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THE PRISON REPORT

THE report of Wayne Coy, the Governor's secretary, on conditions at Michigan City prison is all right as far as it goes. The only trouble with it is that it fails to go far enough.

His remark that the administration of the institution might be "more effective" is a masterpiece of understatement. Beyond doubt his recommendation that a cherry tree in front of the east wall should be removed is sound.

But in view of the record of escapes at the prison during the last year, Mr. Coy's report is strongly reminiscent of the famous occasion when the mountain labored mightily and brought forth a mouse.

We doubt that the public will be satisfied, in view of the latest walk-away of five prisoners, with the discharge of a few understrappers from the prison service. That would be too much like painting a cancer with iodine and pretending it was cured. What is needed at Michigan City is a major operation.

Mr. Coy's report dwells at some length on structural changes necessary at the prison. The taxpayers must make up their minds to spend some money in this direction.

But they should not be asked to do so until they have every assurance that the administration of the institution is sound.

A whisky still was found operating in one of the dormitory elevator shafts. It is difficult for the public to understand how such a thing could have occurred without gross negligence or downright corruption. Structural faults were not responsible for that.

After all, the officials of the prison may have had some hard luck in dealing with the inmates, but hard luck does not deprive a man of some sense of smell. And any bootlegger can vouch for the fact that a still has an extremely strong and characteristic odor.

President Roosevelt has set a splendid example to other public servants by frankly admitting his mistakes. He realizes that attempts to gloss over errors simply magnify their importance in the public mind.

Prison administration has been one of the mistakes of Governor McNutt's administration. The thing to do is to admit it and apply strong remedies.

Indiana's penal problem is a nettle which the Governor must grasp firmly. If he toys with it he is going to get badly stung.

JAPAN AND THE NAVY

JAPAN does not like Secretary Swanson's proposal for naval reduction, according to the cables. That is surprising. For several reasons:

1. Premier Keisuke Okada himself has just been talking reduction.

2. A naval race is expensive business, for each and all.

3. Japan is less able, even that the United States and Great Britain, to afford mounting armament expenses.

4. Japan needs very much a friendly agreement with the United States and Great Britain, who seem to be standing fairly well together on this matter.

So Japan's reported policy, however illogical it may appear from the standpoint of world friendship, seems even more illogical from the viewpoint of her own selfish interest.

But the subject can not be dropped there, permitting our two nations to drift into disagreement. We Americans owe it to ourselves and to world peace to make every effort to understand Japan's feeling.

If Japan can not accept our original proposal for all-round one-third reduction, or the new Swanson figure of 20 per cent reduction, Tokio is free to make a counter-proposal. Of course nothing could be accomplished by repeating her 1932 Geneva proposal for cutting our navy 34 per cent while she cuts only 9 per cent; or the recent trial balloon for an American cut of 44 per cent and Japanese of 9 per cent. Such jests only increase friction. The counter-offer should be serious enough to merit serious consideration by Washington.

Apparently Japan's real purpose is to change the 5-5-3 ratio which she accepted with Britain and America in the Washington treaty. There is nothing sacred about that figure. Possibly some modification might be fair—that is not a question on which the general American public would be apt to have an opinion; it is too technical.

But the American public gives no sign of changing its opinion as to the purpose which fixed the 5-5-3 ratio in the first place. The object was to prevent either Japan or the United States from having an offensive force against the other. And it is agreed rather generally by naval authorities that under the 5-5-3 ratio Japan, in her own waters and near her own bases, has been superior to any five-ratio foreign power. If Japan can show that, because of changing naval conditions, a modification of the 5-5-3 ratio is necessary to preserve the purely defense balance, then she deserves a fair hearing.

Often it is suggested that the main difficulty is national pride. That was a foreign interpretation of Tokio's recent statement that Japan will demand "equality" but not "parity." There must be something wrong with our diplomacy if we unwittingly have encouraged the Japanese to believe that a smaller naval ratio is a sign of national inferiority. We ought to be able to make them see that naval requirements are relative, and that what may be a small navy for one nation might be a very large navy for another nation.

Certainly Japan does not think that France and Italy are inferior, or consider themselves inferior, because they need and accept smaller ratios than Great Britain and the United States.

So even the national pride difficulty may be solved if both sides try hard enough.

Socialists have voted to resist war to the end, so they can tell their grandchildren how they fought the war to resist war.

Ultimately, says a scientist, we'll lose the use of our fingers and thumbs. How terrible for the hitch-hiker.

In a highly organized country like ours, which happens also to be a democracy, it is impossible to let nature take its course in an acute depression. The strain on the social fabric is too great.

Depending on time to effect a cure is like depending on time to relieve an attack of acute appendicitis; it may work—and, on the other hand, the patient may die.

Minister Finot claims a diplomatic victory. Minister Bordenave claims a diplomatic victory. Meanwhile, the Chaco war goes on and Bolivians and Paraguayans continue to be slaughtered.

The disarmament conference is a failure, since some of the nations would rather lock arms on the battlefield than block arms in the conference room.

THE SEAMEN'S NEW DEAL

AN unusual election is being held on the Pacific coast.

Government representatives are conducting a secret poll among thousands of licensed and unlicensed seafarers in preparation for arbitrating their strike demands. For centuries the men who manned the merchant ships were forced to air their grievances singly, if at all, and often the answer was a blow of the first—or belaying pin.

Now they are being permitted to select their representatives, either unions or individuals, to sit at a table with the ship-owners' spokesmen before a government umpire. Thus, the seaman is getting a taste of economic democracy.

Just settlement of the longshoremen's and seamen's strike demands only can come through some such adjustment as the President's mediators are trying to evolve. Permanent settlement of these and other grievances should be provided for in a code of statutory mechanism for adjustment, such as the railroads and other industries have set up.

At the last session of Congress the Senate unanimously passed a resolution, introduced by Senator Hiram Johnson of California, calling upon the administration to take steps toward creating a national maritime board. With such a board it is unlikely that the Pacific coast would have suffered this long and costly strike. Both England and Japan have had such boards for years.

In America the double labor standard for land and sea has persisted too long.

FASCIST IDEA OF PEACE

THE MIND of a devotee of dictatorship must work in an odd way.

Sir Oswald Mosley, the Englishman who admires Mussolini so passionately that he wants to set up a black-shirt regime in England, found himself moved the other day to praise Fascism as a force making for peace. Discussing the recent turmoil in Germany and Austria, he asserted.

"Fascism is the only thing which prevented Europe from being plunged into a war like the one twenty years ago."

This, to be sure, is one way of looking at it. Most of us, however, had supposed that it was just the other way around—that the danger of war in the last fortnight has been due largely to the high-handed and brutal things which the philosophy of Fascism makes men do.

It will take better evidence than anything the trans-Atlantic cables have carried in the last month to persuade us that Fascism is a potent force for peace.

MILITARY CENSORSHIP

IT is a strange new policy which that national guard officer has tried to promulgate in regard to freedom of the press in Minnetonka.

After the national guard had been called out by Governor Floyd B. Olson to preserve the peace during a paralyzing strike, the adjutant-general of the guard undertook to tell the city's editors how they should behave while under martial law. Among his instructions was the amazing order that to print anything "defaming the state of Minnesota or any member of the Minnesota national guard in the field" would be construed as a violation of his order, subjecting the offender to punishment.

It is hard to imagine a clearer perversion of the constitutional guarantee of a free press. It is bad enough to have a military censorship restricting press freedom in time of actual war; but to have a tin-hatted militiaman undertake to strait-jacket the press when nothing more than a strike is going on is intolerably insolent and unwarranted.

PEOPLE WON'T WAIT

LONG after recovery from the depression has been completed, we probably shall be arguing earnestly about what caused the recovery.

Was it due to this, that or the other specific measure adopted at Washington? Or did it come of itself, in spite of what Washington did?

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One of the essential prerequisites of international understanding is a tolerant insight into the psychology of other peoples. The autobiography of Tan Shih-Hua ought to contribute notably to a better understanding of the Chinese mind by occidental observers. (A Chinese Testament, Told in Stories, by Dr. Tretiakov, Simon & Schuster, \$3.) It is a frank and candid summary of the mental evolution and social experience of a typical Chinaman of our era. It may very well come to rank with Pearl Buck's "The Good Earth," as a contribution to Chinese psychology.

Capital Capers

BY GEORGE ABELL

OFFICIAL Washington is getting an enormous chunk of the postoffice department communiqué which the other day described Postmaster-General Farley as "one of the greatest fishermen who ever visited Yellowstone national park."

Once upon a time in the near east was the center of the most flourishing material civilization in the world. Today there is effort to re-establish this tradition in the Near East. The nature and extent of what has been achieved is clearly and concisely summarized by Dr. Grunwald. (The Industrialization of the Near East, by Dr. Kurt Grunwald, The Palestine Economic Society.)

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This argument has begun already.

On one side you have the theory that our cyclical swing, from prosperity to depression and back again, has been increasing steadily in velocity for half a century, and that this last time it carried our economy down so far that our whole social organization would have collapsed if a remedy had not been applied.

On the other, there is the belief that this depression differed little from its predecessors, and that recovery would have proceeded just as fast—if not, in fact, a little faster—if Washington had kept its hands off entirely.

This latter viewpoint is expressed ably by Neil Carothers, director of the College of Business Administration at Lehigh University.

Economists, says Professor Carothers, realize that the causes of a depression "spring from our system of capitalistic production, in which goods are made far in advance of the market by means of borrowed credit and invested funds. It seems to be established that depression comes when this credit-security-investment system of production becomes over-stimulated."

Now this, says Professor Carothers, is a system which inevitably rights itself. It never quite capitizes. Economists, he adds, "know that the only cure is that one remedy for all human ills—time."

The chief trouble with this theory seems to be its belief that human affairs are carried on in a vacuum.

When an economist talks of producers, consumers, investors, and so on, he is not speaking of units in an academic chess game; he is speaking of human beings who have a naive way of getting angry when they lose their money and their jobs, and who will stand private only about so long before they go out to burst something.

A depression like the last one might right itself, if given plenty of time; but the people who are living through it are apt to tear the house down while they are waiting.

Depending on time to effect a cure is like depending on time to relieve an attack of acute appendicitis; it may work—and, on the other hand, the patient may die.

Somewhat the Paraguayan learned of this. Before the meeting adjourned, he managed to send a message expressing the approval of Paraguay.

Minister Finot of Bolivia was present.

The Bolivian expressed to the Pan American gathering the "sympathetic approval" of his country at the resolution.

Minister Bordenave of Paraguay—for some reason—did not attend.

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BUT ISN'T THAT THE WAY WARS ARE WON, BUDDY?



The Message Center

[I wholly disapprove of what you say and will defend to the death your right to say it.—Voltaire.]

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.)

EDINBURGH RESIDENT PRAISES TOWN

By Mrs. Nina Richards.

In answer to Main Street Observer, I will say there must be something wrong with him or her. I have lived in Edinburgh thirty-two years, have been a home owner some fifteen years and have seen very little in that time to kick about.

I believe we have weathered the depression far better than some of the larger towns. Of course, Edinburgh is a small town with small town ways, and we love those ways. We are proud of our school, our churches, our several factories and mills. Proud of our farmer friends, and their industry, and our corn belt which is known all over the state.

We have the best drinking water to be had in the state; we have gas and electricity. We have very little real suffering among our poor in the winter. Most of them are cared for by their more fortunate neighbors, few having to apply to the trustee for help.

Most of them receiving help from the trustee are sent by our neighbor state on the south.

So, I am for dear old Edinburgh, with its kind friends and beautiful homes.

Of course, if Observer likes city ways best there are twenty-two trains out of town daily, several busses and good roads for hitch-hiking.

I will stay where I can get credit from friends if I need it; where I can afford to own a little home and have happiness, and may God protect us from grafters.

DESCRIPTS POLICE ACTION

BY A BYSTANDER

I was attracted Wednesday night by a small crowd that was gathering near the pavilion in Military park. I learned that it was a public meeting against war and Fascism called under the auspices of the Communist party. The crowd was small—about 250 persons—men and women, Negroes and whites, and nearly all in working clothes.

Little interest for me here, I thought, and was about to go on when an officer approached the first speaker on the platform and asked for a permit.

A young chap, self-evidently an American, replied to the officer that the effect that the Communist party was not an illegal organization, that its members had the right to free speech and assembly, that never before had a permit been necessary, and that as American citizens they were going to exercise their rights.

The officer left and the meeting proceeded. The first speaker was a Negro. He spoke for about fifteen minutes. He had been in the war. So had I. He was thoroughly disillusioned and called upon his audience to fight against the next war which he said was impending.

The next speaker was the same young man who had replied to the officer. He said he represented the Young Communist League, an organization of young people who were unalterably opposed to war. The young, he said, were most easily duped by war propaganda, by uniforms, and martial music.

A young Negro with an excellent command of English took the platform. He represented the International Labor