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Give Light and the People Will Find Their Own Way

TUESDAY, MAY 22, 1934

DEATH CARS

MONTH after month, death rides harder on American streets and highways. Last year 29,000 lives were sacrificed and 850,000 human beings were injured in automobile accidents. Through the first months of this year accidents have been constantly increasing. At the present rate, automobiles in a decade will kill 315,000 and injure ten million—six times the number of American soldiers killed and fifty times the number of American soldiers injured in the World war.

The explanation is found partially in the construction of our highways, which are not suitable to the high-speed traffic of today, and in the millions of worn-out cars that multiplied through the years of the depression. But still more is this ghastly record of manslaughter and maiming due to the American habit of trying to get nowhere in a hurry.

Thomas P. Henry, president of the American Automobile Association, recommends: Uniform motor legislation in all states, including a strong drivers' license law and a safety responsibility law; improvement of highways to accommodate high-speed machines; more vigorous enforcement of existing laws, and systematic education of motorists and pedestrians.

"The only bright spot on the horizon," says Mr. Henry, "is the decrease in the ratio of accidents to children of school age, due, of course, to the proved efficacy of safety education in the schools and the schoolboy patrol movement."

Last year automobile-pedestrian collisions comprised 37 per cent of all accidents, resulted in 45 per cent of all deaths. Adults, it seems, need the same kind of training as has been given to school children, who have learned not to depend upon the sanity of the motorists.

AMERICA'S CAPACITY

PUBLICATION a few days hence of the Brookings Institution study, "America's Capacity to Produce," should give pause to our laissez faire doctrinaires.

We can produce, the Brookings analysis finds, about twice as much as we are producing today, and about 20 per cent more than we turned out at the 1929 prosperity peak. This is no "if" analysis, but one which invoices our present productive equipment and our present available labor, and makes a factual finding of what would be the output of our producing plant if it were free to function normally. The finding does not contemplate any improvement whatever in our productive efficiency.

This study, conducted by six recognized authorities in the fields of mining, manufacturing, transportation, agriculture, labor and finance, gets to the core of our economic problem. It shows that underconsumption is at the root of our industrial disruption. Industry has been so intent on profits that it has failed to see that its health depends upon orders for goods.

What we failed to produce in 1929, because of lack of orders, was equivalent to fifteen billion dollars of national incomes—enough to have brought up to \$2,000 a year the income of sixteen and one-half million families that were living below that level, or enough to have increased all family incomes below \$3,500 a year by 42 per cent. Had production continued at its practical capacity, the national income would have been twice what it was during the depression years.

Portions of the study yet unfinished will deal with the part our lop-sided distribution of income and wealth has played in causing the failure of the economic system to function at capacity.

"It," says the Brookings report, "such a betterment in material conditions lay within our grasp in the prosperous years of the late twenties, every alert mind must be driven to ask: What was there in the organization or functioning of our economic system which caused us even in those favorable years to fail to attain it, to say nothing of the margin four times as wide which we are failing today to make available to the satisfying of human wants?"

THE GREAT UNWASHED

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE investigators have learned that approximately a third of the families in fourteen small American cities aren't taking baths. They haven't any bathtubs.

If you apply this percentage to the whole nation you get the idea that for some 40,000,000 of us Saturday nights, not to mention other nights, come and go with no particular reference to soap and water.

Our figuring probably is wrong, but at best it looks like a dirty deal for the soap and towel makers. Robert J. Barrett, head of the National Association of Plumbers, calls the bathtub shortage as revealed from the partial figures a "challenge to the nation." Certainly it's a blow to esthetic sensibilities and olfactory. Worst of all it hurts the national pride.

What will the neighbors say? Here in the great United States of America, where tariff-protected living standards are supposed to be the highest ever achieved by man, a land of garages and penthouses, of milk and money, do nearly a third of the families lack sanitary bathtubs?

The story of the great American unwashed may make good reading in underprivileged countries of the earth. But here it should provide another potent argument for the administration's rehousing measure.

SADDER, BUT WISER

By DR. HARRY ELMER BARNES

EVER since Mark Twain gave the world a ringside account of the great annual sporting event of California's mother lode country, the jumping frog contest in Angels Camp has been tricky for favorites.

In 1849, according to Sports Writer Twain, a couple of slickers slipped into town, filled the champion full of buckshot and beat heavily against him. Instead of jumping he just grunted, and the slickers cleaned up—and out.

Last Sunday, 2000 spectators saw Champion Budweiser go down to an equally sad defeat. Budweiser had held the world's broad jump record for his class by clearing thirteen feet three inches, in three jumps. That was in 1931 and since his namesake has much more kick today he was touted to win easily.

But, like most champions, he got careless, developed a cold and showed up with a Charlie-horse. General Grant proved himself more worthy of his namesake has much more kick today he was touted to win easily.

The following are among the more important reasons for such a deplorable condition:

In the first place the number of physicians has increased rapidly at a time when the population growth of the country has been slowing down. Between 1909 and 1931, 22,000 licensed physicians entered the practice of medicine, approximately 7,000 of them between 1927 and 1931. It is estimated that about 4,500 new doctors began practice in the year 1933 alone.

In spite of the progress of medical science and public information, healers of the shyster and cultist variety have increased in numbers and have flocked from the public over a hundred million dollars a year.

THEN the government stepped in and supplied free treatment for veterans and those entitled to industrial compensation. This has benefited the doctors who receive payment for such service, but has cut in on the practice and income of the remainder.

Most striking and important of all, however, is the great increase in the number of those who are receiving free treatment from competent physicians.

It is estimated that there are about 123,000 persons daily in need of medical attention in the United States. Approximately 500,000 of these are treated in free clinics. Of the 730,000 who are treated by private doctors some 225,000 do not pay their bills.

In short, about two-thirds of the nation's sick are on the free list. It is estimated that American doctors donate over \$1,500,000 daily in free medical attention.

This is only one side of the picture. If doctors are starving at a time when their preparation for practice is yearly becoming more and more expensive and exacting, there are many middle class Americans who are bitterly oppressed by their doctors' bills. They are reluctant to seek free clinical treatment, but at the same time the fees they are charged, especially in hospital treatment, are far greater than they can pay.

THE technical matter of treating a sick person is exclusively the problem of a doctor. But sickness as a whole is a social problem and must be handled by society. Everybody must receive adequate medical treatment and physicians must be able to earn a truly decent living.

It is probable that no other profession imposes so heavy a drain upon money and energy in preparing for practice. It is absurd that a man should have to spend eight years between high school and medical practice and then earn, in many cases, less than \$1,500 a year.

Socialized medicine would seem to be the only solution of the problem from the standpoint of physician and patient alike.

Group—or chain store—medicine, industrial medicine and health insurance are certainly to be preferred to the present combination of anarchy and poverty which prevails in the medical practice of the United States.

But they are all most decidedly inferior to frank and honest socialized medicine under a system which would insure medical control and public support.

So long as the doctors resist this same solution of their problem they will deserve to stew in their own juice.

Liberal Viewpoint

By DR. HARRY ELMER BARNES

THE depression and certain other contemporary developments have upset the economic status of the average American doctor. Over a third of our American physicians realize less than \$1,500 in annual income.

Hence it is no wonder that many physicians who once shunned the idea of social medicine are now eagerly listening to such proposals.

The essential facts about the situation are set forth very lucidly by an eminent New York surgeon who writes an article on "The Plight of Doctor" under the pen name of George W. Aspinwall in the American Mercury. He epitomizes the growing desperation of many doctors in the following paragraphs:

"The practice of medicine is no longer lucrative. The average family (or neighborhood) doctor is not earning a living. Some have abandoned their profession for other fields. Others, more determined or more hopeful, have been accepting \$15 weekly from the unemployment relief funds."

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It is right there that you get an interesting little angle on the brain trust.

The truth-in-securities bill has one distinction that few pieces of legislation have ever rivaled; it is airtight.

Congress has passed laws before this to curb activities of the moneyed powers. Usually these laws look well on paper, but develop flaws, loopholes, and whatnot in actual practice, so that high-powered lawyers have little trouble guiding their clients straight through them.

Not so with the securities bill. There isn't a loophole in it. It means what it says, and the best lawyers of Wall Street have, so far, been unable to find so much as a broken thread in its fabric.

It's one law that can't be dodged or stepped.

That part was the brain trust's work; and perhaps it explains some of the antagonism.

For the rest, it is important to remember that congress has not lost any of its powers. If it uses this brain trust to make its wishes stick, that may be too bad—but the remedy lies in an attack on congress, not in an attack on the brain trusters.

KILLING AN OLD ALIBI

OFFICIALS of fraternal lodges at Athens, Ga., have thought up a little stunt to increase attendance at lodge meetings, and it looks good enough to pass on for the benefit of such other lodge officials as may need it.

Briefly, it is this: Through the Athens Banner-Herald, they announced that unless attendance picks up very soon, reporters will be invited to attend all meetings and publish the names of those who are present.

This, of course, would mean that husbands who use that old gag about "going to the lodge meeting" would have to make good on the statement, or listen to some choice remarks from the little woman.

It's probably a dreadful invasion of the rights and privileges of the male, but the Banner-Herald reports that Athens wives are commanding it heartily. And it ought to stimulate lodge attendance greatly!

OUT OF POLITICS

JUSTICE HARLAN F. STONE of the United States supreme court lets it be known that he is "out of politics" and is not interested in reports naming him as a possible contender for the Republican presidential nomination in 1936.

Although Justice Stone is unquestionably a man of presidential caliber, his attitude is one to be applauded; for the tradition which places the supreme court outside of politics is a good one, which deserves to be kept alive.

To be sure, Charles Evans Hughes resigned from the court in 1916 to run for the presidency, and after the Civil war, Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase accepted support for the presidency.

But in the main the tradition has held; a supreme court justice is out of politics and takes no interest in political campaigns and stratagems.

Justice Stone does his country a service by emphasizing that the tradition is still in operation.

THE SNOOPERS ARE COMING

THERE is one item in the pending emergency relief appropriation bill that congress should scrutinize with special care.

It is a ten million dollar addition to the international revenue bureau's budget, to be used in building a liquor tax enforcement agency up to the size of the late and unlamented prohibition bureau.

Before turning loose on the country another army of snoopers to wage war on a still larger army of bootleggers, congress should consider more obvious methods of destroying the illicit liquor industry.

A slight reduction in liquor tariffs would, by lowering legal liquor prices, eliminate more bootleggers in a month's time than an army of snoopers could round up in years. Moreover, such a reduction in taxes and tariffs probably would increase instead of decrease governmental revenue.

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Tennessee has voted in favor of retaining state prohibition—figuring the low-priced bootleg liquor is plenty good enough.

Capital Capers

BY GEORGE ABELL

SECRETARY OF STATE CORDELL HULL is a gracious personality who goes out of his way in order to avoid offending people.

The other afternoon at a garden party, Mr. Hull, accompanied by his young secretary, Hugh Cummings, was walking across the lawn.

Suddenly one of the famous Patten sisters (elderly spinsters who live in a large brick mansion known for years as the "Irish embassy") loomed up in front of him.

"Oh, Mr. Secretary," she gushed, and thereupon began a long conversation.

Minutes passed. Still Miss Patten talked and talked. Amiable Mr. Hull continued to smile pleasantly and nod his head during pauses in the conversation.

Hugh Cummings glanced at his watch. It is his job to keep the secretary moving. There were other people ahead, waiting to shake the secretary's hand. Hugh gently prodded his chief in the ribs. Miss Patten talked on. Hugh again jogged the secretary's elbow.

Then Miss Patten became aware that Hugh was urging the secretary forward.

"Who in God's name is that?" she inquired, pointing a finger at him.

With Hugh thus disposed of she continued her interrupted tête-à-tête.

There are more people in town than ever. Every one, it seems, is working, and there is hardly an empty house in town. But, wages are so low and the future so uncertain that they spend very little and business is considerably worse than last year.

It is not possible to return to the old living standards now, with multitudes dependent on the automobile, railroads, radios, and other modern developments for a living. But, overproduction has caused wages in a large majority of instances to return to the scale while the living standards remain the same. No human power can return us to the old living standard; therefore wages must advance.

I have at hand a letter from a merchant in a city in the northern part of the state. He writes:

"There are more people in town than ever. Every one, it seems, is working, and there is hardly an empty house in town. But, wages are so low and the future so uncertain that they spend very little and business is considerably worse than last year.

As The Times has pointed out, we must raise wages in advance of prices.

After doing a thing of this sort the organization has intestinal fortitude enough to attack a man like Father Coughlin, a man who has succeeded in doing as much good for the President's new deal program as any other twenty men.

The Courier makes capital of the fact that Father Coughlin is a Roman Catholic Bishop. They say that he should stay out of public life. The Courier fails to remember that just a few years ago one Bishop Cannon was touring the country fighting Al Smith and democracy in general. This same Bishop Cannon incidentally allowed his feelings to get the best of his reasoning and as a result he had some difficulty over campaign funds.

The Klan is again attempting to raise its head in Indiana. It is not probable that the people of the state will rally around the fiery cross as they once did. However, it is probably that some few Hoosiers will allow themselves to be misled by such