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THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 1936

This Law Should Be Repealed

In the opinion of this newspaper the evil to a community, inherent in a spectacle like that staged at Owensboro when Rainey Bethea was hanged in the presence of fifteen thousand holiday makers, is immeasurable. That a rapist should be executed for his crime we will agree, but that the public hanging of a rapist or any other criminal will act as a deterrent to crime is questionable. Certainly the mental effect of such a morbid spectacle is not good for a community. Assuredly it is bad for children, and pictures of the hanging show that children witnessed the execution.

No spectacle, especially no legal execution, that appeals to the sadistic nature of which lurks beneath the thin veneer of civilization in all too many human hearts, should be open to the public. No one who witnesses a public hanging is any the better for it. A morbid curiosity has been satisfied. The primal beast has peered out through hundreds of staring human eyes. Justice has been served, but how cruelely!

Quoting a comment of the Courier-Journal, made upon the occasion of the hanging and re-hanging of Ray Ross, Negro rapist, at Lexington some years ago, "it is a big thing to remember . . . a Commencement which forbids ball fights, cocking mains and dog fights because of their degrading influence to make more or less of a jocal demonstration of an execution." And it must be admitted, after all, that Bethea is no sleeker hanged than he would have been electrocuted.

The Mercury has no desire to become sentimental over a rapist. Deploring, as it does, the necessity for taking the lives of offenders against the laws of men, it recognizes that such necessity exists in our present state of development. But if lives are to be taken, they should be taken decently. The vengeance of the law should not be paraded as a spectacle before beings should not be made to suffer cruel and unusual punishments, nor be slowly butchered before a crowd of the perversely morbid, who have succeed in securing "tickets of admission."

The criminal condemned to death should be put to death as painlessly and as painlessly as possible, within prison walls. The law requiring that the rapist be hung in the county in which the crime is committed was born of passions inflamed by a peculiarly atrocious crime. It is a bad law, causing harmfully upon the citizenship both old and young. It is a law that should be repealed.

The Governor's Frankness

The recent statement of Governor Chandler to a group protesting appointments made under the old age pension set-up that 'unfortunately politics must be considered in making appointments' has caused some copious criticism from those eager to find fault with the State administration.

With few exceptions, however, the newspapers of Kentucky approve the Governor's frank statement and praise him for his candor. Typical of rural newspaper comment is the editorial from the Ledger & Times, of Murray, Ky., which did not support Mr. Chandler in the primary.

"One of the many admirable personal characteristics of our young Governor is his engaging candor on public questions. Even when he is severely criticising him for his statement of last week, that 'unfortunately politics must be considered in making appointments' as to old age pensions, we admire Governor Chandler for frankly confessing what everybody knows to be literally true.

"There are not many of our private jobs that, hypocrisy, and all of us have contemptuously sneered at office-holders who have practiced the spoils system while paying lip service to the merit system and civil service.

"Governor Chandler's record of appointments is one of the most admirable of any Kentucky Governor in our memory. It does even further than that. He himself, twenty-five years ago, was disgusted by the present administration as a deserving ally to former Governor Beckham, and has sponsored more college professors, whom he facetiously says he 'couldn't carry a precinct' than the professors to prevent errors combined, because he believes they are best fitted for the places to which he named them.

"Appointment among them are Professor Martin, head of the tax commission, Professor Hall, head of the civil service commission, Professor Hillman, head of the Board of Control of Eastern and Western State Normal Schools, and Dr. Norman Boyden, outstanding head of Fatherly Junior Order activities.

"We have never proclaimed our approval of every thing that Governor Chandler's friends do, nor of all its policies or most influential personnel. But we do believe that the young Governor, while honestly making mistakes and frequently ignoring the old political hacks, is making a diligent and conscientious effort to strike the Commonwealth a good Governor."

"Kentucky Disgraced."

Under the caption, "Kentucky Disgraced," the Louisville Times comments briefly, but with telling force, upon the "Roman holiday" at Owensboro last week. Says the Times:

"Every Negro who is a figure in crime is 'surly.' The United Press dispatch from Owensboro runs to form in that respect, and describes, accurately, no doubt, details of the black and disgusting disgrace of this State, a public hanging witnessed by 15,000 holiday makers.

"The figure of Kentucky, upon such a stage, would be that of a woman bowed by shame and sorrow."

Vigorous, Perfect English

Seldom in public speeches does one hear a statement as dramatic, or of such vigorously simple literary perfection as one made by President Roosevelt in his address Friday night at Chautauqua, New York.

Even case-hardened news correspondents were moved by its literary style and descriptive power. The President said:

"I have seen war. I have seen war on land and sea. I have seen liquid carriage, from the wounded. I have seen men coughing out their gassed lungs. I have seen the dead in the mud. I have seen cities destroyed. "I have seen 200 limping, exhausted men come out, of line—the survivors of a regiment of one thousand that went forward 48 hours before. I have seen children starving. I have seen the agony of mothers and wives. I hate war."

Such a paragraph calls for perfect delivery and that Mr. Roosevelt gave, those who heard him will agree.

"Fumbling With Recovery."

No single utterance of Gov. Alf M. Landon in his acceptance speech so prominently displayed the ultra-conservative press of the nation as his near-bold assertion that President Roosevelt has been "fumbling with recovery." Editorially they proclaimed it a classic.

Then almost immediately "they were confronted with a "contra-seasonal" report from the Chamber of Commerce of the United States. And they put it inside, not always next to pure reading matter, but some of the great journals of reaction, the piece was whittled down to a few paltry paragraphs. Some left it out entirely, thus upholding the freedom of the press.

But the report was interesting, especially when laid alongside the prime utterance of the Republican nominee. It said:

"The course of events carried employment in manufacturing establishments in June, 1936, to a point higher than at any time since October, 1929.

"If the second half of the present year has actual relations to the first half, employment in manufacturing will be back to the level of the Spring of 1930.

"Manufacturing has not been alone in going forward. In the first six months of 1936, construction will seem to have aggregated in value at least 76 per cent more, for the country as a whole than in the corresponding part of 1935. The figures published by the building trades unions show that more of their members are employed than in the year of 1930.

"The course of 1936 may show this as the best year in physical volume of business since 1929."

The only feature mentioned was the "at least 76 per cent" improvement in construction over the first six months of 1935. According to the figures of previous figures, that makes the gain in construction contracts awarded current since 1931, total 222 per cent. The Roosevelt recovery, it will be noted, as for example the gain of 1,297 per cent in net consumers of industrial corporations in three years, is cumulative.

Likewise, while Gov. Landon's speech seemed that President Roosevelt is infringing upon the freedom of citizens, his more loquacious running mate worked himself into a frenzy on this point. As the publisher of newspapers in Chicago and New England and perhaps having in mind his experiences as general manager of the great Hearst chain of papers, for maintaining freedom of expression, the colonel was more emphatic on the subject to which the du Pont Liberty League is dedicated.

That the day after Col. Knox had burst our ear drums with the cry that Democracy was dead, the Bar Association completed its two-year study and made public its report to the convention in Boston. Concerning "Constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech of the press, of assembly and of petition" the report used those words:

"The careless assertion that the policies and practices of the present national Administration further challenge or infringe these political rights of the citizens has no justification."

As if in further answer, we find the following in the magazine Banking:

"Business activity continues to expand with little regard for the traditional uncertainties of an election year. Even political observers are not campaigning finds the country assured that defeation of the New Deal would not bring a repetition of the crisis of this major victory shall be held * * * It would appear that fundamentally more important of this juncture is the FACT of the recovery.

AN EDITOR'S RANDOM THOUGHTS

Trick to watch after a vacation of, two days and you will be all right and all of a sudden you will be overcome with somnolence and strike for a keg. But while you're in the midst of the battle of the business River on the bank of old Louisville at Louisville Magazine, very cool and enticing with its shade trees, its parks and gardens with fountains and statuary, but across as the branch which ran through the old meadow and the great swing over which many swinging willow school, of the summers flash- ed over the sides in the branch and the one-piece suits and rollwings meeting along its banks. I am not ashamed but in the dreams and adventure all forms of enjoyment whatsoever that participate are enjoyed.

Recently to reciting proofs of more chimmes and the old first upon a fine poem to service, called "The Chimmes Bells," very fit to bring back dreams of the town road, the fields and hills and the peaceful woodlands to one who would shake prefer to be anywhere in the sensation of printer's proofs. Not that I am hurry, on, but come upon another poem, the burden of which reeks of all pests of the springtime, who making mistakes and frequently ignored by the old- sters, who strangely quiet in the sultriness of summer's high noon. This is a truth and I think that we all fall in to the doldrums from rolling about the heat and trying too much and that summer is beautiful, despite the humidity of her "dog days," as if it proved a recall an excursion on a Sunday, when the air was redolent of the woods hot and dry and I remember I thought that people would be happy, sure in the midst of their amusements. But presently came to the shady banks of a creek and the woods and grew cool.

And evening coming on the silent trees grew vocal and a pair of great crested fly-catchers chased and shouted at each other through the leaves; cardinals and wrens whistled and trilled and looking up into the branches of a great sycamore I found the nest of a hummingbird saddled on a limb. Poets of spring time, all of these, though silent in the heat of summer's noon. And so a plague on this matter-of-fact chymster! Poets of the springtime are not disillusioned, they but take their siesta.

Along the Concrete

(Falmouth Outlook)

"Public office is a public trust." So spoke Elmer Wheaton of the Pendleton County Board of Education in issuing good on the trust the people have placed in it this week by publishing the financial statement of its affairs for the year ending June 30, 1935. The people have a right to know what board have undertaken a large building program, and the expenses of the schools have grown out of the merriment of a time when the taxpayers, the men and women on the local "old" of the schools, know exactly how the money is spent. The publication of Kentucky requiring the publication of financial statements of all officials in the public service is a salutary law for those officials protect them from criticism by the taxpayers. That is as it should be in the public interest. It is inspiring to the public-spirited dishonest official. It is also a guarantee of common sense economy. The money of the schools will not overspend or spend in extravagance when the people who know the financial condition of the funds they are handling will be published.

The publication of the financial affairs of public funds is beneficial for a newspaper, but it is better because for the taxpayers. The money spent with a newspaper in making public the financial condition of the funds is well spent, and by using it the people of the county are made more intelligent, foolishly or possibly corruptly spend public funds. The public funds spent is the best insurance against graft and boss business ever spent.

MR. HOOVER FORGOT

(Indianapolis Times)

Mr. Hoover's speech to the Young Republicans of Kansas serves attention. Less for what Mr. Hoover said than for what he did not.

Among his stark and rugged deeds was the statement that "there are roots of constitutional liberty in the right to criticize officials who nullified that right overnment during his Administration."

He assailed the New Deal, but he failed to say that the Administration was the most criticized in history. He failed to say that under every third or fourth term that his farm board tried to stabilize prices the price of wheat went suspicious that his Hoover- ville policies were "planned scarcity," high prices and the ever-present fear of the factory of the land.

He said that if the New Deal were to be defeated "there would be no more raised from the dead." But while during his Administration he spent all the money in sight, the protection of the population with the wherewithal "so that they could live" was never rapidly.

He complained that dollar devaluation hurt it. It per cent of the people of the country than that stocks. He forgot that after shaking us mild in his Administration, he left us with a dollar, England went off gold and the dollar was devalued 40 per cent as to value. Also he forgot that the interest rate was the lowest in history during his Administration.

The foundation of all "regimented" corn is to bring back citizens of the United States the New Deal's many new bureaus and agencies of political bureaucracy." He forgot that his Administration created more commissions.

He said that the Government was spending a part of every dollar it spent for relief. It per cent of the people of the country than that stocks. He forgot that after shaking us mild in his Administration, he left us with a dollar, England went off gold and the dollar was devalued 40 per cent as to value. Also he forgot that the interest rate was the lowest in history during his Administration.

He said that the people are groping for "security from economic storms and from individual poverty." He forgot the bank failures, the collapse of security prices, the condition of the poor of farmside and city in his Administration.

He said that people can not invest $100 today with full confidence as to what it will be worth in their old age. He forgot that when he left office very few people had $100 to invest.

He indicted "reckless subversion in government." He forgot that almost all important legislation in the first part of the New Deal was supported by a majority of the Republicans in Congress.

Mr. Hoover insisted that relief should be kept in spite of the policies of the Administration. He forgot that in the campaigns of 1924 and 1928 his expressed policy was the elimination of relief.

Mr. Hoover's ex-President confessed that the public, like the ostrich does, was receiving pain from its head. Possibly it was.

ON PUBLIC HANGINGS

(Ashland Independent)

The public hanging of Rainey Bethea, Negro rapist, at Owensboro this Friday morning brought out a wild mob of between 15,000 and 20,000 people. Reports of all the spectators of such human beasts as Bethea is that they are glad to see the thing done, but that they feel sorry for the executioner and the officials who have to perform the duty.

The Kentucky law provides for public hanging. It also provides that where the crime was committed in daylight, as was the case of rapist which Bethea was executed, the hanging shall be done in daylight. Probably the chief purpose in these minds of those who framed this law was that the public should witness the hanging so as to give others who might at a time contemplate such a crime.

This hanging at Owensboro should have a salutary effect on evildoers, a question as to the wisdom of the law may be questioned. There is not being with a evil demonstrating circumstances. The crowd that gathered to witness that might come to society from such a criminal as Bethea. There was a private execution serve the purpose of the law as well as a public one. The evils of public would be lessened. The element of the crowd that gathered to witness the hanging would have been eliminated. The public would be spared the humiliation of the whole affair.

Public hangings are a relic of barbarism. Kentucky should abolish them.

NO REFORMATION AT HEIDELBERG

(Ashland Independent)

The declaration that the revolutionists' is a misnomer when applied to Hitler's party is the confirmation of that name at Frankfort on the occasion of the observed burning address by James Hamwood, superintendent of the insane hospital at Hopkinsville, on Wednesday.

Mr. Hammond, immediate past commander of the American Legion in this state, has made an excellent record since his appointment to the superintendency of the Frankfort reformatory about six months ago. But the shock- ingly inadequate housing and facilities provided in the institution are a disgrace to the state which create conditions that no man, however able, can overcome. It is to the credit of Governor Chandler that he faces these conditions boldly and recommends a remedy.

About 2,800 men and 80 women are housed in the Frankfort institution, built more than 100 years ago for a maximum of 850 inmates. The last addition to this prison was constructed 72 years ago. Conditions arising from this forced overcrowding are indescribable. Instead of being a place of reform, it is necessarily a school of crime in which hardened criminals are housed with first offenders. Under the present type and form of management, it is impossible for any reformation to be effected.

It should be said to the credit of the Governor, Mr. Hammond and the Governor himself that the problem of new penal and reformatory buildings is being considered in the first practical of years. Through the use of Federal funds, plans are to be carried out to build a new prison to replace the present one, and Governor Chandler has promised to use his influence to abandon completely the antiquated prison system and build in the place of the latter, it is planned to build institutions for the state's new, modern institution with a large farm and work shops attached. Provision improvements also call for similar replacement for the present inadequate institutions which are a disgrace to the name of Kentucky.

Whatever the necessary cost, it will be justified. Criminals are not born, but are made, and the very foundation of the city and county jails. Under the present system, much worse than the state institutions, the cities, counties and states is staggering and will in a very few years, amount to much more than the investment in the new institutions planned.

Mr. Hamblond, an Eastern Kentuckian of great ability who is admired by all who know him, a champion by unsatisfactory and often incompetent county officials. Experience has demonstrated that the consolidation of these units in such areas not only simplifies the government and makes it understandable to the average citizen, but it accomplishes considerable savings in expenditures.

It is difficult to state in all cases just when a city becomes a metropolis and just when the problem of metropolitan government becomes acute. In Kentucky, outside of Louisville there are no very large cities, but it is believed by many that even the existence of such units as Kenton County and the city of Covington, Campbell County and the city of Newport, Boyd County and the city of Ashland, Daviess County and the city of Owensboro, Henderson County and the city of Henderson, and McCracken County and the city of Paducah, present certain problems of a metropolitan nature. The so-called city- county consolidation amendment which will be voted upon by the people of Kentucky in November, 1937, is designed to meet the metropolitan problem existing in the cities mentioned and in others of similar size. It is believed that most of the voters will favor the amendment for consolidation in some of these metropolitan areas.

If there is any doubt as to the concern city and county, there is only necessary to look at the present political muddle. It is often impossible to fix responsibility for the failure of one department or another because of the overlapping of governmental units when they are so closely related. Even the simplest matters are often complicated by the fact that there is a county name and a city name for the same thing. Such a situation is ridiculous.

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YOUR GOVERNMENT by DR. JOHN W. MANNING DIRECTOR BUREAU OF GOVERNMENT RESEARCH UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

CITY-COUNTY CONSOLIDATION

CLIPPED FROM OTHER EDITORIAL PAGES

LET THE PEOPLE KNOW

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With the development of a city there is an ever increasing public need for the services of the police department. The police department is traditionally a part of the city government. It is the duty of the police department to protect the lives and property of the citizens. It is the duty of the police department to enforce the laws of the state and the ordinances of the city. The police department is the only department of the city government which is on duty twenty-four hours a day. It is the only department which is always ready to render service in case of emergency.

Because of the nature of the work of the police department, it is necessary that the members of the department be men of courage, men of character, men of intelligence, men of good judgment, men of tact, men of good health, men of good habits, men of good appearance, men of good manners, men of good morals, men of good reputation, men of good education, men of good training, men of good experience, men of good ability, men of good leadership, men of good discipline, men of good organization, men of good supervision, men of good inspection, men of good investigation, men of good prosecution, men of good defense, men of good trial, men of good appeal, men of good review, men of good execution, men of good pardon, men of good parole, men of good probation, men of good rehabilitation, men of good reformation, men of good punishment, men of good deterrence, men of good retribution, men of good vengeance, men of good justice, men of good mercy, men of good forgiveness, men of good love, men of good peace, men of good harmony, men of good unity, men of good brotherhood, men of good sisterhood, men of good fatherhood, men of good motherhood, men of good childhood, men of good youth, men of good manhood, men of good womanhood, men of good old age, men of good death, men of good burial, men of good resurrection, men of good life, men of good eternity, men of good heaven, men of good hell, men of good purgatory, men of good limbo, men of good nirvana, men of good reincarnation, men of good transmigration, men of good metempsychosis, men of good pantheism, men of good polytheism, men of good monotheism, men of good atheism, men of good agnosticism, men of good skepticism, men of good rationalism, men of good empiricism, men of good idealism, men of good realism, men of good pragmatism, men of good existentialism, men of good phenomenalism, men of good positivism, men of good logical positivism, men of good dialectical materialism, men of good historical materialism, men of good economic determinism, men of good psychoanalysis, men of good behaviorism, men of good gestalt psychology, men of good functionalism, men of good structuralism, men of good psychology, men of good sociology, men of good anthropology, men of good ethnology, men of good linguistics, men of good semantics, men of good semiotics, men of good logic, men of good mathematics, men of good physics, men of good chemistry, men of good biology, men of good geology, men of good astronomy, men of good cosmology, men of good ontology, men of good epistemology, men of good axiology, men of good aesthetics, men of good ethics, men of good theology, men of good religion, men of good philosophy, men of good science, men of good art, men of good literature, men of good music, men of good dance, men of good drama, men of good poetry, men of good prose, men of good fiction, men of good nonfiction, men of good history, men of good biography, men of good autobiography, men of good memoirs, men of good letters, men of good journalism, men of good broadcasting, men of good television, men of good motion pictures, men of good photography, men of good painting, men of good sculpture, men of good architecture, men of good engineering, men of good medicine, men of good surgery, men of good dentistry, men of good pharmacy, men of good nursing, men of good social work, men of good law, men of good business, men of good economics, men of good finance, men of good accounting, men of good marketing, men of good advertising, men of good public relations, men of good management, men of good labor relations, men of good personnel, men of good industrial relations, men of good agriculture, men of good horticulture, men of good animal husbandry, men of good veterinary medicine, men of good forestry, men of good conservation, men of good recreation, men of good sports, men of good games, men of good hobbies, men of good crafts, men of good trades, men of good professions, men of good occupations, men of good vocations, men of good avocations, men of good leisure, men of good work, men of good play, men of good rest, men of good sleep, men of good dreams, men of good nightmares, men of good visions, men of good hallucinations, men of good delusions, men of good illusions, men of good reality, men of good truth, men of good knowledge, men of good wisdom, men of good understanding, men of good intelligence, men of good stupidity, men of good ignorance, men of good error, men of good sin, men of good evil, men of good good, men of good God, men of good Devil, men of good Satan, men of good Lucifer, men of good Beelzebub, men of good Mephistopheles, men of good Asmodeus, men of good Belial, men of good Moloch, men of good Baal, men of good Ashtoreth, men of good Astarte, men of good Isis, men of good Osiris, men of good Horus, men of good Ra, men of good Amon, men of good Aten, men of good Ptah, men of good Thoth, men of good Ma'at, men of good Sekhmet, men of good Bast, men of good Hathor, men of good Nut, men of good Geb, men of good Shu, men of good Tefnut, men of good Anubis, men of good Sobek, men of good Khnum, men of good Heket, men of good Taweret, men of good Bes, men of good Apis, men of good Mnevis, men of good Ba, men of good Ka, men of good Akh, men of good Sahu, men of good Sekhem, men of good Ren, men of good Khaibit, men of good Ib, men of good Haty, men of good Ab