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Editorials

"It Don't Cost Nobody Nothing!"

Stung sharply into thought by hard times, the people of this and other parts of the country have talked more about taxes in the last year than in the twenty-five before it. Now, with prosperity fled, we look back upon the expenditures of the past five years as huge, after having paid no attention to them whatever for four of those five years.

Causing high taxes probably more than any other single factor, is the general attitude that has grown up among the people toward their government. More and more we have been getting away from local self-rule, and with the ever-widening circle of State and national government activities, we have come to look upon our government as a thing apart. "The government" appears to mean, not simply the means of carrying on a limited work of public nature, but some sort of super-organization, apart from and outside the people. Out of this organization, each group wheedles the most it possibly can.

"The government," we say, is doing this or that, or "the State" is doing it. "The government" has become an immense grab-bag, without bottom or strings. Thus "Federal aid" and "State aid," which most people seem to look upon as manna dropped from the skies, may well prove to be oppressive curses, rather than blessings. The business is carried on so far away that the people forget that they must put in whatever is taken out, with a healthy slice for those who are doing the taking out in the people's behalf.

But let Merle Thorpe, editor of "Nation's Business," tell the story. His description of the situation does not need the prestige of his name to commend it. Rather, its clarity and force is an indication as to why he holds the high position that he does. Says Mr. Thorpe:

"Speaking of taxes—and who is not?—the tax collector now demands from each of us one day's labor out of each week. All of us, men, women and children, earn yearly around 80 billion dollars. Our tax bill is nearly 13 billion—one-sixth of our total earning capacity.

"Look at taxes in another way: One person out of 11 who are gainfully employed is a public employee. Not so long ago we required only one person out of each 22 to perform the services which we demanded of government. A few more of our demands, and it will be one out of ten; then one out of nine, and so on and on. When will we stop saying, 'The Government ought to do this, and that, and the other thing'?"

"Most people think the corporations and the rich pay the taxes. This fallacy, more than any other single thing, is responsible for our increasing tax burden. I once observed how skillfully one million dollars was extracted from a state legislature by the argument that most of the money would be paid by the railroads, anyway. The state, the argument ran, would be getting a dollar's worth of university buildings for 50 cents.

"But the naked truth is that every man and woman who ate a meal in that state, who bought a suit of clothes, or who lived in a house, helped to pay the dollars which the legislators thought they were taking out of the hide of the railroads.

"The railroads simply collected it from the people who shipped freight or bought goods which some one else had shipped.

"Another fallacy is that everything from the Government is free. Free seeds, it used to be; now free publications, free advice, free help, free this and that. Such a ghastly joke. There is no such thing as free government, any more than there is free rent, free clothing, or free groceries. Government costs real money. Every self-supporting citizen shares his income with the million-odd men and women now on government pay rolls.

"A gentleman, visiting Washington, hired an old dorky to drive him around to see the sights. The dorky grew enthusiastic. He waved his arm at the Botanical Gardens, the museums, the parks, and monuments, and said to my friend, 'It's all free. It don't cost nobody nothing.' The Government pays for it."

"Taxes are hidden in everything we buy. The landlord passes on part of his taxes in the bill for our rent; the baker wraps them up with the bread he sells us. The insurance company includes them in its premiums. Bills from the butcher and milkman include a tax as surely as if the postman brought a notice from the tax office.

"Business is interested in reducing taxes, not alone selfishly, because business, after all, simply collects taxes from the consumers of things. Business sees money wasted which might be used by individuals to get those things which would give greater happiness and contentment—house furnishings, or a trip to Europe, a new carpet sweeper, or a set of books. Business sees clearly that it is the consumer of things who pays, and because that consumer does not know that he pays, that he is apt to advocate and urge an expenditure which he would never favor if he knew that it was to be paid out of his pocket.

"When the individual understands clearly that he pays the bill, he will consider more carefully increased government appropriations and services. If each man who signs a petition or writes a letter to a congressman or state legislator, urging a public expenditure, were required by law to enclose his check for his part of the expense, there would be sharper scrutiny of such proposed activities."

How long is it since you paused, thought about what Thanksgiving Day is for—and really gave thanks?

One Never Knows

Sometimes the things we try hardest to avoid are those which turn out to be the greatest good fortune. A good illustration was given last Friday night by Harold H. Emmons, in his talk before showing of pictures of his trip through Africa.

Mr. Emmons told how his brother-in-law, Edwin S. George, bullied him into taking the trip, over the most strenuous objections he could offer, keeping at it for months while Mr. Emmons kept saying "No!" Now Mr. Emmons says he wouldn't trade it for anything else that ever happened to him, although he went through all kinds of perilous experiences on the trip. You never know.

Clipped From Other Newspapers

Be A Practical Dreamer!

(Birmingham Eclectic)

It generally pays to keep one's feet close to the ground—especially when seeking substantial support for the erection of solid buildings. Even air castles—those airy, fairy, dreamy flights of the imagination—should be constructed upon sound thoughts, or even as dreams they do not bring the solace and comfort that they can.

Life, very largely, is a routine, work-a-day affair, filled with trivial necessities—yet containing the Big Moment, the Tempestuous Thrill, the Vagrant Vibration. We need the stimulating thoughts, the enthusiastic aid, and the steady impetus of others to help us along the way; but we should seek to remain practical in all things—else even our air castle may be plunged earthward, and crash about our head.

We must not be like the two knights of the road who, while walking along a railroad track, found a bottle of some enervating fluid—white mule. One took a drink, then passed the bottle to his comrade. They repeated the gesture, until the bottle became empty.

Soon after one of the errant knights stuck out his chest and exclaimed, "Say, Bill, tomorrow I'm going to buy this railroad. In fact, I'm going to buy all the railroads, automobiles, steamships—everything—in this country. What do you think of that?"

Bill turned a pitying gaze upon his friend, and replied, "Impossible; can't do it."

"Why not?" questioned the newly turned financier.

"Because I won't sell," returned the equally stunned Bill.

Good News

(Utica Sentinel)

Here's good news! Michigan's antiquated court procedure is to be reformed. Court procedure affects all of us, inasmuch as wooden-wheeled courts are an encouragement to crime. Since the rules for the lower courts are established by the State Supreme Court, it has been hard for John Doe and Richard Roe to make their voices heard—but they have nevertheless. The Legal Research Institute at the state university has finished its labors and has prepared a new code. Upon its adoption we may look for snapper if not scrapper courts.

Why Should He?

(Grand Rapids Press)

Otto Strong, rural driver from near Kalamazoo, is virtually blind in his right eye. Two weeks ago his car collided with a Grand Rapids fire engine and fireman Thomas J. Merriam was killed.

At the inquest Strong testified that he did not see the fire engine approaching. He said that he had been issued an operator's license seven years ago and that he did not inform the authorities who issued the license that he was unable to see in his right eye.

Why should he have done so? All about him on the roads of Michigan may be found half-blind, astigmatic, epileptic, partly crippled drivers, not to mention criminals and feeble-minded, freely licensed by the State without the least inquiry regarding their infirmities of mind, morals or body. In only a few cities there have been any sustained effort to examine drivers even upon the rules of the road. Rural residents obtain licenses upon a mere perfunctory application, and many city residents enjoy the same liberal service.

It would have been most unusual if Mr. Strong had felt called upon to announce his infirmity, and still more unusual if somebody had inquired about it. Our Michigan drivers' license is not written for public safety. It is written for accommodation only.

The Barber's Vendetta

(Grand Rapids Chronicle)

Of course everybody knows that it isn't really a statue under the kitchen sink (it invariably turns out to be a plumber), but even at that it is perhaps worth while to relay to a nation of suffering householders the joyous tidings that at last one of these creatures has met his just deserts. In Brooklyn, John Gentrio, barber and resourceful American citizen, called in Herman Finisel, plumber, to repair a leaking pipe. Plumber Finisel wandered back to his shop for a gasket; Gentrio held his aching thumb over the leak for five hours and plotted vendetta. Later, we are informed, Finisel came into the barber shop to have his beard shaved. Gentrio shaved off exactly half of the hirsute crop, collected every razor in the place and departed to have them honed. Through some strange freak of fate, the honing job consumed approximately five hours. The reports do not state whether or not Gentrio carried his vengeance to the extent of selling Finisel a bottle of hair tonic.

Football For Charity

(Allegheny News)

All this whoop-t-doo by Gov. Fred W. Green for a charity football game makes me smile. Certainly a game between the University of Detroit and the University of Michigan for charity would be a drawing card and would net a large sum for charity. But—the rules of the conference will not permit such a contest. As a result, thousands of fans, especially in the eastern part of the State, have set up an uproar. If each and every football fan who would pay \$5 for charity for this Thanksgiving day game would stay at home and give thanks that he has employment, and send the \$5, plus the remainder which it costs to attend such a game, he would be doing a lot more for the unemployed. The whole thing takes on the aspect of the so-called charity balls for which the women who attend spend hundreds of dollars to make themselves beautiful—and turn over a few paltry dollars to charity. Attending a football game for a resident of Detroit, journeying to Ann Arbor would cost (for two) not less than \$20 with tickets at \$5 each—and for most, more than this. Let each fanatic donate such a sum to charity—without having to be given a "lollypop" to be a big-hearted Indian.

Phone in your news items.

Around the Home

By MARGARET BRUCE

Ward Service

The Man's Side of It

Did you ever notice that most of the bedrooms shared by husband and wife seem to be arranged chiefly for the comfort and convenience of the lady in the case? Her dressing table stands in the best light, both day and evening. The largest closet is hers, and if there is only one closet in the room, she gets it all to herself. Must the man's side of the closet in the hall or perhaps in the children's room or the guest room. His children's clothes are in a corner, a badly lighted corner at that, and there is no place for him to sit down to change his shoes unless he sits on his wife's pretty chaise longue, strewn with childrens and pillows.

I know a woman who designed the large double sleeping room in her new home with an especial eye to the man's side of it. One "whole side of the room" was devoted to his "divided use." He could step out of the twin bed which he occupied directly into an area filled with his own special furniture, clothing and accessories. Here, in an excellent light, was his hair dresser, equipped with plenty of room for all his brushes, ties, underclothing, shirts, socks, and pajamas. Opposite was a commodious closet, planned for his suits, coats, shoes, and hats.

The chief thoughtfulness, however, was the dressing table built for his use in the window look. Here there was a charming old mahogany shaving stand, and beneath that, a mirror, a chair and in drawers, were the materials and implements for a shave. For the beautiful bathroom opening from the room was shared upon occasions by the occupant of the guest room, just as when the bathroom was not available he did not have to wait, turning, but could shave comfortably in his own room. The splendid light from the window, falling full upon his face, was augmented by strong electric bulbs within the curtains on each side of the window.

Beneath these dressing table curtains was the shoe-brushing outfit in a special cabinet. In fact, every detail provision had been made for his convenience, in such a way that he would not feel that he was getting in his wife's way, or musing upon her duty domain. This side of the room was sacred to him and he was entirely at home there.

(Copyright)

IT IS FAR MORE THAN 'JUST MERE FORMALITY'

When a fast talker says his written contract is "just a formality," "merely red tape," doesn't mean anything,"—stop, look and think.

Read before you sign any important document—such as a contract—or you may regret your haste all your life.

Don't be misled into thinking your signature is a mere "formality." If verbal promises differ from the printed terms of the contract, don't sign!

Reputable business institutions are willing that prospective customers read, understand and investigate their obligation before putting their signatures on the "dotted line."

Read Before You Sign! —Better Business Bureau.

STATE GRAIN WINNERS FOLLOW NEW METHODS

East Lansing.—A study of the methods used by Michigan farmers who produced bumper yields of small grains in 1930 shows that improved farm practices were used universally by the outstanding producers.

The study showed that 80 per cent of the winning exhibits in the 1930 contest planted improved varieties of wheat, oats, and barley developed by Michigan State College plant breeders. Sixty per cent of the winning exhibitors in wheat, oats, and barley grew a legume in their crop rotation. Alfalfa was the most common legume.

The trouble with so much of the interesting stuff we read is that it isn't true.

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