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SCRIPPS-HOWARD
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THE ELECTRIC TAX

IT was about a year ago that a congressional conference committee, subservient to the power industry, violated legislative precedent to transfer a 3 per cent tax from the companies that produce power and light to the people who buy it.

A congressional committee again is about to consider the electric tax. Again there are indications that an attempt will be made to lighten the burden of the industry best fitted to assume such tax.

The house of representatives approved a measure that put the 3 per cent tax on the companies. The senate put only 2 per cent tax on producers and 1 per cent on users of industrial power.

More significant still was the senate provision that the tax shall not be transferred until Sept. 1. This is intended, according to a frank statement by the senate finance committee, to give power companies time to obtain rate increases from local utility commissions. In other words, the senate is doing its best to help the companies keep the tax just where it is today.

Bludgeoned into it by a rebuke from Senator Hiram Johnson, the senate exempted municipal power plants from the new tax.

The conference committee will be urged by the utilities to reject the municipal exemption and to retain the senate's other provisions lessening the tax and delaying it. Already, propaganda has been directed at utility security holders, who are urged to protect their investment by writing congress at once to protest against the company tax.

Due regard for public service and the equities of the case demand action just the reverse of this from the conference committee. A tax on the earnings of an enterprise guaranteed a fair return in good times and bad, which frequently has secured far more than the most bizarre conception of a fair return, is a just tax.

A RECORD HANDS DOWN

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT was very modest and matter-of-fact in recounting the achievements of the first two months of his administration, but he has far surpassed anything accomplished by a previous chief executive in so short a time.

The only Presidents who even would be thought of as contenders are George Washington and Woodrow Wilson. Yet, with no belittlement whatever of their record, it must be said that for hair-raising decisiveness and sweeping accomplishments Roosevelt leaves them outstripped.

Washington and Hamilton put through an amazing program in record time, considering the difficulties which the new government had to meet. They organized the federal administration, passed a tariff bill, restored federal credit, funded the domestic and foreign debt, passed an excise tax bill and established the First United States bank.

But nearly two years elapsed between the inauguration of Washington on April 30, 1789, and the passage of the bank bill in February, 1791.

Wilson's record has been regarded as even more spectacular. In Harper's Weekly of Aug. 22, 1914, President Elliot of Harvard declared it to be unprecedented. Professor Max Farrand, in his "Development of the United States," offers an estimate representative of fair-minded historians:

"It was primarily as leader of the Democratic party that Wilson acted in his first administration as President of the United States, which probably will remain with an unequalled record of legislative achievement, and for this the greatest credit must be given to President Wilson himself.

"Merely to mention a substantial reduction in tariff rates, a revision of the banking and currency system, the strengthening of the In-currency system, the strengthening of the in-of the anti-trust acts, and creating a federal trade commission, would be sufficient to indicate his accomplishment."

It was a year and six months, however, between Wilson's inauguration and the passage of the Clayton bill, which represented the conclusion of the first big spur of his administration. The Underwood-Simmons tariff bill was signed on Oct. 5, 1913. The federal reserve act received Wilson's signature on Dec. 23, 1913. The act creating the federal trade commission became law on Sept. 26, 1914. The Clayton act, supplementing and altering the Sherman act, was signed on Oct. 15, 1914.

Compared even with any of Theodore Roosevelt's accomplishments, this was express train speed. Yet, over against Franklin D. Roosevelt's feats to date, Wilson's achievements seem very slow freight.

The very fact that one could not, if he wished, fully summarize Roosevelt's administrative acts during two short months within the space allotted to this column is in itself eloquently indicative of their unprecedented scope and velocity.

Banking, currency, inflation, securities, farm relief, railroads, public utilities, public works, wage levels, foreign trade relations, war debts, economic planning and the like, all have been grappled with resolutely. If the Roosevelt program is not as yet in all respects a realized legislative fact, its general outlines are clearly apparent and it can be wrecked only by congressional sabotage.

This brings me to the last point I wish to make. In the congressional campaign of 1914, Woodrow Wilson warmly urged re-election of members who had served in 1913-14. He said: "The American people have been served by this congress as they never have been served before."

We may hope that President Roosevelt can say the same in August, 1934. The present congress has the opportunity to establish a record of public service which will make that

of the Wilson congress seem a "fadeout" by comparison.

BOOKS BURN; THOUGHTS ENDURE

IT is almost like going back into the middle ages to read of Germany's attempts to put the torch to all books which do not conform to the notions of Adolf Hitler.

Those bonfires, dotting public squares from one end of Germany to the other, may have seemed to the Nazis like the beacon fires of a new day, a day in which everything "non-German" is to be destroyed.

In reality, they marked the camps of an army engaged in the most hopeless of all lost causes—the attempt to make force triumph over the ideas of men.

It has been tried before, over and over again. Roman emperors and Spanish inquisitors have tried it. Russian czars and French kings, courts civil and religious—and it never has worked.

Books have been burned and their authors have been burned, all the resources of great kingdoms have been enlisted to stamp out ideas that rulers did not like; and nothing of permanence has ever been accomplished.

The fight against a book, against an idea, against a song, is one fight in which ultimate defeat is written in the stars.

When a man gives a book to the world—provided that his book has real meat in it and not just a tale told to amuse idle minds—he contributes something which his fellows will use as long as it contains anything of value for them.

A book is the embodiment of a dream, the clothing in words of a vision, the incarnation of an idea; and it is one of the ironies of existence that such things, utterly lacking in material substance, are among the world's imperishables.

To be sure, you can take the book and burn it. You can take the author and burn him, too, if you like; you can send soldiers into homes and dispossess any people you find reading the book or talking about it.

But you accomplish nothing, aside from adding momentarily to the world's stock of pain and its list of heroes. History will remember you only because you tried the impossible.

And the thing you fought against will go on working, as long as there is any work for it to do.

Your bonfires will die down and their ashes will grow cold; but the flame that was the book itself will keep on burning as long as men anywhere need its light.

DELAYED JUSTICE

CHIEF JUSTICE CHARLES EVANS HUGHES told the American Law Institute recently that hereafter there would be less delay on appeals in criminal cases before the federal courts.

"After a case has been tried," he said, "there is little if any excuse for delay in bringing on appeals. . . . Probably there is no greater reproach to the administration of criminal justice in this country than the delay in criminal appeals."

All this is perfectly true, and it would be a fine thing if the reform he promises could be instituted in state courts as well as in federal courts.

These long delays between conviction and the final disposal of the appeal are nothing less than scandalous; and for the most part they are, as Chief Justice Hughes says, inexcusable. It is high time that a speeding-up process was adopted.

WHERE BLAME BELONGS

THAT Pennsylvania politician who criticized Mrs. Gifford Pinchot for joining a demonstration by striking sweatshop workers seems to have got his argument a bit mixed.

In his criticism, this politician protested that such demonstrations "seek to arouse class hatreds" and asserted that their leaders are trying to "array classes of Americans against each other."

The obvious retort, of course, is that it is the sweatshop itself, and not the demonstration against it, which does those things.

If class hatred is springing up in sweatshop centers, one can hardly wonder at it; but it hardly seems intelligent to put the blame, not on the sweatshops, but on those who protest against them.

CHILD AUTO DRIVERS

A 14-YEAR-OLD Chicago high school girl, driving an automobile along a public highway, recently struck a 7-year-old boy who was riding a bicycle. The boy wasn't badly hurt, and witnesses said that the girl did everything an adult driver could have done to avoid hitting him.

But it preyed on her mind, and the tragic upshot was that after a sleepless night of brooding the girl committed suicide.

It's a pitiful story, and it makes a sad commentary on the automobile age. Why should a child of that age be permitted to drive a car in heavy traffic—or, for that matter, in any kind of traffic?

Handling an automobile these days is strictly a job for adults. The nervous strain that the accidents of the road can bring to a driver is something no 14-year-old ought to have to shoulder.

MONEY FOR REBUILDING

TO stir activity in a trade which touches the living of a fifth of the population of the United States, the administration is working with committees in Washington upon a public works bill.

This bill is expected to provide mainly for federal or local public works federally assisted, for additional construction of the type of slum-clearance, and possibly for private industrial construction where the financing is not locally available.

There can be little doubt that millions of Americans need new housing, that the provision of decent accommodation in the blighted areas of Indianapolis would stimulate the construction industry as nothing else could right now.

But we are wondering if the government is not overlooking another field of construction which is capable of being entered somewhat sooner than many of these other projects.

We allude to literal reconstruction, to renovation, to modernizing, or in the recently-coined word, renovizing.

Many cities have had their renovation campaigns (Indianapolis had a successful one)

in the effort to get householders to spend a few hundred dollars apiece in fixing up their places, but the one difficulty of all of them run against is the shortage of financing.

Only the people with money in the bank have been able to buy repairs to their homes, and this number has been reduced sadly by recent events in the banking field. Even these people practically have had to buy their repairs for cash, because of the inability of dealers and contractors to carry them on time payments.

The cost of what financing has been available for home modernization has run as high as 25 per cent.

Here, surely, is a department of the construction industry which the administration well might turn to for immediate stimulation. If the government is to lend for new construction can it not lend with equal safety upon existing property?

No long and complex engineering studies would be needed to start the work of modernizing. Every man knows what he would like to repair or rebuild or add if he knew where he could get the money.

Wearing a top hat in Vienna now makes one subject to arrest. In America it only makes one subject to a jest.

New law permits physicians a ninety-day supply of liquor for patients. After twelve years, at last the reward of patience.

Modern office boy no longer takes afternoons off to go to grandmother's funeral. Granny now insists on going to the ball game with him.

Story of the frying-out of Greece in three words: Alexander, Constantine, Insult.

Hoover drove the bonus boys out of Washington with bayonets and gas. Roosevelt plans to drive them out by offering them work.

"Works Program Due Next Week," says a headline. Hey! We thought they'd already given us the works.

If love is really what makes the world go 'round, perhaps that's why so many of the young folks are dizzy at this time of year.

Latest figures indicate that \$11,000,000,000 of the \$22,000,000,000 in gold mined since 1492 can not be located. People are so careless!

President Roosevelt may not make a hit every time he comes to bat, but his average so far is certainly 'way above 3.2.

If wine is a mocker, as the Scriptures say, then the new 3.2 wine will be pretty hollow mockery.

Latest style dresses have rows and rows of hooks and eyes. Getting ready for a nationwide hookup.

Funny, but no matter how much girls hate each other these days they always seem ready to make up.

The neighbor's daughter says she's crazy to get a riding habit. But what she really needs is the walking habit.

Illinois supreme court rules the state sales tax invalid. Illinois citizens reported saying they hope it never recovers at all.

Woman stood up in the house gallery the other day and yelled, "You can't spend what you haven't got." That never bothered congress—they can spend what the rest of us have got.

M. E. Tracy Says:

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT is a great disappointment to some people. He rides no hobby horse, has no pet remedy to sell, and no pet theory to prove. (That is a new and unexpected kind of leadership. People have been schooled to associate one-idea men with action and reform, especially since the war.)

Every European dictator represents a doctrine of some kind or other. The Mussolinis, the Stalins, the Pilsudskis, and the Hitlers have risen to power by riding some peculiar scheme, and have retained it by ruthlessly silencing all those who disagree. Even here in America our elections are supposed to turn on some single issue and our Presidents to follow some fixed program.

When President Roosevelt took office, it generally was assumed that he would adopt a cast-iron attitude in behalf of certain measures and that partisanship presently would re-shape itself according to the division they suggested.

During the last eight weeks, the various schools of thought in this country have done their best to present President Roosevelt as the champion of their respective doctrines, but his candor, common sense, and openmindedness make it impossible.

HE is not a crusader, a revolutionist, or even a dictator in the commonly accepted sense of the word. He is just a good citizen, drafted to meet an emergency, ready to assume such responsibilities as the task requires, and no more. It is not going too far to describe him as the most typical American who has occupied the White House in many years. That, more than anything else, explains the confidence he has developed among all classes of people.

President Roosevelt is ready to do what the situation calls for, but no more. He is not going to use it as an excuse for making dangerous experiments. He frankly admits that some of the measures which he advocates may fail, and that, if they do, he will be the first to discard them.

Such attitude represents no more than good sense, but how many leaders adopt it? How many have the courage to acknowledge their fallibility?

We are all human, but a little power and prestige make us forget it. The old illusionment that kings can do no wrong lingers to plague republican government.

Many people like to give in to a political mistake for a leader to be honest with himself or them. That is one reason why we have so much useless quarreling, intolerance, and oppression.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT stands for the kind of leadership that is essential to re-establish democracy, to overcome this addle-pated notion that the twentieth century can't get along without dictators, tyrants, and despots to remind us that the principles for which humanity fought so many years and which eventually found expression in modern governments are not dead to civilization can not sacrifice the victories it has won, or throw away the safeguards of human liberty it has erected, because of this depression or even the holocaust out of which it grew.

A certain amount of readjustment is necessary, but that does not mean the destruction of a system which has done so much to promote happiness and prosperity.

President Roosevelt is bringing not only America, but Europe, back to a saner viewpoint, to a realization of the dangerous tendencies which have been developed by the ruthless ambition of vain doctrinaires who have not scrupled to capitalize human misery.

Prime It!



: : The Message Center : :

(Times readers are invited to express their views in these columns. Make your letters short, so all can have a chance. Limit them to 250 words or less.)

By J. E. Garrett.

MAY I express my sentiments in regard to an item that I saw published in your paper, stating that Indiana bakers are intending to raise the price of bread 1 to 10 cents a loaf?

I think that 10 cents for a pound of quality bread is a fair price. Here are a few of the things that it takes to manufacture bread and put it on the market:

It takes the money, building, machinery, electricity, fuel and water. It takes the ingredients for the bread. In the bakery there are several departments, maintenance, stockroom, bakers, wrapping, checking, order clerk, garage, trucks, sales and office. Figure how much it takes to operate the departments and see how much it would cost for you to manufacture a loaf of bread. Some people think all you do is buy a bushel of wheat, cut it open and dump it out, and there is your bread.

By R. F. Paine.

If bank depositors took on confidence as easily as they scare over hearsay, bank operation would be smooth and comfortable and, right at this time, there would be no necessity to urge the folks to buy; and you will feel an uplift in prosperity when the folks with deposits go to buying with spirit.

Nothing so well demonstrates the sheepishness in many folks as does a "run" on a bank.

Last month, with two of the city's big banks still in "holiday," unfounded rumors started a "run" on the Cleveland Trust Company. When his lobby became pretty well filled with pale-faced depositors, the bank's president announced that the bank would remain open for withdrawals for two hours longer. Next day Cleveland Trust's business was normal.

But the depositors who withdrew their money had lost three months' interest on their deposits in a perfectly sound bank.

During a "depression" of twenty

Bell Methods

By Another Bell Employee.

I want to thank "Bell Employee" for his letter of May 12. I hope the company doesn't find out his identity—nor mine, for the company does a lot of "pussyfooting" on the employees. It has to do this to protect its methods toward its workers. What the company may mistake for loyalty on the part of its employees is simply their helpless obedience because the company holds the whiphand as jobs no longer exist for the dissatisfied. Our company organization meetings for the workers are a grim joke because company officials have an ironclad power of veto on any suggestions to their liking. We sit at these meetings and listen to "hokey" and we are supposed to believe that the company decisions we are forced to accept are in accord with our own views.

The company is making profit unfairly when it "cans" an employee rather than reduce dividends. The majority of stockholders are much "better off" than the wage earners. There is a lot of difference between just reducing the income of stockholders and cutting off entirely a workman's sole means of support.

But the company promises to do more "kicking out" (if it is forced to reduce rates) instead of reducing dividends, as other companies have done. I know I am lucky to have a job, but I don't appreciate it when my friends were discharged for the sake of dividends.

I have read in magazines where Socialists speak of the "exploitation" of workers. I am beginning to understand the meaning of this phrase.

In modern industrial development we have largely lost sight of the fact that the primary reason for industrial enterprise is to furnish a livelihood to workers.—Donald R. Richberg, counsel for railroad labor organizations.

years ago, baseless rumors started depositors after their money in a big Cincinnati bank. Hundreds went down the street five or six blocks and re-deposited their withdrawals in a branch bank of the very bank in which they had lost

confidence, sacrificing months of interest on their original deposits.

Many years ago, raw rumor started a great "run" on the Society for Saving, one of the oldest and best banks of Cleveland, of which my comparatively young friends, Myron T. Herrick, later the famous ambassador to France, was the head.

There were lines of anxious depositors from the bank's entrance for four blocks, mostly wage-earners, house-help and others of moderate means. My meeting Herrick led to this little dialog, which yours truly never forgot after he became able to make a bank deposit:

"Cousin Myron, they seem to be seriously raiding your bank."

"Cousin Paine, they are. We are paying and will pay every dollar demanded." They, with a smile, Herrick added: "It looks as if our bank would gain something like \$50,000 through interest sacrificed by those depositors you see in line there."

Verily, 'tis an ill wind that blows no sound bank good.

So They Say

German education has been purged of smut and dishonesty.—Student Leader Guljar, after German book burning spectacle.

I will not wear knee breeches.—Robert Worth Bingham, United States ambassador to Britain.

The government can produce evidence that Martynova has been distributing radical literature.—John Northrup, immigration inspector, at deportation hearing.

Prohibition officials have estimated that the annual consumption of bootleg whisky as a beverage has been about 100,000,000 gallons.—Harold Jacoby, distiller.

In modern industrial development we have largely lost sight of the fact that the primary reason for industrial enterprise is to furnish a livelihood to workers.—Donald R. Richberg, counsel for railroad labor organizations.

proper use of the foot has made the correction permanent.

In curing club-foot, the competent orthopedic surgeon is likely to manipulate it so as to get it in proper position and to hold it in place by suitable bandages, adhesive straps, plaster-of-Paris casts, or braces.

After the correction is established, massage, exercise, and modification of the shoes tend to hold the feet in proper position and to maintain suitably the healthful condition of the tissues.

In some instances it is impossible to control club-foot by manipulative measures and the use of casts and braces alone.

In these cases it may be necessary to perform surgical operations for readjustment of the tissues or even complete reconstruction.

easy than she can overlook the grouches that keeps up day after day through the years.

AND pray don't be fooled about the smooth-sounding excellence of this pretty theory. Rules do not regulate human nature so easily. The husband who is not trained to give up occasionally in small controversies will, you may be sure, have his way in the major matters of life.

And by the same logic, the wife who feels she always should be the victor in important items, will not be likely to make small concessions for long.

Marriage is held together by gossamer threads much too delicate to be assaulted by hard and fast theorizing. Before you are finished with it, you will discover that you have given up more and often than you dreamed possible.

Indeed, the only true victories are gained when you have learned not to expect your own way and can smile about that.

It Seems to Me

BY HEYWOOD BROWN

NEW YORK, May 16.—The tenement house department just has made a survey which shows that New York city has 1,401,078 apartments.

That is a great many apartments, and I suppose they range from twenty-four rooms, with balconies and roofs, down to alcove, bedroom, and bath. It is not surprising to learn that there are more than enough to go 'round. According to the recent census, 201,000, or a little more than 14 per cent, are without present tenants.

With such a wealth of equipment, it is curious that one great city of New York should be faced with a housing problem. But the plain fact of the matter is that, even though vast armies of halls and kitchenettes and diving rooms yawn for even so much as the echo of a human footstep, each day the marshals' men make their rounds and carry through evictions.

Mother's Day

AND so a vast acreage of sheltered space is left to mice and moths and whatever stray ghosts there may be, while men and women trudge mean streets seeking some place into which they can go from under the stars.

It doesn't sound very sensible. And it isn't getting any more sensible, for with the diminution of relief funds Commissioner Taylor has announced that it no longer will be possible to supply even the neediest with funds for rent.

With a due appreciation of that gentleman's difficulties, it does not seem to me that the policy of public welfare has always been dictated by inspired wisdom. I am told by Mary Fox:

"The procedure during the whole winter has been that when a family was actually on the point of eviction, a check would be issued by the home relief station to enable the family to get another flat."

"I have known of families," she adds, "who have hunted a week before they would find a landlord who would take them in once he saw the home relief check. The landlord's position was: 'If I take you in, I will have to keep you and your family for several months, at the end of which time it will be necessary for me to pay a city marshal \$4 to \$6 to get you out. I'd rather have an empty flat than accept somebody as a tenant who offers one month's rent for three months' occupancy.'"

Left Hand and Right

UNDER the circumstances, we have the almost fantastic situation in which one arm of the city government carts furniture down to the sidewalk and expels a family, whereupon the dispossessed are expected to go to another department of that same city government, with the dim hope of being put back in again in some other place.

Moreover, the cat and mouse quality in the administration of relief has resulted in the filling up of the poorest types of tenement houses. The owner of the worst slum tenement is the only one willing to take the risk of taking in the dispossessed, because his property is in such condition that even one month's rent is so much velvet.

In addition to the empty apartments of the city, there also are the huge number of hotels which are for the most part very slightly annoyed by the presence of guests in recent months. If the federal government is going to hire marginal farm lands to raise the price of wheat and keep the farmer from losing his home, I see no reason why it should not also take over marginal apartment houses and hotels and insure the industrial tenement house dweller of some place to lay his head.

Some may object that housing should be a matter for the municipality of the state. Others may urge that the whole thing ought to be left to private initiative.

Private initiative being what it is, I see no reason why it should not be left to private initiative. But, whatever method is used, it certainly is not beyond human ingenuity to house everybody in any community which has grown real estate poor through vacancies.

Moth and Rust Corrupt

AND Sunday was Mother's day, a festival devoted to sending flowers or candy to the appropriate relative.

But in any case there were a great many mothers of the east side and elsewhere who found that their token of the day was an eviction notice. There are thousands of families which do not even answer a knock at the door for fear it may be a marshal.

And 201,406 apartments are vacant. Who says that man is a reasonable being?

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Cat's Epitaph

BY MARGARET E. BRUNER