

The Farmington Enterprise

Established 1888 by Edgar R. Bloomer as "A Permanent Journal of Progress"

Published Thursday of each week and entered at the Post Office at Farmington, Oakland County, Mich., as second-class matter

Myman Levinson Editor and Publisher
C. J. Lehmann Mgr., Printing Dept.

Member
Michigan Press
Association



Member
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Association

Farmington, Michigan, Thursday, January 23, 1930

Editorials

Sold!—"My Life In The White House"

"Everything is commercialized nowadays." How often have we heard it said—and how often do we encounter things that make us feel it is true.

So we all ought to be somewhat hardened to it by this time. Still, some manifestations of it give one pause, now and then. For instance, something that is trumpeted forth on blatant bill-board posters all over Detroit. The wife of a former President of the United States has sold her recollections of "My Life In The White House," to a newspaper syndicate for publication.

Nothing it would seem, but has its price. As our children study history and civics in the schools, their teachers endeavor to throw a halo of respect and reverence around that greatest of all living men, the President of the United States. Yet more wonderful is the White House, that beautiful and marvellous white mansion in which not merely one, but many Presidents have lived.

And now "My Life In The White House" is for sale—nay, has been sold to the highest bidder. The most wonderful and mysterious of all the homes in what orators call "this great home-loving nation" has become a curiosity-place. Even its memories have become a matter for barter and sale.

Had this been done out of need, to obtain the bare necessities of life, or even modest comforts, perhaps for an elderly person in declining years, it might be understandable. But there is nothing to indicate that such is the case. There is nothing to indicate that any reason at all exists for this selling and publication, except that there was a publisher with money who thought the public wanted it—and a possessor who was willing to sell.

"Yes, everything is commercialized nowadays." And we hear much about disrespect for not only the law, but also our time-honored institutions. But can the rank and file of any people be expected to stand on a plane above those who are, or were, its leaders? Can even the President of the United States, and the White House, continue to command and hold respect when occupants of the White House, after they leave, do not hesitate to capitalize the office; when they are willing, even, to have the name of America's sacred White House used for private gain?

What else is there left to "commercialize," to offer for sale? What else is there in this country to put upon the block? Is there anything in America today that money will not buy?

The Worst Time Of The Year

Once again owners of automobiles have discarded their old automobile plates and put on new ones (most of them). And once again it has been demonstrated that the first of January is a bad time of the year for the changing of plates.

This year more than ever, it

seems, have owners of cars felt the burden. The expenses peculiar to winter—coal, additional clothing, Christmas bills, taxes, have been present as in previous years. In some cases owners delayed getting their licenses for some time because of shortage of money, and more than a few have not secured them yet, for this very reason.

Changing the plates in summer would bring the expense at a time when practically all the hundreds of thousands of people could better spare money. Waiting in line would be less uncomfortable. Even taking off the old and putting on the new plates would be much more convenient for the motorists. It would seem, too, that the Secretary of State's office would find it more convenient to have all the registration work handled at some other time, rather than at the end of the year when other work in the department must be heavy.

July 1 sounds like an odd time to be changing license plates, perhaps, but if it were tried it might prove to be quite sensible. Certainly the present date was not selected with the greatest consideration for Michigan's million automobile owners.

The Teachers Teach Them The "Golden Rule"

Detroit City firemen refuse an unsolicited increase of five per cent in their pay because, they say, there is so much unemployment and so many are in need. Dozens of editors must have reached for their pens and uncovered their typewriters to write soul-stirring editorials pointing out that there still is plenty of brotherly love in the world, still plenty of "sweetness and light." In fact, we almost did ourselves.

But hold! Before the eloquent editorials could have been set in type, come the Board of Fire Commissioners of the City of Detroit. The "refusal" by some of the firemen was not only unauthorized, but was in fact, the Board asserted, a trick on the part of some firemen to gain public favor which might lead to a 20 per cent increase later on by vote of the people, as the New York firemen obtained such a raise some time ago.

So dozens of editorials must have found their way into editorial waste-baskets, which was, perhaps, the place they should have gone in the first place. Yet there is no need to become cynical. There are two sides to every story. And another story there is to balance this one.

A few days later it was reported that teachers of Hazel Park schools, and others employed by the school system, have agreed to take a five per cent cut in salary for the remainder of the present school year. The employees volunteered to accept cuts, it is reported, "to relieve the financial stress brought about by the large amount of delinquent taxes."

Wasn't it Hazel Park that a few years ago made its school teachers miserable for months? Wasn't it Hazel Park that demanded that its school teachers

wear smocks, instead of the usual feminine dress?

We're pretty sure that it was—and if this acceptance by the teachers of salary reductions isn't returning good for evil, we'd like to know what is.

Nauseated?

Dr. Lee DeForest is one of the outstanding figures in radio. One of the great pioneers, he is the inventor of many of the radio devices upon which modern broadcasting and receiving depends.

Dr. DeForest's fame rests upon his technical and inventive achievements, rather than upon successful operation of broadcasting equipment or manufacturer of chains of equipment. And as an engineer second to none in the entire field of radio, Dr. DeForest is probably able to survey radio at present and predict its future with much clearer vision and much less self-interest than the heads of broadcasting systems.

It is interesting, therefore, to learn what Dr. DeForest had to say to the Institute of Radio Engineers, of which he was recently elected president. Speaking to them at New York he said, as reported in a Detroit newspaper:

"The present all too marked tendency of the broadcast chains and of many individual stations to lower their bars to direct advertising will rapidly work to sap the lifeblood and destroy the greatest usefulness of this magnificent new means of contact."

"I attribute a part of the present slackening in radio sales as actually due to this one cause. The radio public, is, I believe, becoming nauseated by the quality of many of the present programs. 'This situation can be cured. If we anticipate the day of the international broadcast, you may rest assured that any foreign programs of high class music will be relayed in this country in preference to much of the stuff which American audiences are now compelled to hear.'"

If Dr. DeForest says that "the public is becoming nauseated" by present programs, it is undoubtedly true—he ought to know. It looks as though the radio broadcasters have come dangerously close to "killing the goose that laid the golden egg." Public interest will not persist and grow if conditions continue, which lead even so great a friend of radio as Dr. DeForest to publicly denounce them. If one of radio's great pioneers says this, what must the public be saying?

Hard On His Pants

During a fire campaign in a leading American city, younger school students were asked to write essays on fire prevention. A winning paper said:

"Hundreds of people are killed every year by fire. Mother was dry cleaning some clothes, the gasoline ignited and flames were all around but luckily she wasn't burned; the sink was close so in the course of time she got the fire out. Otherwise we wouldn't have had a bed to sleep in."

"Just the other day I had several matches in my back pocket. I got down on the floor to get a nail out of the side of our row boat which we were fixing. I felt something warm in the seat of my pants until I couldn't imagine what it was, but you should have seen me strip my pants off. I found out all those matches ignited when I moved on the floor and burned the whole pocket out of my pants. Luckily my pants were not inflammable or I would

have gone up in smoke." A homely object lesson given by a child, illustrating conditions which cause fires every day—in proper use of gasoline and matches not kept in a proper container.

—Industrial News Bureau

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