

Gov. Warner

Some lessons from the past

I HAVEN'T had a chance yet to ask Gov. Jim Blanchard if he has read Jean M. Fox's new biography of Fred M. Warner, first man ever elected to three consecutive terms as governor (1905-11).

Chances are Blanchard either has read it or already has learned the crucial lessons in the final chapter.

Fred Warner? He gets little space in most state histories. A merchant, cheese manufacturer and banker, he rose from Farmington village president to state senator, secretary of state and the big job.

Warner was no "idea man," and his forgettable speeches had little sparkle, but he was a tall, solid and trusted man, much like Jerry Ford.

Fox titles him "Progressive Governor" because he advocated so many reforms: a primary for nomination of U.S. senators, laws regulating railroads and life insurance companies, registration of lobbyists, taxation of telephone and telegraph companies, the forerunner of the Department of Natural Resources, the first highway department, labor laws for women and children, factory inspections, and so on.

Warner's tenure covered the 1908 Constitutional Convention, and he was a champion of its advances — notably city home rule and the line-item veto, my personal favorites.

WHY, THEN, does Warner get so little recognition, particularly compared to his flash-in-the-pan successor?

Jean Fox, a Farmington Hills city councilwoman and local historian, is a newspaper person as well as history buff, and she may have put her finger on it in the final chapter:

First, he was immediately followed by the charismatic Chase Osborn, who came equipped not only with an ability to verbalize ideas and grasp headlines, but also with the first recorded gubernatorial press agent, Frank Knox. . .

Most of (Osborn's) reforms were outgrowths of hard-fought political battles waged by his predecessor. . .

Warner's times were tranquil compared to the ensuing World War I, depression and growth of the auto industry. Historians, she says, tend to "focus on the history of labor and industrial might."



Tim Richard

IF BLANCHARD hasn't read the Warner biography, he certainly knows about Osborn. He told me so himself several years ago after a chilly parade in Munising.

"I'm the first governor since Chase S. Osborn to carry all 15 counties in the Upper Peninsula," he said. And as readers of this column know, Blanchard is a history buff who would be a formidable contestant on "Jeopardy."

Republicans are attacking Democrat Blanchard precisely because his staff is so good at public relations.

They accuse him of using the Commerce Department budget to promote his administration rather than the state, of "glitz" and ribbon cutting rather than cost cutting, of producing "photo opportunities" instead

of legislative compromises, of boiling an alphabet soup of GAIN, MET and TIP rather than going after the billion-dollar road problems.

The State Capitol press corps grouches that Blanchard bypasses them in favor of local media. I've registered my own complaint — that his state of the state speech was designed as a C-SPAN television extravaganza rather than a solid outline of his programs.

THE INCUMBENT governor, whether or not he has read Jean Fox, has learned the lesson.

Making history is more than doing good. It's making what you do appear good and seeing that you get credit for doing good — now.

Blanchard, like Osborn, intends to cement his reputation while he's still in office, not take a chance that a nice lady like Jean Fox will resurrect his memory 78 years afterwards.

Tim Richard is director of the Suburban Communications Corp. News Service. SCC is the parent company of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

points of view

Tunnel leads to moral

THIS IS a tale of two large bureaucracies trying to make ends meet.

But not in the way you think. Is it tough times in the sales department? Too many expenses and not enough revenue to pay the bills? Maybe a company on the brink of bankruptcy?

No, that's not it. This is about a \$2 million pedestrian tunnel in Chicago — probably budgeted at half that when the project began. When completed, the tunnel will connect city hall and the state government office building.

City contractors started digging at one end, while those hired by the state of Illinois shoveled at the other. They've now reached the middle and discovered someone was a bit off on the calculations.

The state's half of the tunnel is nine inches lower and eight inches to one side of the city's segment. They don't quite match up — to the tune of \$309,000, one of those little extra bills for taxpayers trying to "make ends meet" in more important ways.

THE STATE blames the city and



Casey Hans

the city blames the state. I call it the ultimate in bureaucratic inefficiency. The question is: why didn't one engineering staff and contractor work on the tunnel and have the other governmental unit reimburse them?

That would be too easy. Obviously, each thought they could do a better job, so the whole effort was botched. It's almost comical. If we don't laugh about it, we'll cry.

"It's very embarrassing," one city architect told reporters. "Professionals aren't supposed to make mistakes like this."

Pedestrians will remember their goot each time they step up midway through the tunnel to get to Chicago City Hall.

The project is already some four years behind schedule, but is due to

open in September.

I suppose there are several lessons to be learned from our neighbors in Illinois. A couple might be "do the job yourself to ensure it gets done," or, "the more you dig, the deeper in trouble you get."

BUT THERE'S one more important lesson that Chicago and Illinois officials can learn from other municipalities.

Many cities and government bureaucracies have found methods of working well together — it's commonly called teamwork. When they have a project to coordinate, they get together and do what is most cost efficient and timely for the project and taxpayers.

Usually, whoever can get the lowest quote coordinates the job, with the city or township or county reimbursing for their portion of the project.

Just who's running these big cities and states, and making these big dollar decisions anyway? That's the million-dollar question.

Casey Hans is a staff writer for the Farmington Observer.

Though truth hurts, students must know

Check out your child's history book to see what they're learning.



Steve Barnaby

which provides the majority of labor in our country.

"The principal reason for racial problems," he said, "is a lack of education." And the majority in this country must learn about the history and heritage of minorities.

BUT WE rarely do. The other day, I grazed through my daughter's eighth grade history book to see what she was learning — or should I say what she was missing out on.

The text did deal rather frankly with some of the very major social problems we have experienced in the U.S. But in other areas I was saddened.

Check out your child's history book to see what they're learning.

For instance:

• We, too smugly, gaze at the turmoil in China. But too few of us remember the fate of the bonus marchers who encamped on the lawns of Washington D.C. When President Herbert Hoover had enough of the World War I veterans, he called in the troops, led by General Douglas MacArthur and assisted by Dwight D. Eisenhower, who brutally evicted them.

• Thousands of American citizens were forced into concentration camps during World War II by order of President Franklin Roosevelt. The

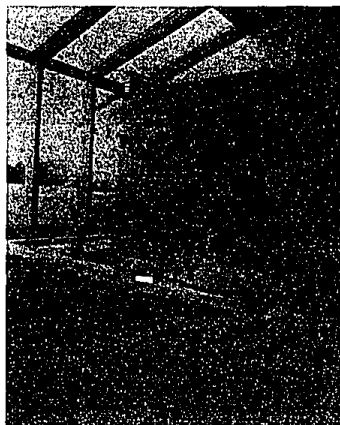
internees lost houses, businesses and bank accounts. The only reason for their internment was because they were Japanese, German-Americans weren't imprisoned.

• Every history book has a photograph of beautiful Mount Vernon. But few, if any, show the massive slave quarters behind it where blacks were forced to live in cramped quarters at night after laboring in the fields during the day so George Washington could live like a king.

• Not satisfied with decimating the American Indian population in the 18th century, the federal government, through the FBI led a concerted effort to destroy the Indian political movement of the 1960s, even though the federal law forbids the FBI from meddling in politics.

The stories are endless. But the point is obvious. Sometimes the truth hurts. But it needs to be told.

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