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THE YEAR OF THE LOCUST

One of the most eventful decades in modern history has ended. And this nation enters a new decade during which, unless all signs are wrong, its people must face and grapple with problems, issues and responsibilities of the most far-reaching character.

The 1930's will be known to the historians of the future as the years of one of the greatest and longest depressions this or any nation ever experienced. They will be known as years of experiment, of trial and error, of the weighing of our old values and our old traditions. And they will be known too as years in which the democratic process was consistently attacked by some of those who called themselves its friends, as well as by those who were its frankly avowed enemies.

From the international point of view, the tragic '30's came to a cynically fitting end in that most ghastly and unnecessary of events—a war which embraces much of the world. In nation after nation the arts of peace have of necessity been put aside, to the end that war may be prosecuted to the utmost. And war destroys more than men and materials and machines and economies and state. It destroys those essential liberties for which men have fought and died in holy causes ever since the world we know began.

The greatest blessing which this nation possesses today is its physical remoteness from the conflict abroad. That is a position enjoyed by no other of the world's major powers. There is profound wisdom in the attitude of the great majority of the American people who say, in effect—"We can keep out of war—and we will keep out of war." There is no war party in this country—no responsible statesman urges our participation. We can all feel a deep and abiding thankfulness that this is so. Never before was it so important that we Americans keep our heads, in order that we may also keep our liberties. For should this country become involved in war, democracy would vanish here, as swiftly and as surely as it has vanished abroad.

Turning to our own internal problems, our task is great. The gratifying improvement that has recently taken place throughout our economic structure must not be allowed to blind us to the unpleasant truth that not one of those issues which we were forced to face at the start of the depression has been solved. Most of them have become more complicated and difficult. The national debt, despite the heaviest tax load in our peace-time history, has nearly tripled in the past decade and will soon reach the present legal limit of \$45,000,000,000. The immense expenditures for relief continue, even though business has much improved and unemployment has consequently been reduced. The agricultural situation, in spite of a long series of extremely expensive "farm relief" measures, remains tangled and unsatisfactory.

Summing up, we have plenty to do at home during the years that stretch ahead. The current Congress and those which follow have their work cut out for them.

Here in America we have all that is needed to bring a greater prosperity than we have ever known—the industries, the men, the resources. But unless we maintain our basic liberties, material blessings mean nothing.—Industrial News.

A BETTER YEAR

Most of the official reports indicated that economic and human conditions improved during 1939. The Department of Commerce notes substantial gains in nearly all directions up to the New Year.

Our Government officials and business organizations give some credit for the improvements to sharp spurts in purchases of products and materials since the new year began.

The fact of the matter is that there has been a small reduction of unemployment; small reductions in relief, and evidences that a period of good business lies ahead. It isn't hard to figure this out, as one observes how business is pushing upward on a broad front across the entire country.

The nation's business leaders are inclined to be conservative, and that is another good sign.

If we keep our nose out of this European war-mess the year 1940 will likely show big business improvements.

POLITICAL MYSTERIES

By J. E. Jones

Washington, D. C., January, 1940—When the wild bells rang out the year and rang in the new the same old political clangor rang out from firebrands, and increased the radio-static. The politicians as a class are not facing the vital issues that concern the future of our country.

On the national front one finds the familiar plans of the Administration being presented under new names, but all carefully modeled to harmonize with President Roosevelt's views and programs. The theory of spending the taxpayers money through a streamlined Federal machine is not new. If the President controls the 1940 Congress as he has controlled all other sessions the national debt limit will be raised above 45 billion dollars. That is sure to increase rates of taxation. The budget will continue to run in the red.

The President gets all the money that he is authorized to spend, from Congress. The legislative branch of the Government, and not the President, is responsible to the people for the course our Government. Any changes in the tax laws, amendments to the labor laws, restoring relief to states and local communities, changes in the trade treaties as well as the decentralization of any Federal authority, is entirely up to Congress.

Will Congress return to the Constitutional method and go back to the old American way of receiving the "recommendations" from the Chief Executive—and give them proper consideration? After that will Congress manufacture its own laws?

If Congress goes through this session, as it has in the past few years, and leaves behind a rubber-stamp record, then don't blame the President. Blame Congress! On the other hand if Congress raises to its responsibilities there will be two schools of political thinking restored in this country. The voters have been kept in the dark long enough. Democrats and Republicans should put an end to their political mysteries.

Conservation of the Soil

Land is still wearing out faster than we can restore it, says a statement from the Agricultural Department issued in support of greater efforts on the part of the Government to encourage soil conservation practices.

The insecurity of land resulting from tenant farmers moving from one patch to another has influenced the Department of Agriculture to rule against the single-crop tenant, and insist that he stay put on the same land, and keep it from "wearing out."

Battleship Steel For Motor Transport

As fast as a new material is developed these days for one purpose, it finds its way into a number of other industries where it proves to be of equal or even greater value. Recently it was discovered that one of the latest types of steel, intended for our battleships, will probably cover more miles of highway than it will of ocean travel before the history of its existence has been completed.

The new steel has been selected for the building of battleships because by its use it is possible to save 25 per cent in the weight of the armor and increase the speed of the battleship another 25 per cent. It is found also that because of the decrease in weight, a saving of 20 per cent in fuel is effected and also the armament of the vessel strengthened by the addition of five 5-inch guns on these new ships of Uncle Sam.

Exactly this same steel is being used for the new series Fruehauf trailers, which are traveling over the highways of the United States in all sorts of commercial hauling work. By the use of this steel not only are these trailers stronger and more rigid, but they are lighter in weight and consequently more efficient, more maneuverable and able to carry a greater payload in relation to their total weight. Thus the metallurgist who invented this steel for war purposes has made a marked contribution to the efficiency of motor transport on the highways.

Car Nameplate Collection Recalls Industry's Start

More than 4,000 makes of automobiles have appeared on the markets of the world since France introduced the first in 1868, the Smithsonian institution reports.

The rapid rise of the industry, as manufacturers of everything from bird cages to guns turned their factories into automobile plants, was attended by sudden ruin for most of them. The course of the industry is reflected in a loan exhibit of the institution prepared by Frank Walker of Pontiac, Mich. Walker is making a collection of name plates from as many cars as possible. His exhibit consists of the plates he has collected.

The French idea of an automobile propelled by an internal combustion engine had spread to Austria, Great Britain and Italy by 1889, with a general broadening of scope until it reached Belgium, Switzerland and the United States, where the industry has seen its greatest development. Two-thirds of the 300 cars on the market in 1875 were extinct within 25 years, however. Spain's first car had a belated appearance in 1902.

A boom came in 1905 and 1906 when Hungarians, Danes, Russians, Swedes, Austrians and Canadians entered the field. Indications pointed to the industry taking its place as the great industry of the future, causing makers of bicycles, guns, sewing machines, telephones and typewriters to convert their factories into automobile plants.

The result was ruin for many. The market for the relatively crude and expensive machines were restricted to the wealthy and near-wealthy. Only those makers with new fundamental ideas to incorporate into their products survived.

The approximate record of the different makes put out follows: United States, 1,550; Great Britain, 610; France, 480; Germany, 240; Italy, 80; Belgium, 70; other countries, 135.

Government Is Promoting Sorghum Breakfast Food

The department of agriculture is promoting a new breakfast food, made from grain sorghums.

The grains, feterita, kafir and milo, are said to compare favorably with corn and wheat cereals in taste and nutritional value.

Increasing popularity of the new cereal is predicted by the department's food experts. The Farm Security administration has instructed its home demonstration agents to introduce it among low-income farm families.

Tests made by the department showed the food value of grain sorghums only slightly below corn and wheat. Raw, white corn has 1,758 calories per pound, while feterita has 1,736. Wheat has 1,675 per pound.

"In the light of these facts, the Farm Security administration considers itself on safe ground in sponsoring the grain sorghums as a food, though there are many things we would like to know," an official said.

The circumstances which prompted the FSA to sponsor the new food were largely financial. Grain sorghum is the cheapest source of several food elements. It is grown extensively in the Southwest.

The grain sorghums may be used as a breadstuff as well as a breakfast cereal. When finely ground it makes an excellent muffin, the food experts said. They have demonstrated their qualities in scores of communities.

The grain sorghums constitute a breadstuff more wholesome and less expensive than white flour customarily used, a FSA report said. The favor is a surprise to people who have considered such grains largely as an economy measure.

Notwithstanding the fact that the President has appointed Myron C. Taylor his personal representative to the Vatican there is nothing in the situation to indicate that he has any special mission to perform. He will represent the normal sentiment of the United States Government in behalf of peace efforts and in that capacity he may be able to help the efforts of the Pope.

Everybody seems to be backing the Finns and it is hoped that our new unofficial Ambassador to the Vatican may strengthen the position of the little Republic that is struggling so magnificently against insuperable numbers.

Washington learns that Dr. Townsend's forces will renew their efforts to have Congress pass some sort of legislation to see them through with their old-age pension plans. Social Security is now beginning to return payments to beneficiaries. This fact will help to stimulate the efforts in behalf of all kinds of benefits.

Recent studies by newsmen in Washington show that the special committees of the House engaged in investigations have cost the taxpayers more than \$355,500. But as editor Ray Howard said about the late Heywood Brown: maybe the "head-aches" are worth the cost.

The United States Department of Agriculture is rapidly extending operation of the food stamp plan into cities throughout the country. Secretary Wallace is making this a very expensive affair. He is convinced of the merits of the scheme.

Peanut Butter Factory Operated by Students

Peanut butter is paying the way of eight students through Little Rock, Ark., junior college.

W. H. Travis, "father of farm chermurgy in Arkansas," conceived the idea when he talked with fathers and mothers from rural sections who brought produce to a local cur market, and found that many children from farm homes could not hope for higher education.

He found there was no peanut butter plant in Little Rock. Thus, the students could make and sell peanut butter without competing with another Arkansas industry. Travis broached his plan to Dean E. Q. Brothers of Junior college. Brothers was enthusiastic, and even authorized a small loan from the school to assist in establishing the plant.

The eight boys and girls operating the plant come from rural families in the vicinity of Little Rock. They work five hours a day in the plant, which is located at a local curb market, and attend classes in their spare time. They are paid at the rate of 25 cents an hour.

The students do all the work. They supervise the buying of the peanuts, process them, and market the product.

Early Soil Savers

One of America's first soil conservationists was George Washington. Even before the War for Independence, he was experimenting with ways and means of keeping the soil from washing away from his Mount Vernon estate, in what is now the state of Virginia. Patrick Henry considered the saving of our soil so important that just a few years after the Revolution he remarked, "Since the achievement of our independence, he is the greatest patriot who stops the most gullies." And Thomas Jefferson devised a method of plowing hillsides horizontally to stop the wastage of our lands by erosion.

Civil War Spy

Belle Boyd, Confederate spy in the Civil war, was but 17 when her exploits began. During the next two years she made use of opportunities in her home towns of Martinsburg and Front Royal, Va., for gathering information on Union activities unsuspected and conveying it to Stonewall Jackson. She was twice arrested and imprisoned, but each time soon released. In 1863 she escaped to England, where she went on the stage. Subsequently she played in New York and in stock companies in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys.

Rivers Flowing North

The St. Johns river in Florida is supposedly the only river in the United States which flows northward throughout its entire course. There are others, however, which flow north for a part of their course. These include the Monongahela in Pennsylvania, the Tennessee in Tennessee and Kentucky, the Red river of the North in Minnesota and North Dakota, Big Horn in Wyoming and Montana and Powder in Wyoming and Montana.

Everybody is cared for now except the little people who could provide for their own old age if they had a safe way to invest their savings.

Danes Have Reputation As Skilled Lacemakers

One of the Danish kings of long ago forbade all women who made lace to leave the kingdom. He was afraid that emigrants would divulge to foreigners the methods of this marvelous native handicraft industry.

Today such forcible secrecy is out of fashion but Danish peasant women still have a monopoly in producing certain kinds of intricately worked designs in fine linen thread. A particularly desirable variety in Copenhagen shops is Tonder lace, made only by women in the little town of that name, situated on the Jutland peninsula.

Another famous sort of needlework found in shops in the Danish capital is the Hedebo embroidery. The technique in making this stuff is many centuries old, but it continues to appear in new designs, as it has since it originated in the Middle Ages.

Besides the cunning and rich designs from cottage industry needles, silver and china are two commodities that visitors should consider in Denmark. Modern Danish porcelain may be from either the royal or a private factory. The first kind is identified by a trade mark showing three wavy lines which represent the three sea passages through the Danish Archipelago by which ships enter the Baltic, the Sound, the Great Belt and the Little Belt. The private pottery mark displays the three towers on the national coat of arms.

In either case china bought in good shops in Copenhagen or in the other cities of the country is a lovely ware. The workmen who paint the designs on it are real artists. Many of them are descended from a line of ancestors who have handed down their skill from father to son and the decorations are baked into a clay mixed by a process that still is a secret.

Danish silver has the widest reputation of all the artistic things produced in the country. In fact, it can be purchased now in nearly every large city in the world.

Marseilles Garlic Market

One of the most interesting events in Marseilles, France, is the garlic fair, during which garlic is king for an entire month. The market is held along one of the city's avenues and for it merchants hang up thousands of long strings of this cousin of the onion. Twenty-five to 50 or even 100 cloves of garlic are strung on each string, and during the month of the fair about 100 tons of the vegetable are sold. According to many Marseillais, garlic has curative properties and it is therefore often used by them as a medicine for certain diseases.

Rhodesian Superstitions

The greatest Rhodesian superstition, which British authorities have had scant success in suppressing, is the killing of babies. If twins are born they must be killed. If a baby cuts an upper tooth first, it must be killed. If either type were allowed to live, the natives believe, a great calamity would befall the tribe. The natives dodge strict British laws by killing the ill-starred babies secretly, then reporting that they died of illness.

Sliced bread isn't the final answer. The customer still has to break it into chunks for gravy sopping.

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Mozambique Population Retards Modernization

With an area nearly that of Texas and Louisiana combined, Mozambique, or Portuguese East Africa, has a white population of less than 25,000, says the National Geographic society. The native population, of many tribes, is about 4,000,000, or less than one-third the population of New York state.

Despite the unusual fertility of the soil, navigable rivers and proximity to the ocean, with ample harbors, development of Mozambique was long retarded by hostile natives, wild animals, bog-bound rivers and malaria. A century ago 34 out of every 40 Europeans died there of fever. Today, with ordinary precautions, farmers, miners and others have little fear of fever.

Mozambique's more than 1,400 miles of African east coast, opposite the island of Madagascar, is now dotted with cities and towns. Eleven thousand miles of good roads form a network over the colony connecting every important town and there are more than 1,800 miles of railroads, connecting with British rails in South and Central Africa.

Hydro-electric plants have been established and steamers regularly ply the rivers. The ports of the colony handle more than \$100,000,000 a year in merchandise. A bridge more than two miles long has recently been built over the Lower Zambezi river. Coal and other mineral deposits have been developed.

In addition to working the mines and plantations and dabbling in farming, the natives supply many workers for the Transvaal gold mines. Their principal amusements, aside from hunting with bow and spear, are dancing and music.

Uranium Is By-Product In Processing of Radium

While the mineral resources of Canada seem inexhaustible, the enterprise with which she is developing those resources and applying the fruits of research to the more varied uses of the minerals are equally impressive. An example is provided by uranium, of which Canada is now an important source. It is used, among many other purposes, as a coloring agent in the production of certain shades of yellow and deep orange in glazes and glass.

Uranium is obtained as a by-product in the processing of radium from pitchblende, and after the discovery and development of the rich deposits of pitchblende in the Great Bear lake area and the erection of a refinery at Port Hope, Ontario, it entered the world markets, says Canada's Weekly. Its entry into the ceramic field was achieved by the co-operation of private research workers and the laboratory experts of the department of mines and resources.

In recent years the popularity of the bright orange color which it produces has increased considerably, particularly for such articles as bungalow tableware, tiles, jugs and bowls, and art pottery.

The new chemical plant for the recovery of radium, at Port Hope, was erected by the Eldorado Gold Mines, Ltd. There the ore from the mine is treated. Recovery for uranium was about 90 per cent.

To get a reputation as a prophet, tell people they will have trouble within a month. You are right, if it's only toothache.