

The Farmington Enterprise

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Editorials

The Right Not To Vote

Elections are over and the voters, or rather, only about half of them, having "done their duty," the people of the County and State will turn their attention in other directions until the next campaign comes around. All that remains is the taking of office by the successful candidates.

As has been the case for many years, the voters who went to the polls did not comprise a very large percentage of those entitled to do so. The pleas to "get out and vote" fell to a large extent on deaf ears. This despite the fact that appeals and persuasion were present, as always. Newspapers, as is the custom before every election, urged upon the citizenry that it was their solemn duty to "vote next Tuesday." Probably thousands of newspapers all over this broad land printed editorials which ended with the favorite strain: "Vote Tuesday! Vote as you please—but VOTE! This is all to the good, of course, but in many cases the persuasiveness undoubtedly went so far as to imply that the citizen who did not vote was a slacker, derelict in his duty. These continual attempts to coerce indifferent voters have raised in our mind a disturbing question.

The citizen of the United States is granted by the Constitution the privilege of voting, but wherein does it say that he must? And who may say, if the voter chooses not to bother, that he hasn't a perfect right to do so? This might appear at first the most violent heresy. But pause a moment and reflect that there are probably hundreds of thousands, even millions of people all over the country whose attitude toward government and public affairs is something like this:—

"The business of government, outside of a small community, has become so big and complex that I, an average citizen, have neither the time nor the opportunity to keep up with affairs. If I should spend the time, aside from working hours, that would be required to keep posted on my county, state and national government, it would take two or three evenings a week at least, perhaps more. So even though there is a good deal of inefficiency, graft and corruption in government, and though I might make possible a saving of twenty-five or fifty or a hundred dollars a year in my taxes, it would be hardly worth-while to spend all that time and effort. Life's too short. And there's no assurance that even if I and all my intelligent friends and neighbors did put in the effort, that we could keep out the bunch that just want to make their living in office—job-hunters. So what's the use? Government in this country and probably every other country, is run by a bunch of fellows who make a business of it. Of course they don't run it for the people's good, but for their own benefit, whenever they get a chance. Let 'em run it, and I'll attend to my business and put in my spare time at something I enjoy. Why should I be criticized for it, and be told every little while that I'm not an asset to the country just because I don't vote for one candidate or another at election time?"

This attitude on the part of citizens is, of course, seldom expressed openly, being a negative one. But it exists, nevertheless, though editorial writers may regard it as horrifying, and reformers may declare it to be "the source of all our governmental ills." Despite the eager reforming and urgent editorializing year after year, the percentage of citizens who vote goes down, down, down, with almost every election. There is nothing to indicate that it is likely to turn upward again in the near future. Unless, possibly, we can put into political campaigns, something of the entertainment features that they possessed years ago, before the movie, the automobile and the radio.

The situation being as it is, with such great multitudes of citizens in this country preferring "not to bother," and being criticized for it, we think they ought to be entitled to a statement of their side of the case. We should like to see someone step forward and argue the voter's right not to vote if he doesn't want to.

Worth Thinking Over

In a letter written before the World War veterans undertook the campaign at present under way for payment of the war veterans' bonus certificates now, and before President Hoover was reported as endorsing the plan, one William Corman of Detroit wrote a letter suggesting the idea as an economic restorative. In his letter, filled with sound logic in support of the plan, Mr. Corman said:

President Herbert Hoover, The White House, Washington, D. C.
Dear Sir:

I have outlined below a plan that will restore prosperity to the country within thirty days.
Let the Government pay off the war veterans' bonus certificates now, in liberty bonds if the cash is not available. This will put the now, in liberty bonds if the cash is not available. This will put the equivalent of \$3,500,000,000 of the hands of 4,000,000 citizens scattered throughout the nation; more ready money than any similar group of PLAIN people ever had before in the history of the world. They will start building homes, buy furniture, clothes, automobiles, etc.—start the business ball rolling in such a way that its very momentum would keep it going for years.

A three per cent interest rate would keep these bonds at par in today's easy money market. Of course Mr. Mellon objects to all this, pointing out the annual interest charges of \$105,000,000. However, we know definitely that our Government takes in much more than \$105,000,000 extra in income taxes and custom receipts in a prosperous year than it does in a year of depression such as we are now passing through. Furthermore the loss in our total national income for this year alone as compared to last year, will be at least twice the entire amount of these bonus certificates.
If we wait 15 years and pay these certificates off at maturity, it is very probable that this huge cash payment will come at a time

when the nation is extremely prosperous, and generate an uncounted boom with a subsequent collapse, similar to what we have recently experienced.

The nation's business needs a stimulant now. Fifteen years from now it may prove a menace.

WILLIAM CORMAN.

From the standpoint of relieving the present depression, the proposal has unquestioned merit. Before plunging into the thing heading, however, it would be well to consider not merely the country as a whole, but the veterans themselves and their families, in the future as well as the present. Most of the World War veterans are now between 30 and 40 years old. In 15 years they will be between 45 and 55. Everyone, including the former soldiers themselves, should reflect carefully whether it would do them and their families the most good now, at the same time helping to relieve the general business stringency of the moment, or whether the several hundred dollars each due them will not serve them and their families better in the late forties and middle fifties. Decision should be based on both factors, not one alone. The veterans themselves may perhaps best decide.

A Real Drain

Whatever else may be said of the Southfield Drain, it cannot be denied that it was rightly named—a drain. It's going to be just that—and a big one—on the pockets of the people of Oakland County.

Clipped From Other Newspapers

Running A Newspaper

(Raleigh, N. C. Register)
The thing that makes it hard for a man to run a newspaper is his friends. When a friend thinks something ought to be kept out of the paper he doesn't hesitate to ask it as a personal favor. An enemy doesn't ask any favors. But a friend thinks the conduct of a newspaper is the personal matter of the editor, when as a matter of fact he is largely in the position of a man serving a public trust.
A philosophical old fellow once said to the writer, "a newspaper that doesn't make you mad once in a while isn't worth the subscription price."

To make people mad isn't the chief province of a newspaper, but if it is going to be one worthy the name, it must print the news without fear or favor. The Register has been threatened with, and indeed has suffered, business reprisals, not once but frequently. These things must necessarily be borne in mind by the great reading public which the newspaper serves is not interested in the personal difficulties of the editor or publisher, though we have known instances where a full airing of threats and subsequent reprisals would have made absorbing reading.

But such things must be regarded as part of the game—to be suffered perhaps because of sins committed in other directions. And then too it must be remembered that all things, both human and divine, are subject to criticism. Even the Bible does not escape.

How Odd Penny Prices Begon

(Florence, Ala., Herald)
We are so accustomed to articles in stores priced at 98 cents, \$1.49, and other odd-penny amounts that few persons give any thought to what once was considered a freakish idea of price-making.

But G. H. Cilley, a well-known store advertising manager, tells in a recent article that the custom arose from the solution of a very practical problem by a shrewd merchant.

When Captain Roland H. Macy got tired of sailing the briny deep as a sea captain and started a store in New York, there were no cash registers, or other means for checking up on his clerks. Money received for purchases was put in an old-fashioned cash drawer which made no records, and the practice of "knocking down," a euphemism for plain stealing by clerks, was quite prevalent.

Macy changed all prices to odd-cent amounts, established cashiers to make the required change, and kept a close watch on the cashiers. His advertisements of the public eye favored to strike in an old-fashioned way, and he got a great response. What was at first only an expedient to keep from being robbed developed into a potent psychological appeal to his customers.

Thus the odd-price has survived many years after the original reason for its adoption ceased to exist.

Candidates Woe

(Grand Rapids Chronicle)
Reminding one of the old story of the once wealthy philanthropist who starved to death because

he was refused food and shelter at home for the indigent which he had endowed in the days of his affluence, is the story of the defeated Virginia candidate for congressman, Carney K. Rosser, unsuccessful independent candidate from Virginia's tenth district, immediately upon being defeated applied for admittance to an almshouse. He was hungry, shabbily dressed when he made the request. And although it was perfectly within his rights that he should run for congress, the hardboiled authorities at the almshouse made the Salvation Army feed him while they investigated to determine whether or not he was properly a ward of the county.

What The Pruning Knife

(Durand Express)

The defeat of the cigaret tax in last week's election is proof conclusive of one thing if no other, and that is that if the people are to have a voice in the matter no new tax idea will be approved unless it guarantees a reduction in other taxation. This refers in particular to the property tax. Every mother's son sitting in the state legislature this coming January must take full recognition of the expression of the people in the matter of taxation. No matter whether it is an income tax, more gas or any other kind of a tax the great rank and file of the people will not accept it only on the terms herein stated.

Perhaps it would be more to the point to frankly state that the new state administration, together with solons in session in the legislature, will be wise if the taxation issue is kept within the bounds of the present receipts. The actions of the Board of Supervisors in several counties, including Shiawassee, can serve as a good pattern for imitation. If it is possible for counties to curtail their budgets it would seemingly be equally true of the state. Trimming expenses is the keynote of the present trend of business and industry. If our sister State of Michigan will do well to whet the pruning knife and get busy.

Should Require 51 Per Cent

(George English, Bad Axe)

We vote that the primary law be changed so that 51 per cent of the votes cast will be required to nominate. The futile slip contest for sheriff, both in Huron and Sanilac counties, was due to that defect in the law. The first Michigan primary law. The first the 51 per cent provision.

The majority in the next congress will be so close that both parties will have to behave themselves and quit their political jockeying in order to get any work done at all. It's not a bad thing to have the voters more evenly divided between the parties. If this were true in Michigan taxes would not be so high.

Dollars are scarce these days, else they are in close hiding. Everybody is trying to save and cut down expenses as well they should, but there are some charities that we can't afford to neglect even though our personal wants go unheeded in some degree. One of these is the Red Cross roll call now on. All who can squeeze out a dollar from somewhere and in some way should try and do so for this great cause.

In the state of Massachusetts today there are over four times as many telephones as there were 23 years ago. In 1907 the Bay State had 209,000 telephones.

while there are approximately 922,000 in service at the present time.
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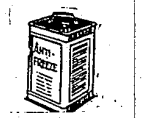
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