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 By Edgar R. Bloomer
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Editorial

"BACK AND FORTH"

Back and forth—back and forth—back and forth. Twist and turn, turn and twist. Turn right, turn left, turn straight. Slip, slide, and skid. Motor racing, wheels spinning, car standing absolutely still.

This spectacle has been before us at any hour of the day along the curbs in Farmington's business-section, since the snowstorm Monday night. Cars parked with difficulty a few minutes before, now stalled in the snowbanks at the curbs. Those "in" unable to get out, and those "out" unable to get "in"—and not so sure they want to, when they see what happens.

One man remarks, "It's silly to talk of doing a lot of different things to try to get people to come and trade in Farmington, when a thing like this is allowed to go on. Why shouldn't people go elsewhere when they can't park when they do come here and if they do park, they can't get out."

His remark points out another of those problems upon which Farmington business-men and the City government must co-operate and act, if business is to be retained and increased.

"BEN FRANKLIN—PRINTER"

Thursday, January 17th, is the birthday of the most versatile man America ever produced, and one of the remarkable characters in the world's history, Benjamin Franklin. He and his work have not been forgotten, of course, but the fact that his accomplishments were of the unspectacular kind has tended to minimize the tremendously important place he holds in history, not only of the United States, but of all the Western World.

It is impossible to single out any quality or achievement of Franklin, his were so many and so great. Because, with the modesty that characterized his every act and thought, he chose to call himself always, plain "Ben Franklin, Printer," the printing industry has done more than any other group to perpetuate his name. And everyone connected with the art and business of putting ink on paper is honored in this choice of Ben Franklin, to designate himself first of all as a printer.

In tribute to his memory on his birthday, the "Ben Franklins," an organization "to encourage discussion of and increase interest in the great contribution Franklin made to his generations and posterity," has issued a resume of his life. The record is amazing, even to those who are familiar with Franklin's work. The good and true old saying, "Jack-of-all-trades, master of none," meets an exception here. Franklin did dozens of things—and every one well.

His wisdom and ability, so useful in his own time and city, would be of equal advantage today, in any community—in this community. For instance, Farmington is faced with the necessity for public improvements, yet it is desired to keep taxes down. Probably most Franklin's outstanding characteristic, to most people,

was his strong belief in thrift—he was, indeed, the very apostle of thrift—yet he was a leader in bringing about improvements, organizing the police and fire departments, aiding toward improvement of Philadelphia's streets, and leading the good roads movement.

Although he was one of the perhaps two or three diplomats in American history for whom European nations have had the highest respect, and is possibly America's only "citizen of the world" thus far, Franklin displayed to the utmost degree those characteristics which are peculiarly American. Every American citizen should know more about him. His important works have been summed up by the Ben Franklins, in part, as follows:

"So general were his activities, so versatile his achievements, so genuine his public spirit, that his useful life appeals to the interest and incentive of people in every field of endeavor.

"His thrift, his sterling honesty, his natural simplicity, his keen sense of justice, his patience and endeavor in overcoming obstacles, all serve as examples and inspiration to worthy life.

"Of no other man can it be said that he distinguished himself as a business man, inventor, printer, editor, public author, statesman, diplomat, harmonizer, public servant, educator, philosopher, philanthropist, benefactor and exemplar.

"An inventor and scientist he greatly improved the methods of printing by devising an improved printing press; he invented the Franklin stove. He taught much regarding electricity through his writings. By trying his life and other experiments in electricity he began the great work Edison still carries on.

"As a publisher he edited the Pennsylvania Gazette and later Poor Richard's Almanac, in which he displayed his incomparable faculty of translating great principles into terms of simple anecdote. Its reputation was established by its first issue, and it was the first American literary production to find favor in foreign lands. Franklin has never ceased to be Poor Richard teaching the basic facts which are essential to normal living and true progress received from him.

"He organized the Junto Club for the study and discussion of morals, politics and mutual philosophy, which led to the establishment of the Philadelphia Public Library. It became the nucleus of all public libraries in America and paved the way for the great philanthropy of Andrew Carnegie.

"He helped to establish the American Philosophical Society, and was one of the founders of the Academy of the Province of Pennsylvania, which finally became the University of Pennsylvania. With little school training, he so educated himself that he was recognized as a great philosopher, and received the degree of doctor of laws from the University of St. Andrews at Edinburgh.

"He also received honors from many other universities and societies in the United States and Europe.

"He carried on correspondence with nearly every important man in this country and many of the leading characters in other countries. His correspondence covers quite fully the early history of this country and its foreign relations.

"It has been said of him that he never said a word too soon, never said a word too late and never said a word too much. While he never seemed to attempt eloquence, he never spoke without attaining it. He was sparing with words but lavish with ideas.

"He organized the police and fire departments, and did much toward improving the streets of Philadelphia and starting the good roads movement.

"As showing what many of our present generation think of Franklin, the professors of the University of Washington included Franklin as the only American in a list of men whom they considered had made the greatest contribution to learning in the history of the western world. Included were three Greeks, three Germans, three Italians, a Scotchman, a Roman, a Frenchman, a Hebrew and a Dutchman.

"As early as 1764 he wrote a treatise showing that the colonies must be united and this first public proposal grew and crystallized and resulted in the United States of America.

"He organized and was president of the first society formed in America to advocate the abolition of slavery, and sent the first protest on this subject ever addressed to the congress of the United States.

"As a public official he served as clerk of the general assembly of Pennsylvania, postmaster of Philadelphia, postmaster general

of the colonies, was a delegate to the constitutional convention of Pennsylvania and served three terms as president of Pennsylvania.

"He was elected delegate to the provincial congress, which appointed him a member of a committee of five to frame the Declaration of Independence. While the matters of the Declaration of Independence were signing, John Hancock said to Franklin: 'We must all hang together.' Yes, replied Franklin with his brilliant wit, 'He must all hang together or most assuredly we will all hang separately.'

"He worked energetically in war times, but he was a constant advocate of peace. More than once he said, 'There never was a good war or a bad peace. What repeated follies are these repeated wars.' Thus he was a pioneer in the great work for world peace.

"He was 81 years of age when he was chosen a delegate to the convention which framed the Constitution of the United States in 1787."

Random Hits
 By Contributor

Necessity of Public Improvements

There seems to be no negative side to the question of public improvements while the discussion is in the abstract, which is conclusive proof that paved streets, sewers, etc. are generally desired and deemed necessary for the proper development of a community.

Let the improvement proposition be put in definite form such as the proposed paving of Oakland road and there, at once develops an objection. A few property owners rise to protest that the time is not right, "the present road is good enough," "taxes are already too high." These with several other stock excuses are sung in high pitch just as they always have been since the time of man first conceived of that cruel instrument of torture, the tax-roll. This mournful wail will probably reverberate down through the corridors of time, but happily will go with it the joyous ring of the ax in blazing the trail of progress, for forward movement is not stopped by chronic objectors, only hindered.

It is an unfortunate circumstance that there are those who are hard pressed for ready tax money, but that is no reason why improvements should cease. There never was nor never will be a time when every tax-payer will find it perfectly convenient to pay taxes. If improvements were dependent upon the willingness and convenience of every individual tax-payer, there would be no public improvements.

Should it have been necessary to secure the unanimous consent of every property owner on Woodward avenue, Detroit, before paving could have been undertaken that avenue today would be a dirt road. There would be no paved streets or improved roads in Michigan and the objectors together with other property owners would be much poorer than they are today with their "burden of taxation."

If tax-payers were as alert in matters of general public expenditures and as interested in State, County and local board and commission expenses, as they are when a specific tax is proposed affecting their individual property, there would be material lessening in the tax burden without loss of necessary service or protection.

The improvement tax looks large, but the money wasted and frittered away by officials, boards and commissions is larger.

Danger in Transplanting

Tree-like people, lose adaptability with advancing age, and comparatively minor change in their environments may be fatal.

Entomologists of the Department of Agriculture say that transplanting almost always is a severe test for trees of considerable size and many transplanted trees are attacked by insects. In most of the large trees in a grove are small trees or bushes, and trees or small groups, the survivors often suffer serious damage and die.

This may be the result of a disturbance of moisture conditions and a change from regular shade to large areas of sun-baked soil. Borers then may complete the deadly work.

Milky Way

The most stupendous of all celestial objects is the Galaxy, more commonly known as the Milky Way. In fact it is one whole universe of which the sun with all its attendant family of planets, including asteroids and satellites, as well as comets, forms a very humble member. Its appearance as a dim white band across the heavens is merely a matter of perspective; that band marks simply the plane of greatest extension of the Milky Way—the direction in which the stars, in reality, are widely distributed, appear congested by the effect of distance. Many of these stars are immensely brighter than the sun.

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