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

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FLOOD CONTROL AND UTILITIES

INDIANA suffers an annual loss of more than \$2,000,000 from rivers on the rampage. Just how much more it is losing each year at the hands of rapacious public utilities is in calculable.

Regulation has been a monumental failure. Levee systems on the rivers have been inadequate. So have attempts to control the dreadful piracy of the utilities.

There is a way right now, if the people choose, to bring both rivers and utilities under permanent control. Erect a series of dams at the headwaters of the Wabash and White rivers. Use one or two of these dams as the basis for state-owned and operated hydroelectric plants.

The dams would check the flood waters at their source, before they had a chance to roll into the lowlands carrying destruction with them. It is a perfectly feasible scheme. Dayton did it after the disastrous 1912 flood and that community needs no new levees.

Once the dams are built, there is nothing complicated about hitching hydro-electric plants to them. These sources of power could be made entirely self-supporting and might even turn in a profit to the state.

But, above all, such plants would furnish the one type of regulation utility companies understand—competition.

Cleveland has a small municipal lighting plant. It can serve comparatively few consumers at its low rate. Yet its very presence in the city changed the privately owned utility from a blood-thirsty lion into a woolly lamb with fleece as white as snow. Indiana can do the same thing if it chooses.

The objection that the flood control dams would be too expensive has no force if the state acts now. Mrs. Virginia A. Jenckes, Sixth district congressman, has been fighting for \$18,000,000 from the federal government for flood prevention as part of the President's public works program.

All that awaits the issuing of these funds to Indiana is the signature of Secretary Harold Ickes. He should make this money immediately available.

Then the people of the state will be able to control their floods and their electric light companies at one shrewd stroke.

PRESIDENT AND LEGION

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S "friends" were reported to have warned him against addressing the American Legion convention in Chicago.

That was political advice. The President ignored it. He went to Chicago yesterday and talked to the veterans. He left politics with his "friends" at home. He had something to talk about which politics always seems to poll, namely, the government's obligation to the men who fight its wars. Politicians generally are unable to divorce patriotism and moral obligations from their own personal aspirations.

President Roosevelt yesterday lifted this subject from the morass into which politics had dragged it, and discussed it in terms of simple justice.

Of the veteran as a class, he said: "The fact of wearing a uniform does not mean that he can demand and receive from his government a benefit which no other citizen receives."

He then presented, in three simple principles, his policy toward the former soldiers. They are: Government care for those disabled or incapacitated in the war; no special class of beneficiaries over and above all other citizens; federal aid for non-connected service disability, but only when all other agencies, such as state or municipal, fail.

Service in defense of one's country, he said, is a basic obligation of citizenship. So long as governments settle their disputes by physical combat this can not be denied.

It being a basic obligation, the President said, then no special consideration is due the soldier who returns from the combat unharmed in any way.

The President asked for the support of the legion in continuing the economies which he has instituted in the government. At the same time he admitted that serious mistakes have been made in administering veterans' affairs during the last fifteen years, and to this he added with welcome candor:

"Individual persons know what mistakes in individual cases and inequalities affecting various groups occurred in the last six months." Many of these have been rectified, he said, and all will be as soon as possible. But, said the President, the government can not go on if the attempt is made to meet irresponsible demands for ever greater benefits.

There was in this speech no mudsling bid for votes, no political maneuvering. Such a healthy attitude toward the veteran is not sufficiently common among men in public office. It should be encouraged, particularly by the American Legion.

Let the "friends" back home worry about the political consequences of honest thinking, honestly expressed.

GET RID OF JAILS

A TIMELY contribution to the current drive against crime now is available in the report of the National Crime Commission on "Propagating Crime Through Jails and Other Institutions for Short-Term Offenders." The material was gathered by a subcommittee of which the Honorable Frank O. Lowden was chairman and Dr. Louis N. Robinson the secretary.

The question of whether prisons should be retained still is open to debate, though the trend of expert opinion is toward their abandonment in favor of specialized institutions manned by experts and of a wider use of

probation. But there is little, if any, argument in favor of retaining the county jail, which is as ill-adapted to current needs as the ox-cart, sickle or flail.

Any concerted attack upon the crime problem must take into account the treatment of the convicted criminal. Mr. Wickesham once observed truly that the criminal's depredations upon society do not match the cruelty visited upon the criminal by society. Society must present a better record for humanity and sense than the criminal before it can tackle the criminal with very good grace.

Most protests which have been made against the inhumane and unscientific treatment of convicted criminals have been directed against our state prisons. But the worst situation does not exist there. In the first place, many more are sent to local jails and workhouses. In the second place, these latter institutions usually are far worse than the prisons and state reformatories.

There are only 102 federal and state prisons and reformatories, while there are some 3,571 local jails, workhouses and houses of correction. On the average, only about 13 per cent of convicted persons are sent to federal and state institutions and 87 per cent to local institutions.

In recent year it is estimated that 37,585 were sent to federal and state institutions and 319,908 to local institutions. Therefore, the personal destiny of many more persons is involved in the character and administration of local institutions.

The best definition of a jail has been proposed by Joseph F. Fishman, now of the New York City department of corrections and formerly federal inspector of prisons. He says:

"A jail is an unbelievably filthy institution in which are confined men and women serving sentence for misdemeanors and crimes, and men and women not under sentence who are simply awaiting trial. With few exceptions, having no segregation of the unconvicted from the convicted, the well from the diseased, the youngest and most impressionable from the most degraded and hardened."

It usually is swarming with bedbugs, roaches, lice, and other vermin; has an odor of disinfectant and filth which is appalling; supports in complete idleness countless thousands of able-bodied men and women, and generally affords ample time and opportunity to assure inmates a complete course in every kind of viciousness and crime. A melting pot in which the worst elements of the raw material in the criminal world are brought forth, blended and turned out in absolute perfection."

Lest one might think this an exaggeration, Mr. Fishman, who knows more about the subject than any other living man, says that this description will apply to fully 85 per cent of the jails of the country.

The effect which such an institution has on a young first offender has been admirably summarized by a public prosecutor:

"We take a boy just past 16 and sentence him to thirty or sixty days in the county jail for stealing a bicycle. The purpose of the sentence is to impress upon his mind that he must be virtuous, that he must have respect for the government under which he exists. So for sixty days he gets no exercise, no pure air, no mental exercise, no good reading matter, no valuable sermon or lectures; he sees no worthy deeds or acts of charity or kindness performed. The only thing he hears is the vilest of stories; he is taught how to engage in the drug traffic, how to avoid officers in the transportation, sale and manufacture of liquor, how to commit burglary; he is introduced into a ring of automobile thieves."

"After he has been attending a school of crime with past masters as teachers we release him with the admonition to 'be good.'

Whatever help America can render unhappy Cuba by way of debt relief, sugar stabilization, the feeding of the hungry or other aid should be tendered. In the meantime, President Roosevelt's good neighbor policy calls for hands-off in Cuba.

Bronx (N. Y.) residents reported a gold strike in their own back yards, but not enough to entice the gold diggers from Broadway.

A million copies of Hitler's book, "My Fight," have been published. What a bonfire they would make!

Denmark's citizens are going to have gas masks to prepare themselves against chemical warfare—and the talk coming from Europe's statesmen.

Man in Chicago was buried alive for sixty days. And men in this city go about dead, but not buried for longer than that.

It seems President Roosevelt still can see nothing but hot air in all that inflation talk.

RADICAL CASE VS. LIBERALS

SOAKING the liberals seems to be leading all the fall sports of the radicals. The latter may, perhaps, have been lashed into special fury because liberalism seems to be bearing some practical and desirable fruit in the form of the New Deal.

The charges made by the various knights of the radical cavalcade may be summarized as follows:

The liberals really are old-fashioned folk whose intellectual perspective is that of the period from 1750 to 1850.

They are mere temporizers who fail to recognize the vital defects in our present social and economic system.

Hence, they never go far enough in their recommendations and are mainly content to concentrate upon preserving certain quaint civil liberties which date from the Bill of Rights and the ratification of the first ten amendments to our Constitution.

Through their lack of insight, their half-hearted measures and their incredible optimism over trivial reforms, the liberals help to make an intolerable system seem passable and workable.

Therefore, the liberal is really a much more dangerous obstacle to real progress than the conservative who does his best, albeit unconsciously, to make the present system seem as repugnant as possible.

There is some ground for this radical complaint. It certainly is true that there are very prominent so-called "liberals" who try to sanctify and purify what are actually intolerable elements and figures in our present order. This must be admitted whether we can say that the system as a whole is impossible and unworthy of salvation. The radical charge that such writers are "kept men" of capitalism is essentially true and deserved.

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and are often meaningless and misleading.

A liberal tent which covers Nicholas Murray Butler, Walter Lippman, Al Smith, Clarence Darrow, Stuart Chase, Bruce Bliven, George Soule and Amos Pinchot is obviously too expansive for any single-track assault on the occupants.

Similarly, with the radical label, when we see Mary Van Kleek put arm in arm with Benjamin Stoiberg, Norman Thomas lined up with W. Z. Foster, and Roger Baldwin paired with V. F. Calverton, we may be pardoned for some confusion as to what really constitutes a radical.

There is nothing out of which the radicals are feeding upon ideas which were germinated between the age of Cromwell and that of Victoria. But no allegation could be more misleading or more easily turned into a boomerang to be used against the radicals themselves.

It is true that the civil liberties prized by the liberals were systematized in eighteenth century England. It also is true that liberalism was first prominently identified with the great mid-nineteenth century individualists like Cobden, Bright and Spencer.

But it also must be remembered that socialism is as old as Plato, Sir Thomas More and Robert Owen. Nothing would make an up-to-date Communist more furious than to be told that he is 100 years out of date because Owen was founding communistic communities a century ago. Even more cogent is the fact that the arch prophet of contemporary radicalism was Karl Marx, who wrote his "Communist Manifesto" at exactly the period in which Cobden and Bright were leading their crusade against the English corn laws.

PATIENCE TOWARD CUBA

THE accidental killing of an American and the bombing of the American-owned National hotel in Havana should not, and doubtless will not, affect the state department's policy of patience toward Cuba and her revolution.

These were in no way unfriendly acts toward the United States and are not so being interpreted by Secretary Hull. A stray bullet killed Mr. Lotspeich. The hotel was bombed by government troops to evacuate rebel officers.

Too much praise can not be given the Roosevelt administration for refusing to be stampeded into intervention. The landing of marines on Cuban soil would open a Pandora's box of calamities. It would destroy the fine structure of inter-American understanding that our recent policies have created. It would wreck the December Pan-American congress at Montevideo and set back pending negotiations for mutual trade agreements. It might draw us into a long and costly war, such as followed our intervention in Nicaragua. It would not only turn back the clock in our foreign policy but would jeopardize the Roosevelt domestic program.

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M.E. Tracy Says:

THE most significant point about this epidemic of strikes is that NRA is able to bring about a quick settlement in so many cases.

Since he took office, Grover A. Whalen, local chairman for New York City, successfully has arbitrated four walkouts involving a total of 116,000 workers.

Similarly encouraging results are reported from all parts of the country.

Without minimizing the difficulties still to be met, it is fair to say that the new order has worked well thus far.

No plan or project should be judged by the obstacles confronting it, the all-important question is whether it can overcome them.

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Speculation has raised Cain with stocks and agricultural products, but not with steel or aluminum. Steel and aluminum showed what could be done through highly developed organization. So did such unions as that of the printers and plumbers.

NRA is not an original scheme, but built around certain ideas which have been tested by experience and which the government borrowed from private enterprise.

WHAT is characteristic of statecraft. There were private schools before there were public schools, and roads paid for with tolls before taxes.

All constructive phases of government are socialistic. The only question that should bother us in connection with that aspect of the situation is whether an activity has become too vast to be left in private hands or become too essential to warrant public control.

Trusts and trade unions had reached a point in this country where they could not be handled by methods designed for individual business and industrial bargaining. At the same time, they stood for principles of production, distribution and economic relations which were manifestly sound. NRA simply is an adaptation of those principles in a general way.

Indeed, perhaps the first and most important thing to be noted in analyzing this radical rampage against the liberals is that the labels and terms used are unsatisfactory

and are often meaningless and misleading.

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