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Give Light and the People Will Find Their Own Way

THE WILLING AUTO

A SENSIBLE man won't work a willing horse to death. But the tax collector is just about doing that to the horse's successor, the more or less willing automobile.

John T. Flynn, in Collier's this week, tells the story of Bib Groover of Decatur, Limestone County, Alabama. Every time Mr. Groover drives his modest little car up to a filling station four fiscal plates pound on him, each to demand his cut of a multiple Federal, state, county and town tax on gasoline. His gallon of gas costs 13 cents, the four-fold levy comes to 12 cents more, almost a 100 per cent sales tax on what has become a necessity to him.

Not all of the states bear down on the autoist the way Alabama does, but to a greater or less extent you can multiply Mr. Groover's troubles by 25,000,000, the number of cars in the United States, and get an idea how the American motorist pays and pays and pays.

Last year all state taxes totaled \$1,641,000,000. Of this more than half came from motorists.

The mushroom growth of gas and other auto taxes is the result of the mistaken idea that auto-owners are all plutocrats. As a matter of fact, Mr. Flynn says, there are more car owners with incomes under \$1400 a year than with incomes of more than \$7000. Three out of every five car-owners have incomes under \$3000.

How long, one wonders, can the willing auto bear up under these gathering burdens?

CHAIN GANGS

IN spite of Gov. Talmadge's defense of Georgia's chain-gangs as "the most humane way" of treating prisoners, the American Prison Association concluded its Atlantic Congress by condemning them as "utterly inconsistent with the dictates of humanity," and offering its services to help fight them anywhere and everywhere.

American public opinion will support the prison association, and not Gov. Talmadge. This is not only because chain gangs are inhumane, and un-American, but also because they don't work.

The whipping post (also advocated by Gov. Talmadge), the strait-jacket, starvation, shackles and tortures, chain gangs and other sadistic survivals of jungle justice do not reform men. They brutalize both the victims and the administrators. Mounting crime statistics prove they do not deter but increase crime.

"Instead of cowering one man," the Wickersham Commission reported four years ago, "repressive rules and tortures have aroused a hundred to greater hatred and discontent."

The American Prison Association is to be praised for its determination to crusade for decent and scientific treatment of prisoners.

\$100,000-A-YEAR MEN

UNITED STATES Supreme Court justices now come at \$100,000 a year. That's what they cost the taxpayers.

The cost has more than doubled with the court's removal to its new marble building.

Figuring in terms of cases—the court handles approximately 1000 a year—it costs the taxpayers \$840 a case to settle these arguments, about four-fifths of them involving private litigation over property rights.

Most of the justices' time, however, is devoted to approximately 200 cases a term, which are found to involve major legal problems. Casting aside the 800 others at a few dollars, each of the 200 costs some \$4200.

The amount appropriated for the current year by Congress is \$510,080, of which \$416,000 is for salaries of the court and its staff, \$49,080 for care of the buildings and grounds, \$25,000 for miscellaneous expenses, and \$20,000 for printing and binding.

To this must be added the interest charges on the people's capital investment of \$1,000,000 in the building, which at 3 per cent is \$30,000. This makes a total of \$840,080.

Two years ago the court's operation took an appropriation of only \$315,173, out of which the justices then, as now, were paid \$20,000 each, with the Chief Justice getting an added \$500.

Much of the added appropriation is taken up by about 100 new employees, including many guards and about 40 charwomen.

The new building is more popular with tourists, who have been thronging the building daily, than with the justices themselves. Justice Brandeis and one or two others have indicated they will not move into the oak-paneled office suites, complete with shower-baths, reserved for each of the nine. They will continue to work at home. Others, including Chief Justice Hughes, are at work in the new chambers.

JOHNSON ON ROPER

"WHY," asks Gen. Johnson, "is business so frequently at odds with government?"

Certainly not because of Secretary of Commerce Dan Roper, target for the general's fifth philippic today. Is not business' voice at least given a hearing in the councils of government? How about "Uncle Danny's" famous pipeline to the marts of trade, "The Business Advisory and Planning Council?"

The general says Gerard Swope would be a better Secretary of Commerce. Why, the Roper Council includes not only Mr. Swope, but such other "luminous figures" as Messrs. du Pont, Rasbok and Harriman.

The general says Roper is a "political expert." We'll go further and say he's as near a political spokesman as any man in the Washington picture. But never let it be said that his presence at the Cabinet table is an offense to business.

HOUSING GIVES JOBS

FOR the first time, advocates of Federal low-cost housing have figures to back up their claim that housing is an appropriate field for giving employment.

An analysis of costs of Knickerbocker Village in New York City, one of the first such projects, has just been made by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

It shows that a third of the total cost of the

apartment house was paid to workmen at the site. The 42 per cent spent for materials and the 25 per cent spent for overhead both concealed additional payments to labor engaged in producing and transporting materials and in clerical work and drafting.

Labor got more than 50 per cent of the total cost of engineering and supervision, lathing and plastering, painting and decorating, and weather-proofing. Material charges, on the other hand, were the most important factor in items for carpentry, plumbing, heating and ventilating, structural steel, elevators and manufactured metal products.

HAMILTON FISH, LIBERAL

ALTHOUGH he has done it frequently in recent months, we are always a little startled when Rep. Hamilton Fish sounds off like a lusty liberal against the iniquities of the Old Guard Republican machine.

Being in sympathy with what this tall and truculent New Yorker apparently is trying to do—to wit, kick out the old crowd and give the people a chance to reclaim the Republican party—we perhaps should not look a gift fish in the mouth. But whenever we think of Ham Fish we can't help remembering the climax of his red hunt fiasco—when he raided a Baltimore warehouse for subversive documents and found a crate of lettuce.

ANTIOCH AND GARDEN CITY

THE President warned the other day against "ruthless depletion of the soil" which has resulted in "waste on a colossal scale," symbolized by "dust storms and mud-laden streams." He outlined a long-time AAA program designed to "protect the nation's heritage of soil."

If there be any who think Mr. Roosevelt was viewing with needless alarm, they should read this, from a study of soil erosion in the current issue of *Fortune*:

"The city of Antioch was a rich and dissolute city in the days of Paul. Its markets were famous throughout Asia Minor. Its morals were infamous as far as Rome . . .

"Today Antioch is a miserable Syrian town of 30,000 and the archaeologists who excavate its ancient stones may shovel through some 18 feet of mountain-washed detritus. Those who believe the laws of nature are at one with moral law will take a lively satisfaction in that fact. Those who believe that the laws of nature are no respecters of virtue will feel otherwise. To them the stripped declivities of the Taurus and the Lebanon above the ancient city will recall a nearer and a more familiar scene . . .

"There is, after all, no philosophic difference between the fate of Antioch in Syria and the possible fate of Garden City in Kansas. Except perhaps this: That the fate of Garden City in Kansas is approaching more rapidly than the fate of Antioch approached."

RETURN TO INDIANA

BY MCCREADY HUSTON

Chief Editorial Writer

GETTING back to Indiana is getting home. I am not a native, but 12 years in the state made me feel like one. Yet those 12 years did not convince me as they should have. I had to go away to learn.

Getting back to Indianapolis is something. I never lived here; my previous incarnation in the state was spent in St. Joseph County. But I was here often; and here I had such kindly friends. Hewitt Howland was one. Meredith Nicholson was another. The late Albert J. Beveridge befriended me voluntarily when I was trying to make a beginning as a writer. Then there was Kin Hubbard, and D. L. Chambers. Hewitt Howland's charming home in New York was often a refuge for me when I was doing newspaper work there after leaving Indiana.

Curious how you pick up the old threads when you come back to the warm-hearted Middle West. It's the same in any part of the Great Valley, I suspect; but it is strongly true of Indiana. I had hardly arrived when old friends I hadn't seen or heard of in years were trying to reach me at The Times, to see how they could help me get oriented. If I am to do any work I shall have to beg off from many of the invitations.

I've been around a bit since I left Indiana. I've worked and lived in New York, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Scranton and Pittsburgh. But in spite of their charming people and their advantages—all different—I missed something. I knew what it was when I arrived here to begin my duties. It was Indiana.

And back to writing editorials and other newspaper things. For I was out of that for a while, teaching. I feel like Kipling's soldier on re-enlisting: "Back to the army again, sergeant; Back to the army again—"

Where did I learn to do right about turn? I'm back to the army again. And I hope they let me stay.

A WOMAN'S VIEWPOINT

By Mrs. Walter Ferguson

WOMEN with small children and no servants have a special recreational problem. Unless relatives help out occasionally, some of them are never so fortunate as the American business man to whom the President was lately so reassuring. They get no breathing spell.

When they are young enough themselves to long for diversions, there is only one thing for them to do—take their babies along when they leave home. Sometimes, watching these poor tired children, one wishes such women might be more considerate, for they trot the poor little things through long aisles of department stores while they finger materials and hang over the trinket counters.

The children cry, and no wonder. They can't see the gorgeous array of merchandise which so allures their mothers. Being only about knee high to adults, their scenery consists of multitudes of trousered and skirted legs and the blank walls of counters. They are just confused midgets in a world of giants, who surround them, shutting off the air and the view and threatening to crush them at every turn.

When the necessity forces the mother to run her own errands, she should lay her plans carefully so that the trip may be made an adventure for the children. Certainly a part of their weariness on such trips is due to plain boredom. They can't see anything; they never know what all the pushing and shoving about is for, or whither they are bound.

With a little ingenuity things might be different. Immediately after their daily nap, the children could be promised a special treat, and if upon each trip they were shown and taught something, and pains were made to go to some special place of interest to them, what is now an ordeal for mother and children could become a pleasure for both.

I personally think that Geneva should discuss the necessity of colonies being given to over-populated countries. The world simply must recognize the problem and do something about it.—Italo Balbo, governor general of Libya.

STILL LOOKING FOR THAT NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK!



Forum of The Times

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, religious controversies excluded. Make your letters short so all can have a chance. Limit them to 250 words or less. Your letter must be signed, but names will be withheld on request.)

HAS SUGGESTION FOR MR. ROOSEVELT

By H. L. S.

The President asked America's business leaders for suggestions as to how to increase wages. Business regards labor as a commodity, with the greatest flexibility in the matter of price control. Controlled commodities vary little in price, as they become a part of production in industry, so employers find the flexible point at the labor counter.

The new policy is to attempt price control over those commodities that have heretofore been controlled by supply and demand, without regard to producers' ability to pay production costs.

One instance is farm products and needs. During the depression years the price of farm machinery has varied but little from pre-depression years, but the quantity of production has varied greatly, falling off immensely as farm income declined.

Control of production in farm machinery is concentrated, while farm production is subject to the weather and millions of individual producers without regard to the buyer's ability to pay.

Control of production, while there is an unsatisfied want, regardless of the price, is against public interest, and results in continuous lower standards of living, even though a temporary price gain is obtained.

Every human want must be satisfied before curtailment of production in any line is sound, from the social welfare angle. Only those commodities that are scarce by reason of a deficiency in production facilities should be controlled by the law of supply and demand as to price, to encourage increased production. Where adequate facilities for production exist, a planned program of production that will meet the highest consumption standard should be initiated.

We commit a grave social crime if we permit sabotage in any line of production in which every human need has not been met. Competition

Switzerland

BY BERTRAM DAY

One revels in the scenes of Switzerland.

Where solid mountain roads are unsurpassed, And charming vales are beautiful and grand.

A dreamland where eternal snows are massed! Fair Interlaken is its beauty place. For here the Jungfrau, queen of Alpine heights, Reveals the sparkling snowflakes on her face.

And shows her feet encased in ice-bound nights. And Lake Lucerne, her dazzling diamond spot, Lies sleeping and reflecting chalets' bliss.

Its shores re-echo Shiller's pulsing plot As waters tell the story of the Swiss!

Resplendent is this land of scenic charms. It is God's playground folded in His arm.

Asks Definition of "Americanism"

By Subscriber

When we hear Commander Murphy of the American Legion talk about Americanism, without explaining what it is, we wonder just what he means.

Does he mean a nation where we have economic security, peace and plenty for every citizen, or a banker-controlled nation in which about 3 per cent of the population get the cream of the wealth and the actual producers get a few crumbs?

Do these self-appointed "Constitution savers" know that radical-minded people are responsible for the progress of the world? That the constitutional rights of the common people are trampled on daily under the present system?

It is silly to cry "Communism"

whenever sound progressive measures are proposed for human welfare.

One wonders if capitalism has discovered that it needs a bogeyman in an attempt to frighten people so that it will furnish an excuse to defend an obnoxious system. The old "red herring" has been dragged out so much that it is putrid.

I do not believe in Communism, nor am I a Communist. I am one of a group that believes the day of individualism is done. By using common sense the people could vote into power a system that would give them peace and economic security.

Socialism points the way and it is up to the people to save themselves if they want the better things of life.

It is no longer necessary in those lines of production that can supply an abundance for the highest possible consumption. Co-ordination of production to eliminate duplication and waste energy is essential in those industries, in order to release energy for those with undeveloped or inadequate facilities. Raising wages means absolutely nothing if prices

rise higher than will permit top-notch consumption.

Raising production to the highest possible consumption level spells real prosperity. Bookkeeping profits mean nothing to society if we go bankrupt in consumption power.

To set the pace for industry the government can start the wage-raising program to its employees.

It also can set up sample production units with the highest degree of efficiency. To set the pace for all industries, these goods to be sold to government units and employees.

Hooverian competition is fallacious. Consumption subsidies may be the answer to the query as to how to raise wages to permit higher production and consumption levels. WPA merely stops production and consumption from falling lower, but it will not intensify either to its limit.

THINKS KILLING DOG AN INHUMAN ACT

By Elsie Perkins

On the morning of Oct. 31, while going downtown, I witnessed a rather horrible sight. A car went around the bus I was on and struck a dog that was crossing the street. The driver of that car could not have helped seeing the dog, but he did not slow down in the least. He did not even stop after he hit the dog. Are people in such a hurry that they can run over a dog and leave it writhing and crying in helpless pain? They shouldn't be.

Any person who has no more feeling than to leave a dog like that would probably do the same thing to a human. Can't we do something about them?

Daily Thought

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.—St. John 15:13.

LET friendship creep gently to a height; it rushes to it, it may soon run itself out of breath.—Fuller.

SIDE GLANCES

By George Clark



"A few more defeats like that, professor, and we'll never draw crowds enough to pay for that stadium."