

## The Indianapolis Times

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## GOOD SOLDIERS

THE annual war over the army budget is

on again. Since the days of Harding, every President has charged up the hill against excessive army appropriations, only to back down in the face of a barrage of army propaganda and political pressure.

In the Coolidge administration, the President was provoked into a public warning that the military was trying to usurp the civil authority of government. President Hoover did not get very far with his economy plans.

Now President Roosevelt and Budget Director Douglas actually are going to cut \$14,000,000 from the \$365,000,000 war department budget—a reduction of about \$54,000,000 from nonmilitary, some of which will be replaced in the public works budget, and \$90,000 from military expenses.

And again the same old cry goes up that the administration is destroying the army.

This cry can not be taken seriously. The war-time records of President Roosevelt and Director Douglas are too well known for the public to believe that these men are trying to wreck national defense.

Moreover, army waste and extravagance no longer are a secret. In the name of efficiency, if nothing else, much of the deadwood should be eliminated. This is common knowledge among officers, though few have the courage to say so publicly. Major-General Johnson Hagood, with bravery and accuracy, has stated the case. He says:

"We can get a better organization for less. . . . We have too many bureaus already and we could spare six or eight of them with advantage to the national defense and to the joy of the taxpayer. . . . I have twice as many staff officers, clerks and orderlies as I need, but I can not get rid of them under the existing setup."

Now that the civilian branches of government have been reduced so drastically, the military men should be good soldiers enough to take their fair share of economy without whimpering. As they know, in the federal pay roll reductions for the period 1932-34, the total military cut was only 4 per cent, compared with a 10 per cent decrease in the total civilian pay roll.

While the civilian personnel was reduced for that period 17 per cent, the military personnel was cut only 0.4 per cent.

Considering that much of the proposed reduction proportionately will come out of the national guard, citizens' military training camps, and reserve officers' training corps, the regular army should be the last to protest.

It's commander-in-chief, President Roosevelt, is making the cuts regardless of protests, and the public is back of the President. Not only a less expensive, but a more efficient, army is likely to result.

## PAINLESS EXECUTION

THE death recently of Dr. Alphonso Rockwell passed almost unnoticed. But this man, a distinguished physician and scientist, put his mark on his generation in a way as striking and as bizarre as that of old Dr. Guillotin of France. For it was Dr. Rockwell who invented the electric chair.

Oddly enough, Dr. Rockwell himself was not in favor of capital punishment. But the electric chair was devised as a reform.

A more humane method of taking life than the gallows was sought, and Dr. Rockwell—in collaboration with two other physicians and Thomas A. Edison—was given the thankless job of finding one.

The electric chair was the result. It claimed its first victim in 1890. Since then it just about has become the standard instrument of execution in the United States.

And Dr. Rockwell, who disapproved of the law which his invention served, must have been glad that the public was not generally aware of what he had done.

## RUSSIAN RECOGNITION

IN his policies with respect to most aspects of domestic problems and general international relations, President Roosevelt has moved with an amazing and gratifying promptness. Not a few have, however, been disappointed by his delay in recognizing Russia. Every week of delay postpones the establishment of highly desirable commercial relations with the U. S. S. R.

There just have appeared three splendid books on Russia, all indicating that if there is any state which should appeal to the apostle of a "new deal" it is Russia.

Professor Jerome Davis of Yale university has been mentioned widely as the possible ambassador of the United States to Russia in case of recognition. He and a group of experts, most of whom earlier had traveled widely in Russia, visited that country to study aspects of contemporary Russian civilization.

The results of their investigations have been brought together by Professor Davis in an absorbing and authoritative volume on "The New Russia: Between the First and Second Five-Year Plans."

Whatever we think of Russian economics, the book pictures a well-organized and dynamic society which has attained stability and has achieved more remarkable results, considering the obstacles imposed, than any other society of our day. Professor Davis points out that thus far the Russians have not even attempted to establish Communism, but have aimed to introduce a comprehensive system of state Socialism.

Russia now stands between the first and second five-year plans. The first was devoted primarily to the rapid mechanization of industry and agriculture. The second aims to produce a classless society.

Russia may have devoted a little too much energy to mechanical development at the expense of the provision of sufficient food; nevertheless, "if there is hunger in the Soviet

Union it is not found beside an abundance of wheat and corn. A person willing to do useful work will be able to secure food if there are goods and chattels.

The volume concludes with a forceful and logical chapter urging the immediate recognition of Russia.

One of the most common of the threadbare arguments against the Russian experiment is that it is contrary to human nature. This archaic thesis is obliterated by Professor Harry F. Ward in his penetrating book, "In Place of Profit: Social Incentives in the Soviet Union."

Professor Ward, for some fourteen years a close student of Russian conditions, went to Russia to live for a year to discover what new drives the Russians have introduced to take the place of the old profit motives. He finds that the basic effort of the Russians is to arrive at a practical solution of the alleged conflict between the interests of the individual and the group.

This poor immigrant shocks us, today; our grandfathers would have called him a hero.

And we are beginning to see, now, that this tension of society's responsibility spreads into many fields. Not only has society the obligation to step inside the family circle, on occasion; it must interfere in many other matters with which it never before concerned itself.

In sheer self-protection, it must interfere with a man's private business. It is getting ready, now, to regulate the amount of food-stuffs a man may raise, if he be a farmer; to say how many hours his employees may work, and what pay they shall get, if he be a manufacturer; to say what he may do with his money, if he be a financier.

It has to do these things, and many more like them, because the old individualistic system does not work any longer.

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Now we have got past that, and because two bewildered immigrants in a small town hadn't become adjusted to the new viewpoint, the state's attempt to save their daughter's life seemed to them cruel, high-handed, and deeply unjust.

And for those of us who are sitting on the sidelines, there is an interesting parallel to be drawn.

What else was this stubborn, heart-breaking, confused attitude on the part of the John Vasko family than a last flare-up of the rugged individualism of the old days?

There was a time when it was none of the state's business how a man chose to rear his children. It is only recently that the higher duty and responsibility of the state has been recognized.

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## BOYS AT WORK

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The report from Fort Slocum, at New Rochelle, N. Y., says that 1,790 recruits there have shown marked increase in weight, color, and morale within a week.

It would be hard to say how much of this improvement in health and spirit is due to regular hours, good grub, and out-of-door exercise and how much to removal of the urge of insecurity. The latter must have a great effect.

Through these 250,000 boys and men who are put at conservation work the country is certain to receive a marked stimulation toward recovery. Happiness is infectious.

From the work camps some of this elation will stick home and lighten hearts there. It will leaven a little the whole loaf of American depression and encourage success in the President's new move to get industry going.

## AID TO HOME OWNERS

THE proposed new federal law to provide mortgage relief for the owners of small urban homes eventually may have a very beneficial effect on depositors in frozen banks and on the tax incomes of cities and states.

It looks very much as if many frozen banks, with vast sums invested in small real estate mortgages, would be able to thaw out a good part of their frozen assets by exchanging their mortgages for the 4 per cent bonds of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation. This, naturally, would be a break for their depositors.

At the same time, the scheme is designed to enable home owners to pay their delinquent taxes; and such payments would lift a large part of the financial burden which today lies upon innumerable states and cities.

If this measure would achieve those two results, it would be very welcome indeed.

## SWEET ADELINE

BEER comes back and a reporter finds the man who wrote "Sweet Adeline."

You get the impression that such songs as this wrote themselves, grew up like folk fables, that no man could have concocted such a universally owned thing.

Ask any man or college student who over-glasses of beer climes out in the strains of this old tune who the author is and he would blurt as much in astonishment that the piece should be associated with an author as in lack of knowledge as to who that author is, or was.

The author of "Sweet Adeline," as the reporter reveals to us, was Richard Gerard. But Richard Gerard is Richard Gerard Husch, special clerk in the New York city general post-office, happy father of five children.

He still sings with gusto and longs for Broadway. But six mouths are six mouths when feeding time comes—and "You know how much big-heartedness there is on Broadway."

"Sweet Adeline . . . for you I pine . . ."

That beverage over which some of the tallest pinning was done, itself pined for, is back. Harken now to those vibrant strains, not so vibrant in the last thirteen years.

## MUSCLE SHOALS YARDSTICK

VOTES are nearing in both houses of congress on the administration's Muscle Shoals bill.

Prosperity for the Tennessee valley will not, as some apparently expect, result if President Roosevelt signs the shoals bill. This is a long-time program of immense scope, involving economic planning in the entire river basin.

Its provisions for electrification, at cheap rates, of the farms of the valley; for cheap power for states, counties and municipalities; for experimenting in the manufacture of plant foods, have deep significance.

Its reforestation plan will take time, as will the carrying out of its provisions for improving navigability of the stream.

But before long, with the government operating the Muscle Shoals hydro-electric power plants, and those at Cove Creek, we will have for the first time a chance to measure against federal power rates those of some private companies that are based on inflated valuations, immense and unnecessary bond and stock issues.

Within the last few days, power company officials, while giving every evidence of being convinced that the Muscle Shoals bill finally will be enacted, have been conjuring up the same old bogies to frighten the house military affairs committee against government operation.

These phantoms were laid successfully, we think, by the testimony before that same committee of Senator Bone (Dem., Wash.), whose recent years have been devoted to fighting the power interests of the west.

The administration expected its titanic battle to bring some opposition; congress might as well expect the same.

But neither should be in the least deterred in enacting the shoals bill.

## EXTENDING POWER OF SOCIETY

THAT tragic dispute of Hastings, N. Y., in which a man and his wife barricaded their doors to keep their infant daughter from being taken to a hospital for a life-saving operation, is a thing that could have happened at no other time than the present.

A few decades ago the mere notion that one might try to override a parent's wishes about a child's welfare would have seemed unendurable.

The tradition of endless ages still held good, until very recently—a man could do what he liked with his own, and "his own" included

## M. E. Tracy Says:

UNLESS all signs fail, this country is on the verge of a decentralizing movement, made possible not only by the invention and discovery of certain mechanical devices, but by the normal reaction of people weary of dancing to an old tune.

We have had a glorious time building skyscrapers and crowding into cities, but how can we make effective use of the auto, radio, airplane, and other contraptions which enable the individual to travel about or sequester himself without losing touch with the world, if we continue to do so?

Besides, the prospect of getting out of doors has a peculiar charm after our extended whirl with the stuffiness and discomfort of congestion.

Architects probably are right in assuming that the skyscraper craze is over and that a new style of construction is just around the corner—a style which will leave more elbow room on the one hand, and serve the needs of increased leisure on the other.

Science virtually has destroyed the compelling reasons for jamming factories, office buildings, and apartments into the smallest possible space. It no longer is necessary for workers to live within walking distance of the mill, or for heads of firms to be so close together that they can drop in for a chat.

WHAT real purpose does the telephone serve if we make use of it to talk across the hall or across the street? Of what advantage is the radio if we still must dwell within ten blocks of the opera house? Where lies the benefit of autos if we employ them to follow Old Dobbin's beat?

We have been freed of many limitations, and it is incredible to suppose that we shall ignore it. Isolation has ceased to be the dread consequence of living apart that it once was.

The young man who goes a thousand miles away from home today is not compelled to bid his parents or the world he knows good-by. He can occupy a cabin on some western mountainside and still get the report of a prize fight as it proceeds in Madison Square Garden.

To the same extent that machinery has reduced the hours of essential work, it has increased the possibilities of leisure. The real problem is to take proper advantage of the power interests of the west.

We have been playing with most of our great innovations thus far, but the time has arrived for us to make them a part of our daily life, to realize the new freedom they promise.

WE have done very little by way of readjustment to the new agencies of travel and communication. Our social and economic life still is dominated by traditions of the railroad and kerosene lamp era.

We have only a vague conception of how much better we could live if we really tried, of what stupendous changes electricity, broadcasting, and combustion engines make possible.

The barriers that formerly separated urban farm rural life have been swept away. Except as one enjoys the crowd, there is no longer any distinct gain in herding together. Suburbs can be extended enormously; factories can be moved into the country, living rooms can be converted into a concert hall by the mere turn of a button and neighbors can keep in close touch with each other, though their houses are fifty miles apart.

And work, you ask? Well, what about the privilege of rebuilding a nation, of making this country truly modern?

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members of his family as well as his lesser goods and chattels.

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