been as scandalous as the administration of its present director has been stupid.

The grip of Murden, looked upon as the craftiest of the members, on the Governor has long been recognized. The fact that Murden came from the Jackson administration placed him, naturally, under suspicion. His conduct invited more.

It required the fine legal mind of the attorney-general to discriminate between the sale of asphalt or cement by a member and the sale of trucks and automobiles to relieve him of legal proceedings. The distinction may be legal. It is immoral.

Two years ago he lobbied for the automobile, which he was successful in getting for the use of the Governor and was then so callous as to remind that official of his obligation.

The department takes more money than all other departments of government. But its results are far from satisfying.

The senate will do less than its duty if it fails to wipe out this commission and place in it stead a board whose members gave all their time to the important job of spending twenty millions of dollars. The Governor needs the advice of the senate in approving such nominees. Left alone, his judgment seems to have been bad. And for the people it is too bad.

## The Progressive Conference

In the lame duck session of congress now ending, the only group with a definite program has been the progressives.

They have fought for direct unemployment relief, for sundry measures to control and limit future unemployment, for constructive farm legislation, for tariff reform, for Muscle Shoals and federal regulation of interstate electric power, and for a long list of measures such as abolition of anti-labor injunctions and lame duck sessions of congress—to restore constitutional civil liberties and representative government.

Most of the progressive programs has failed of enactment. That was to be expected. The group is a small minority. The session was under dictatorial control of the administration, with the aid of a conservative Democratic leadership. This control was made easier because it was a lame duck session.

Now the progressives have called a round-table conference in Washington next week. The purpose is to go over their legislative program, to extend and perfect it for use in the next congress, elected last November in the anti-administration landslide.

In calling this working conference, Senator Norris and his progressive colleagues of both parties demonstrate two things: First, they recognize that the economic depression and suffering has revealed the lack of leadership of the Republican and Democratic bosses to many voters—as witness the November election.

Second, these progressive senators recognize that while theirs was the only constructive program before congress, it was inadequate. Therefore, they now propose to take counsel with progressive Governors and mayors, and with economic and government experts, to work out a better practical program for enactment by the next congress.

The wisdom of Senator Norris and his colleagues is indicated by their determination that this round-table shall be wholly nonpartisan and unrelated to any third party ideas. Instead of thinking about the election of November, 1932, they are planning for the opening of congress in December, 1931.

They feel properly that the immediate practical problem is so great that it should receive the undivided attention now of all persons in positions of political responsibility.

With the effort of the progressive group—and of any other group, official or otherwise—to rally the best thought and courage of the country to cope with our serious economic and political problems, this newspaper is in fullest sympathy.

To our mind the most discouraging aspect of the depression has been the failure of representative groups of political officials, or of business leaders, or of both, to formulate a constructive program to stabilize and equalize prosperity in the future.

The need is not for some Utopian design. But certainly if we are an intelligent people, we will come out of this depression with enough experience and foresight to prevent its return.

To that end, we heartily welcome the nonpartisan progressive conference on a practical reform program for the next congress.

## The Real Culprit

Now that murder may have been added to the long list of crimes committed in the name of sex purity in New York City, it is particularly desirable to get to the bottom of the whole issue involved in vice cases. Who or what is the real culprit?

In an article in The Nation, Miss Isabel Paterson logically and courageously insists that the real blame rests, not upon savage or corrupt magistrates, venal policemen, or infamous stool-pigeons, but upon the law under which they operate.

"With all the indignation that has been expressed over the convictions by paid perjury and framed evidence, of girls charged with soliciting on the streets of New York, the protests significantly and rather sickeningly have avoided touching the real issue."

"Nobody has cared or dared to face the fact that the law under which such convictions were obtained—and the New York law is typical of most American state laws on the subject—is a source of corruption."

# THE INDIANAPOLIS TIMES

## M. E. Tracy SAYS:

Arthur Henderson, Who Helped Put Over the Franco-Italian Navy Pact, Buks Large in Europe's Horizon.

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla., March 3—Thanks to the kindly offices of Arthur Henderson, British foreign secretary, France and Italy have reached a naval agreement. That's not only big news, but good news.

Whatever else may be said of such agreement, it shows that the two countries concerned were not too sore at each other to get together. A good many people had come to suspect that it might be otherwise with France and Italy. No prophet of impending conflict has enumerated the signs and possibility without giving the Franco-Italian wrangle first place.

The failure of these two countries to reach a naval agreement has been taken as a grave indication of their animosity. Now that they have been brought together, we can forget that particular source of apprehension.

## He's Real Uncle

ARTHUR HENDERSON, who performed this feat, is bulking large on Europe's political horizon. By common report he is due to inherit Ramsay MacDonald's job as leader of the labor party and perhaps as premier of England when the latter steps or is pushed aside.

They call him Uncle Arthur over there, and means everything the expression is supposed to imply. He not only has grown up with the labor party, but entered it in overall, a real honest to God working man, who climbed all the way up without losing his simple faith, the kind with whom some disagree, but none distrusts.

Ten years ago, a great English merchant asked, "Why do the laborites have all the brains?" He would have come nearer hitting the mark had he asked "Why do they have all the character?"

We Prefer Wisecracker

CHARACTER still counts in politics if people only would give it a chance, but we aren't sold on the idea in this country. What we prefer is the smart man, the wisecracker, the one who responds to our passing emotions.

That's why we get so many and have to run them out, or put them in jail afterward. It isn't what a man believes with regard to this or that particular question that tells the story, but what he believes with regard to conduct in general to his duty as a citizen or public official.

We have kidded ourselves with the old catch phrase that "this is a government of law, not men," as though such things were possible. We have piled up law until we don't know what to do with it, but the government isn't getting any better because of the accumulation.

If we paid more attention to men, especially to men of character, we'd find a way out.

## Peace News

Pending publication of the new Franco-Italian naval agreement negotiated by Great Britain, all that the state department and the American public can do is to join in the general hope that the agreement is as satisfactory as advertised.

Washington apparently is somewhat nervous over semi-official reports regarding some of the details such as reduction in size of capital ships.

Probably this apprehension is unnecessary. So long as the United States sticks to the principle laid down by Hoover before the London conference—but forgotten several times by the American delegation at the London conference—we have nothing to worry about.

That is the principle that the United States is ready to go as far and as fast in its disarmament ratio as any other power, and the faster the better.

Despite all the ballyhoo about the London conference last year, it failed to limit auxiliary craft as the Washington conference limited capital ships. It failed because of the Franco-Italian disagreement, which necessitated inclusion of an "escape" clause in the treaty under which the United States, Great Britain and Japan were free to disregard treaty limitation if the Franco-Italian building race continued.

If the new agreement has been reported correctly it will make the London treaty really effective for the first time and improve the chances of success of the general disarmament conference of 1932.

Moreover it should stop the preparation for a Franco-Italian war, which has been the most dangerous aspect of the international situation for many months.

## Butler Would Speak to Aid Unemployed.

Indeed "this is a government of law, not men." We spend scads of time thinking up ways to get around it, but are content to take pot luck when it comes to men.

In England, they do it differently.

In England, they don't put a man at the head of the government unless he has been in the public eye a long time, and not only that, but in line for the job.

In England, they know exactly who should be premier if the conservative should win, or MacDonald were to resign leadership of the labor party.

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