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Editorials

'Michigan's Greatest Problem'

At a banquet attended by Michigan weekly newspaper publishers at Lansing last week-end, the editors heard two of Michigan's high officials speak. They were Webster H. Pearce, superintendent of public instruction, whose charming address in Farmington a few months ago will be well remembered, and Wilber M. Brucker, Michigan's accomplished young Attorney-General.

Mr. Pearce spoke on a favorite subject of his—the question of the youth of today, and its fitness to assume the obligations soon to fall upon it. As when in Farmington, he expressed the conviction that the young people of today will measure up to the needs of the future. And he told a story of a little boy who trudges every day several miles through the snow to a little schoolhouse up north, one which Mr. Pearce happened to visit. Mr. Pearce watched the shabbily-dressed little boy come into the school. He took off his overshoes, revealing bare feet. At noon when the other children took out their lunches, this little boy hid his lunch behind an opened book. And Mr. Pearce saw that the lunch consisted of three cold pancakes left over from breakfast.

Mr. Pearce pointed out that when any little boy is so eager for schooling that he is willing to walk to school with his bare feet covered only by overshoes, and eat a lunch of cold left-over pancakes, we need not worry about our country's future.

Attorney-General Brucker's address, quite different, was on "Michigan's greatest problem." Our greatest problem in this State, declared Mr. Brucker, is to make the people become "State-minded." This is important in the handling of crime, in building of roads and other public works, in developing Michigan as a recreation State. The people in every community must learn that above the advantage of their particular locality is the welfare of the whole State.

Following the talks of Mr. Pearce and Mr. Brucker, a number of editors were called on for stories. Among them was Fred D. Keister of the Ionia County News. Mr. Keister had no story. But he had been impressed by the incident related by Supt. Pearce, about the little boy who went to school with just bare feet inside his overshoes. And Mr. Keister was able to add some experiences of his daughter, a teacher in a school in the tenement district in one of Michigan's cities. All of the children in the school are given an allowance of milk during the day, but not as much as required. Most of them were able to bring more, because their parents could afford it. Others were not, because their parents could not afford it.

"It seems to me that it is a shame upon this State," said Mr. Keister. "That we have everywhere magnificent school buildings with everything in the way of equipment that anyone could ask—and yet some children have to go to school in bare feet, and others

can't get the milk that they should have. And that hundreds of them should come every year to the reformatory, when many a father who knows about reformatories would rather stand beside an open grave than see his son enter a reform school. That's Michigan's greatest problem." And Mr. Keister sat down.

The speech had not been prepared. It was spoken without long forethought, and based on what the other speakers had said. Any yet we cannot help feeling that Mr. Keister in his brief remarks had got down to the real bottom of things, to real fundamental problems of society, of Michigan, while the two able officials who had preceded him, in all due respect to them, merely scratched the surface of superficial things. Brick buildings yet bare feet; reform schools "graduating" so many criminals that the State has to have a police radio system to catch them; mathematics for children who need milk more—this, truly, is "Michigan's greatest problem."

How She Wishes She Were A Man!

Those tobacco posters! Not so long ago, they induced acute nausea by depicting an impossibly handsome young man (college-graduate, of course!) gazing into the limpid orbs of an even more impossibly beautiful young lady; with admiration exceeded only by their mutual adoration of the cigaret which alone separates their alluring (to each other) red lips. We have forgotten the message, but the picture remains.

Now comes the newer art. Another very apparently college-bred young man is seated in a luxurious arm-chair. He has just exhaled from a pipe a glorious cloud of fragrant smoke, which wafts gently toward the ceiling—and the name of the brand he is smoking. Kneeling beside the arm of his chair (how else could she properly express adequate reverence?) is an exquisitely beautiful young lady. She gazes upward at the smoke and at his pipe and sighs gloriously, "How I wish I was a man!"

We have never tried that particular brand. It may be good, bad, or indifferent. But whatever may be its quality, the taste can't be half as bad as the work of artists who could spoil the best of tobacco with bad posters.

Judges As Dictators

An appeal to the United States supreme court from the decision of the Minnesota supreme court on the infamous "gas law" of that State is both inevitable and imperative. The state tribunal found that the statute violates neither the state nor the federal constitution. That the highest tribunal in the land will reverse the Minnesota court seems almost certain.

This law, which so many persons and groups have found objectionable, makes it possible for any district judge in Minnesota to suppress a publication for printing "malicious, scandalous and defamatory matter".

The possibilities for corruption of the courts and government and for intimidation of the press under a gag law of this sort are unlimited. It abrogates the constitutional guarantee of freedom of the press and freedom of speech. Liberty-loving Americans and all who believe in good government and in upholding the high standard of the courts shudder at the thought of vesting a corrupt and unscrupulous jurist with such arbitrary powers. Every newspaper that dared to criticize his maladministration of justice would be at his mercy and the press would cease to be a medium through which individuals could expose his perfidy.

Where is the need of legislation of this type? Every commonwealth has its criminal and civil libel laws which afford ample protection against defamation.—Greenville Daily News.

From the Gallows

Bad grammar and all, the letters to Clarence Menard, in Ionia reformatory, from his two brothers in Montreal are rare human documents.

Clarence and one of the brothers engaged in armed robbery at Detroit. Clarence is still serving his five-to-fifteen year term at Ionia but the brother escaped, picked up a still younger brother, held up a Montreal coal office, killed an attendant and ran squarely into Canadian justice. They were hanged, and on their last night wrote Clarence as follows:

I hope Clarence, that you will be out of there soon and please go straight. You know Clarence, that it don't pay. Look what little you got for the long time that you got to do for it and look what we got to pay, so please get a job and be good.

In the shadow of the gallows the Menard boys knew one prospective criminal who could be deterred from crime by their execution. They added the force of their admonition to the fact of their death. But unquestionably a multitude of others to whom they did not write, and of whom they did not know, will also be deterred by their punishment.

The criminal does reflect. He does count the cost. If he knows—as in England and Canada—that crime won't pay, that the cost is too high, he will do exactly what the Menard brothers advised Clarence to do—"get a job and be good."

The letter from these boys is more than brotherly advice under the gallows. It is a lesson to lawmakers, juries, judges, pardon commissions and governors. It says: "Make punishment certain and we, the criminal, will fear it and leave innocent lives and honest men's property alone"—Grand Rapids Press.

Credit Character

Your real character is worth more than gold, keep it good. Credit is the faith man has in his fellow man. It represents integrity, honor, honesty and is the foundation stone of character. This is the season of the year when men who have been given credit should go to the



limit in an endeavor to clean their slate and be prepared to start the coming year with all old bills paid up. If a man cannot pay all his bills, he can pay part of them. Pay the interest on notes and pay part of the principal if possible. Acts of this kind are far reaching in importance and have much to do with one's standing in the community.—Exchange.

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