

## The Indianapolis Times

(A SCRIPPS-HOWARD NEWSPAPER)

ROY W. HOWARD . . . . . President  
TALCOTT D. POWELL . . . . . Editor  
EARL D. BAKER . . . . . Business Manager  
Phone—Riley 5551



Member of United Press, Scripps-Howard Newspaper Alliance, News-paper Enterprise Association, News-paper Information Service and Audit Bureau of Circulations.

Owned and published daily (except Sunday) by The Indianapolis Times Publishing Co., 214-220 West Maryland street, Indianapolis, Ind. Price in Marion county, 2 cents a copy; elsewhere, 3 cents—delivered by carrier, 12 cents a week. Mail subscription rates in Indiana, \$3 a year; outside of Indiana, 65 cents a month.

TUESDAY, FEB. 28, 1933.

## JUST A MINUTE, GOVERNOR

It is quite understandable that administration leaders so new to power and so filled with power would suggest a moratorium in city elections.

Their proposal that the present city administration be continued for one year is based upon the idea of saving money for elections.

In times of hysteria, leadership should not become hysterical. The saving of money is important. Preservation of confidence in the orderly processes of government is more important.

Unfortunately, for whatever benefits might come from the plan, all our large cities and most of the smaller ones now are in the hands of those elected upon the same ticket under whose label the present state administration came into power.

As a matter of fact, the revolt in the cities against the old order of special privilege, hypocrisy, and hate made possible the revolt of the state.

To propose now that the people be denied the right to elect their own local officials with whom they come in closest contact, on the score that it is necessary to save money, only will furnish a new citadel from which the same old forces of special privilege, hypocrisy, and hate may wage successful warfare.

Democratic government depends upon bringing the government closer to the people. It must begin with the township, village, the city, and end only in the presidency.

The greatest foe to democratic ideals is blind partisanship and party machinery which rests upon patronage and office holding rather than upon service and closeness to the people.

For that reason, after long years of struggle, city elections were separated from state elections. Sadly enough, this state never took that next necessary step which separated state from national elections. Had that step been taken, there never would have been a Jackson or a Leslie.

There never would have been the necessity for exposing the degradation to which Indiana had sunk with the sale of privilege to special interests and with blind obedience to minorities or the night-gown.

Grant that a postponement of elections may save a half million dollars in money. Grant that in most of our cities the people are well satisfied with their government, and especially is that true in Indianapolis.

Then balance that fact against the greater one that the people have little left except their right to rule, and that any encroachment upon this ideal means lack of confidence in all government.

Necessity is forcing many readjustments in the public mind, and in the thought of individuals. The people expect to elect their next mayor. They expect to go through the formalities of democratic government.

To suddenly take away this right invites not criticism, but hatred. It would destroy all the fine things that have been accomplished under the name of the new deal.

It is too violent a jar to the governmental machine to be accepted with equanimity.

The hour is not here for a voluntary petition in bankruptcy for our democratic processes.

Just a minute, Governor, please.

## THE WAGNER BILL

The enemy, depression, in four short years, has carved out of economic America one-fifth of its population. These 25,000,000 jobless and their dependents form our own America Irredenta, the unredeemed homeland.

They are economic expatriates. They trade and barter among themselves. They add nothing to the national wealth. Few even pay taxes. Many suffer hunger.

Not only do they drag down the national living standard, but they cost, in annual tribute, a billion dollars a year for the barest relief to keep soul and body together. They are, for the time, lost to the republic in every economic sense.

The banks could lend of their ample credit, but they fear runs and sit on their money bags while business investors lack confidence. The governments, state and national, must take the lead, or there will be no lead. To restore buying power to the masses, there seems to be no quick way except through extensive public works.

The Wagner bill, now through the senate and before the house, is not a perfect instrument. But it will thaw out at least \$2,000,000,000 of R. F. C. credit for immediate public works loans to states.

It will replenish the hunger relief fund by \$300,000,000. It will set aside \$15,000,000 for state grants to care for the million wandering men and boys now being made into tramps and worse.

This latter provision is more economical, sounder, and more constructive than the absurd "substitutes" passed by the senate as the Couzens amendment, which would turn only a fraction of these transients into army camps at a cost of \$22,000,000 a year.

There is plenty of public work to do. City slums can be wiped out, and 9,000,000 "homes" now unfit for human habitation can be razed and rebuilt. Idle land and sub-marginal farms can be put to work growing trees.

Schools can be modernized and fireproofed. Grade crossings can be eliminated, highways widened, bridges built, electric projects installed, scores of projects in the beautification and modernization of America undertaken now instead of later.

"We may as well determine right here and now that we are going to wage relentless war until we abolish involuntary idleness as we are abolished involuntary servitude," said Senator Wagner.

The house should not adjourn without passing the Wagner bill and President Hoover should sign it as one of his last acts in public office. That would clear the way for the larger Roosevelt projects, in the Tennessee valley and elsewhere, in national planning.

## OUR DESTINY IS AHEAD

A British writer finished a tour of the United States not long ago and remarked that the chief trouble with America today is that it can't quite figure out just what its destiny is.

Until recently, he said, America knew that its destiny was to develop and settle a vast continent

This knowledge inspired almost every act in our national history and gave significance to every turn of events.

As long as the job was unfinished, people could overlook the imperfections of the present by keeping their eyes on the future.

But now the continent has been settled and developed about as completely as it needs to be. The great job that unified and inspired the nation is finished—and because we don't know what the next job is going to be we are at a loose end and our troubles look very big to us.

The visiting Englishman had another word to add to all of this. Sooner or later, he said, the American people will find a new destiny and follow it through; and in the end, he predicted, they will become "the greatest race the world has ever seen."

Now that, to be sure, is very kind and very comforting. And while we have never been famous for our national modesty, it is a good thing for us to be told something like that just now.

For the first part of the Englishman's comment is indisputably true, and it is precisely the thing which makes the depression so hard to bear.

Because of it we have moments in which we wonder if the end of the world is not just about at hand. Everything, we tell ourselves, is finished. The old days are done for and no new day is going to dawn.

The country is going to perdition in a high-wheeled hack and there is nothing we can do about it except crouch on the mourners' bench and bay at the moon.

If we could once make ourselves realize that the biggest jobs are yet to come and the greatest days are yet to dawn we might slough off some of our pessimism.

The great depression isn't the end of things; it is only an incident. Our real destiny is ahead of us, not behind us.

## BETRAYAL OR DEFEAT?

Senator Borah's assertion to a New England manufacturer that congress could not confer extraordinary powers on the President "without the cowardly betrayal of its constitutional obligations" is probably perfectly true. About the only trouble is that that cowardly betrayal seems to have taken place already.

That it should be congress' job to make a sweeping

change in governmental organization and drastic cuts in governmental expenditures goes without saying. But congress has had ample time in which to do it, and it has demonstrated pretty clearly that the job is just naturally beyond it.

The one certain thing is that the job has got to be done, and it has got to be done right. If congress can't do it—and do it speedily—it can do nothing less than give the President a free hand at it.

## OUR SONG BIRDS "PROSPER"

There has grown up in the last generation a belief that American song birds have decreased in numbers since the settlement of the country. It is a relief, therefore, to learn from D. T. Gilbert Pearson, president of the National Association of Audubon societies, that this is not the case. On the contrary, they are flourishing nowadays as never before.

"Contrary to popular opinion," says Dr. Pearson, "dense and unbroken forests do not afford an ideal habitat for a great variety of song birds."

Consequently, with the gradual clearing away of forest areas, the planting of orchards and the growth of a diversified agriculture, there has been brought about a change in conditions which have been conducive to the welfare of birds."

To any one who delights in the presence of song birds, this must come as a bit of welcome news.

Many grave questions confront Roosevelt's cabinet, but we venture the first to come up will be: "Do you mind, Miss Perkins, if we smoke?"

Glimpses of the ladies' new spring chapeaux in pill-box, tip-tilt, and fez varieties are apt to give us a new appreciation of that old phrase, "mad as a hatter."

With the human race it's different, but where the ponies gallop—the hand that clocks the stable fools the world.

The man who can't look himself in the face may get along for a while, but sooner or later he'll run into trouble shaving in the dark.

## Just Plain Sense

BY MRS. WALTER FERGUSON

WRITING in the American Legion Monthly, Commander Louis Johnson argues for a mustering of all legion forces to prevent drastic economy programs for army and navy. He reminds us that as our baby boys of today will be tomorrow's soldiers, war and national defense therefore are a woman's problem.

Sweet words! How many times have the same gracious things been uttered and how little have men ever heeded our replies!

To be sure, war is a woman's problem. Does she not see her men forced into the monster's hideous maw, there to be beaten, maimed, crushed, utterly destroyed?

War is a wife's problem. When the government takes her husband, is she not left defenseless with her children to support and rear and with her future blighted? Is she not called upon to commit endless sacrifices, so that all those things most precious and sacred to her may become rubbish upon the ever-burning altar of Mars?

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