

## The Indianapolis Times

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## OLD AGE PENSIONS

In keeping with its platform pledge and campaign promise, the legislature has before it a measure to provide old age pensions.

The measure, as drafted, is in keeping with the experiences of the many states which have found in this plan for caring for the aged indigent not only a greater measure of humanity, but an actual saving of money.

The poorhouse system was invented in the days of Queen Elizabeth and has changed little in 300 years.

Under present economic conditions, there will be an increasing number of persons who reach the years of unproductivity with no savings. Their crime is in growing old without money. The almshouse for them becomes but a prison.

For years organized labor and the Fraternal Order of Eagles have fought before the legislature for passage of a law which will permit the aged indigent to live out their lives in their own homes.

Governor Leslie vetoed such a measure two years ago. The matter was made a campaign issue.

If there is any criticism of the measure, it is because it leans toward the side of conservatism, rather than toward liberality.

No one with property can obtain such pension. The amount of the pension is meager.

In the many states which have such laws, the plan has proved less costly than maintenance of the pensioners in poorhouses.

Aside from that phase, the humanitarian aspects of the measure should forestall any objections or criticisms.

## MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP

Municipal ownership of public utilities rests upon the fundamental idea that the people of cities are able to operate and manage these public services.

It rests upon the theory that the people of a community alert enough to get rid of utility extortion can be trusted to run their own affairs.

To place the rate fixing power for publicly owned utilities in the hands of the utility commission is a denial of the very foundation of this theory.

The utilities have always fought to keep the power to fix rates in the state board. They have always been able to keep these rates high enough so that the comparison between public and private operations would not be too educational to the public.

When the measure to provide an easier path to public ownership, sponsored by the mayors of the cities, was presented to the legislature, the rate power was left to the cities.

Now, for some unexplained reason, it is taken away from them and put back where the privately owned utilities want it located, in a state board far removed from the owners of the utilities.

It is to be hoped that the legislature will be wise enough to restore the power to the cities.

Provisions that cities may obtain the power to fix rates by a vote means little. Either cities can be trusted or can not be trusted to manage their own affairs. If they need guardianship of this sort, they should not be trusted with ownership at all.

## GET THE FACTS

A doctor who decided that any study of his patient's disease must wait until the patient recovered would be a ridiculous doctor.

The house appropriations committee is equally ridiculous when it "does not approve of the initiation of new economic investigations at this time," and proposes abolishing the economic division of the federal trade commission by denying it funds for the coming year.

The commission wants to make a study of corporation practices in the immediate past, to determine, if it can, what has been responsible for the condition in which we now find ourselves. The commission proposes to do in a scientific and thorough way what committees of congress have been trying to do in their spare time, thereby admitting the need for such study if intelligent steps for economic recovery are to be taken.

If congress had exact data today about the volume and extent of call loans, the effect of issuing bonds and stocks accompanied by stock-purchase warrants, corporation operations in the stock market, scrip dividend issues, reinvestment of earnings and officers' bonuses, underwriting and syndicate operations, and a variety of other things which the commission proposes to put under the microscope, congress would be floundering less in trying to legislate on banks, corporate reorganization, and other matters.

If congress had the facts the commission proposes to unearth about the relationship between anti-trust laws and the petroleum, gas, coal and lumber industries, it might not spend endless time debating these subjects, without accomplishing anything.

In another respect the proposed cut would entail serious loss. It would prevent preparation of a report on the four-year study of electric and gas utilities which already has brought about important reforms in these industries and is awaited as the basis of holding company legislation.

The trade commission has been one of the most useful and least expensive departments of the federal government and is needed more at present than ever before. If its highly skilled workers are allowed to scatter now, it will be necessary to reassemble them at considerable loss a little later. True economy dictates continuance of this work.

## THE FROZEN R. F. C.

The government's great emergency "bank," known as the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, was formed to beat hard times. It is not doing its job.

In creating this \$3,800,000,000 credit pool, congress had three purposes. The first was to pump funds into sick banks, insurance companies, railroads and other corporations. The second was to extend job relief aid to states and cities through self-liquidating loans. The third was to make emergency loans to communities to feed and shelter the destitute.

Passing over for the moment its business loans,

which have been drawing so much criticism, what about its success as a first aid station for the jobless?

The entire unloaned fund, except for the \$300,000 earmarked for hunger relief, is available for self-liquidating work aid projects. This amounts now to some \$2,000,000,000, and will increase through repayments.

Yet of this sum only fifty-six self-liquidating loans, totaling \$147,680,000, so far have been approved. Of this only \$17,793,000 has been paid in through repayments.

Thus only about 7 per cent of money available has been loaned for work relief, and less than 1 per cent has been paid out. Apparently the number of projects that can be liquidated from tolls and rates is limited, for pending are only 74 "Class 1" loan applications, totaling \$238,890,000.

For hunger relief, about one-half of the \$300,000,000 available has been loaned in short term handouts. Destitution is intense and widespread.

Even with the present onerous restrictions, Senator La Follette estimates that this inadequate relief fund will be exhausted by July 1.

This big federal emergency "bank" either should be abandoned, along with the federal farm board, or it should be reformed.

Three reforms are needed. One is to change its personnel, another its administration, a third its scope. Loans for relief should be administered by a board of experts, and the fund replenished.

The term "self-liquidating" should be liberalized. Thousands of public projects await this change; projects in slum elimination, schools, reforestation, reclamation, parks, hydro-electric development.

Immediate construction along these lines would tend to prime the pump of sluggish industry, start buying power and permanent improvements and wealth to the nation.

We have the mechanism for reconstruction. Let it be put to work.

## THE CHICAGO INQUISITION

One would think that Chicago's police and judges had their hands full holding the city against the machine gun and "pineapple" assaults of its listed public enemies. Apparently, however, some of these guardians of law have found time in the last year to do a bit of law-breaking on their own.

The Chicago Civil Liberties committee, in its 1932 report, cites more than 300 violations of constitutional rights by local police. These include illegal arrests, inhuman beating of prisoners, raids without warrants. Fifty persons, most of them arrested without legal justification, were reported as having been "third degree."

The Chicago inquisition appears from the report to have been an unusually savage affair. More than 100 arrests were made for "distribution of Communist literature," although the Communist party legally is on the Illinois ballot. Numerous open air gatherings of unemployed and others were broken up, often with violence.

One Judge Francis Borrelli comes in for criticism for "abuse of power." This judge is accused of having locked in his courtroom thirty spectators at the trial of a jobless demonstrator and subjected them to an inquisition on their personal and political beliefs.

He ordered from the room one lawyer who protested the high handed proceeding, and ordered fourteen other protesting victims arrested for disorderly conduct. He had, it seems, previously evicted three lawyers from his court room after having "bullied and accused" them.

Chicago's underworld has become a byword throughout the world. A much more unfortunate reputation awaits that great city if she permits her police department and her courts to lead in lawlessness.

Advice is free, but sometimes there's profit in it.

It's not surprising congress is discordant. You can't expect harmony when lame ducks essay a swan song.

Where would the world be but for the international good will created by last summer's Olympic games?

Whether tonsil operations are beneficial or not, they're about the only chance some of us have when the talk gets around to our hospital ordeals.

If our jobless seem a little more glum than usual, it's probably because they've been reading about baseball holdouts rejecting \$24,995 offers and won't sign up for one cent less than \$25,000.

Some one has written Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt complaining of the appearance of her husband's hat. If it appears a little misshapen, it should be remembered the President-elect is keeping a whole cabinet under it.

## Just Plain Sense

BY MRS. WALTER FERGUSON

EIGHT-YEAR-OLD Larry had something on his mind. He approached his mother cautiously. "Mother," he said, "I want to ask you something. I want you to tell me all about this boy and girl business."

Started, but determined to be staunch, his mother prepared to face the question in the manner approved by our best psychologists.

"Yes, son, ask anything you wish," she replied, using a smile of the sort warranted by the occasion when the facts of life first present themselves for maternal explanation.

"Well, then," Larry burst forth. "I want to know why a boy can't hit a girl who's hit him first. What's the reason for that?"

"And may I ask what you told him?" I inquired.

"Oh," said Larry's mother. "I was so relieved that I went into details on the subject. I explained all about chivalry and the dependence and weakness of women and that he should just stand back and say to the girl, I am a boy much bigger and stronger than you are. I could hurt you very much, but because you are a girl and weaker and because gentlemen never strike women, I shall not hit you."

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## The Chase!



## It Seems to Me . . . by Heywood Broun

IN writing about a recent propaganda play, one of the dramatic critics asserted that the playwright gave the other side no case at all, and that no propagandist has ever said even that.

And, even so, I will say that

George Bernard Shaw has earned

his right to the shaker. It seems

to me that Mr. Shaw has been be-

yond question the greatest

preacher of the last half-century.

He came to the theater admitt-

edly as a man with a message,

and, though he has not gained all

of his objectives, he certainly has

shaken his adversaries out of their

complacency.

Mr. Shaw soon realized that if

he was to succeed as a sermonizer he must succeed as a dramatist.

From time to time some have

complained that the plays of G. B. S. were in effect debates rather

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To be able to draw a line be-

tween the two, and not mistake

for cannon-balls, is the begin-

ning of wisdom. Often enough

our imagination makes pills into

cannon-balls, and that is folly.

The point of the proverb is that

if life gives us a pill, however

nasty, we must swallow it at once

and not be afraid of it.

Otherwise, by chewing it we add

to our irritations and make our-

selves and everybody about us un-

happy.

Life does give us some bitter

pills. Sometimes they are sugar-

coated, but not often. If we can

find a way to sugar-coat them by

all means let us do it. Anyway,

the thing to do is to swallow them

quickly, and maybe they will do

as we wish, as pills are intended