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EDITORIALS

FREEDOM AND AN OPEN MIND

This being an election year, the average American is now being subjected to a barrage of propaganda and advice from public officials and candidates seeking public office. In all this traditional American hokum, the American voter must remember that an open mind and an ability to resist efforts to stir his prejudices are necessary if he is to make an intelligent contribution in the American election system.

In the United States, citizens are free to read what they please, write what they please and to think as they please. These freedoms are enjoyed because this generation's forefathers fought for that very individual freedom of choice which we sometimes take for granted. One does not have to travel far to find areas where the citizen is not allowed to think, read or say what he truly believes.

More important, in many areas of the world, the average inhabitant is not given full access to the truth, has only a poor chance at best of receiving a full and liberal education and, therefore, is not mentally equipped to decide the great issues of the day.

In the United States, however, our educational standards are comparatively high and where the industrious individual can find the truth if he seeks it, there is little excuse for narrow-minded, prejudiced views, which have no basis in fact or reason.

This election year is an excellent time for you to examine your convictions and challenge your accepted theories as a means of testing their true value. The great difference between the United States and other democracies in the world, and dictatorial forms of governments and groups is that freedom of mind, individual liberty, freedom of choice and the individual rights of human beings are stressed above others. During the coming months, it may be hard to keep a cool head and a rational perspective, but, for the best interests of the nation, the American citizen should resolve to do his best to think out the problems of the day in a fair, open-minded manner. If those in a democracy will do this, there will be no chance of failure in our democratic form of government.

THE HIGH COST OF DYING

The Cooperative League of the U.S.A. has asked the Federal Trade Commission to conduct public investigations looking into the various phases of the burial industry. A Cooperative League official said a private investigation unearthed unethical practices by undertakers and

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY THOUGHT I

**FIRST IN WAR -
(OR POLICE ACTION)
FIRST IN PEACE -**

**BIGGEST PEACETIME
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BILLION IN 7½ YEARS -
COMPARED TO \$246
BILLION COLLECTED IN
156 YEARS BY ALL THE
OTHER PRESIDENTS
FROM G. WASHINGTON
THROUGH ROOSEVELT**



others in the industry.

The official cited an example in Detroit, where the cost of a funeral is said to be dependent on the cost of caskets. The cost of the funeral is said to be determined by multiplying the exact cost of the casket by 3.8, regardless of the fact that the actual funeral services provided are the same in each case.

Several labor unions have attacked this problem by negotiating with professional undertaking firms. In one case, a C.I.O. group succeeded in working out a flat amount payment for services, regardless of the type of casket used. As a result costs of the first twenty-five funerals conducted under this arrangement were cut an average of \$369.00 each. It is not hard to see, in this case, that former charges were excessive.

Now, the A.F.L. and the C.I.O. are pressing for action by the Federal Trade Commission on burial price-rigging. They claim that in many areas, especially rural areas, where there are no burial co-ops, the public is too often being exploited.

While there are many honorable business men in the undertaking field, who no doubt condemn the practices which the Cooperative League complains of, they alone cannot cope with the situation. Like most other citizens, they will probably welcome the investigation.

Week-end Accidents

A tremendous increase in traffic accidents on Saturday and Sunday since the end of World War II grimly underscores the fact that these are the most dangerous days for driving.

Quite naturally, week-end outings have grown in popularity as many more families have acquired cars and now also enjoy the extra leisure that is provided by the five day week. So, more than at any other time except national holidays, most American families are on wheels on week-ends, pleasure bent.

It is especially tragic, therefore, that so many of these happy outings are marred by a fatal or serious accident. Unfortunately, too often the family driver doesn't realize that week-ends are the time when dangerous drivers are out in full

numbers — speeding drivers, reckless drivers, inexperienced drivers and inconsiderate drivers who won't yield an inch — along with a full harvest of law-abiding motorists.

Holidays are notorious for their shockingly long lists of dead and injured. But drivers must also bear in mind that all week-ends, especially in the summer and during the months of good weather, are in effect "little holidays" that claim vast numbers of victims in traffic accidents. Last year nearly 15,000 men, women and children were killed and 650,000 injured in week-end mishaps on the highways — mishaps that for the most part could have been avoided if the drivers involved had used a little more care, a little more patience, and much more regard for the traffic laws. Since the end of the war, week-end fatalities are now about 2,600 higher and injuries about 200,000 greater annually. As a well known safety specialist said this very week: Are a few minutes or even a few hours of time saved worth a lifetime of regret? Let every driver, therefore, consider the extra hazards of week-end travel. The family wheel of fate literally is in each driver's hands. If he isn't level-headed, sober and con-

scious of the traffic rules, others in the car should take action. That isn't backseat driving; it is just self-preservation. To that we say amen.

HIS 20TH FRACTURE—

Louisville, Mo.—Although only eight years old, Roger Elkins is back in a local hospital with his twentieth leg fracture—the fiftieth among six members of his family, all of whom have osteopenesis imperfecta, a medical term covering various types of congenital defects in bone structure.

PIGEON MAKES SELF AT HOME

Chattanooga, Tenn.—A cocky pigeon strutted through the door of a downtown restaurant one night recently, marched to the kitchen, had a meal of peanuts and a drink of water on the house. Then, the bird sauntered over to a phone booth laid an egg and settled down for the night.

POT LUCK BAD—

Portland, Ore.—Someone noticed smoke coming from an apartment window and turned in a fire alarm. Answering the alarm, a fireman fell from a fire truck speeding to the scene. Another fire truck was called, only to collide with a freight truck. When the freight truck tried to pull free it backed into a trolley bus. The bus had to be retired. When the firemen eventually got to the apartment, they found that a coffee pot had boiled over, causing all the stir. The coffee pot was the only damage.



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NO INFLATION THERE—

Woodbury, Pa.—Daniel N. Byers began his barbering career here 69 years ago, charging only 10 cents for a haircut and he hasn't raised prices since. "Just never saw any reason to charge more," declares Mr. Byers.

18 NOT ENOUGH—

Joliet, Ill.—Mrs. Nora Baker, 40, who recently gave birth to her eighteenth child, said "a big family is really no trouble. In fact, I want two more girls just to even this up." Mrs. Baker and her husband, Raymond, 46, have ten sons and eight daughters.

LOANS OWN WATCH—

Atlanta, Ga.—Jerry Mandel, pawnbroker, recently learned that he had lent money on one of his own watches. A Negro confessed to police that he had robbed Mandel's shop of four watches and sent one of them back later as pledge for a loan.

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LIKES CABBAGE—

Oakland, Calif.—The holdup man who recently robbed a grocery store here walked into the store, tossed a head of cabbage into a paper sack and then, at gun-point, ordered the clerk, Robert A. Elkins, to empty the contents of his cash register into the sack.

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