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STANLEY W. NETHERTON Editor and Publisher
MRS. EDNA BLACK Associate Editor-Office Mgr.
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Worth Living Up To It

What is Democracy?
There is a question that might justify a little study. For there is a value toward which many throughout the World are constantly hoping—so many of them in vain.

The dictionary would have us believe that democracy is a government by the people collectively, through elected representatives; a political or social equality. Other off-hand definitions all admit the importance of people in the operation of such a form of government.

Which brings to pointed emphasis the matter of individual responsibility, as a part of the whole fabric. If a democracy will survive and prosper, it will do so only by the conscientious attention and participation of the people who make it up.

In the American form of democracy, there is a detailed charter of rights and privileges that are certainly foreign to many nations. And yet, those rights and privileges remain constant only by the constant watchfulness of the citizenry.

We must be tolerant of intolerances, somewhat, if we are to protect our own liberties by insisting on them for those whose opinions are at a variance with ours. For instance, take the matter of compulsory medicine.

There are many people in the United States who see in the implication of such a program great, social uplift. They believe and speak up for a plan of taxation which would affect everyone financially, with the further promise of adequate medical treatment to be furnished at no added cost.

Opposing them, no doubt with some degree of self-interest, are the dominantly organized members of the medical profession. They see in such a proposal the deterioration of medical standards of service. They counter the claims that those unable to pay for adequate treatment would have better health under the benefits of a compulsory health insurance plan.

In behalf of its side of the argument, the American Medical Association has assessed its members across the nation to provide a rather top-heavy war chest to carry on the fight. This money's use is well apparent to newspapers of the nation who are on the receiving end of carefully printed dossiers holding the proposition of compulsory, political medicine up for detailed criticism.

Numerous believers in compulsory medicine, somehow believing that a government-subsidized medical profession would better meet the needs of all, point with alarm and indignation to the funds doctors have built up to fight the issue.

Such alarms, to be sure, are without foundation. For, by every guarantee of self-interest, doctors may raise such a fund just as any other group of individuals or association of groups may do the same, to carry out the expression of their sincere beliefs.

To be sure, the carefully slanted literature that the medicals send out cannot quiet all the questions relating to better health for those unable to pay for medical services. And yet, the whole answer comes back to the word "Democracy".

Ours is a government of elected representatives and any citizen within it may petition his representatives either for or against the proposition. And the Congressman so petitioned will know the views of his constituents in direct proportion of their expressions.

That idea of "Democracy"—it's well worth living up to it!

Graduation Experience

Many are the homes this year in Tualatin Valley that were or will be touched by the high experience of graduation. Eighth graders and high school seniors alike, in their own ways, count the year of 1949 as a marker of accomplishment.

By custom, ceremonies which mark the completion of a school course, are called commencement. For the eighth graders, it is the commencement of an entirely new way of life—high school. And for high school seniors, it is a jumping-off perch facing a mysterious unknown.

Those seniors who, in breathless emotion, march to the center of the stage to receive a hard-earned parchment are rightly on the threshold of more than commencement. They are swiftly coming face to face with awesome responsibility.

Not all high school graduates will enter college in the fall. In fact, a certain percentage will never be able to continue their formal education. But what a shame and a frightful loss to the future of the nation if any of them pay little heed toward a better education, regardless of formal schools and classes.

It is well said that Experience is a great teacher. But the hard knocks and reverses of Experience sometimes have a negative reaction. And what comfort and benefit is the continual search for knowledge, to soften the blows of Adversity that await the trails of the young!

Should one be denied the "advantages" of higher schooling, there is nevertheless no excuse for him to neglect the finer, fuller development of his mind. The libraries are full of volumes which will extend the scope of anyone's knowledge.

It sometimes requires almost superhuman determination to pursue education without the easier, more formalized assistance of an instructor and fellow classmates. But concentration and application in private study will sometimes result in a much firmer grasp of fundamentals.

All education, to be sure, doesn't come from books. In any line of work which a young person starts, there is an almost unlimited field for study, development and advancement. What is needed as a first requirement, of course, is an understanding and realization of possibilities.

A dish washer may, by determined attention and sincere apprenticeship, learn the mysteries of the culinary art and go on from the lowly rung to a top perch in a most essential profession.

A deck hand on a river tug need not always remain so. There are jobs of the future as marine engineers, captains of grand, sea-going vessels or management positions in the field of the Merchant Marine.

A farm laborer need not always content himself with menial, seasonal employment. He might well have a constructive curiosity to spur him in the study and mastery of the magic knowledge of agriculture and production of foodstuffs.

The young are so often impatient. They become mightily discouraged at the apprenticeships they must undergo and the training they must have before being in a position of responsibility. What they must realize is that skill, even more than "contacts" and "influence" is the telling currency in economic existence.

The thrills of graduation are not selfishly bestowed upon the principal actors in the drama. Everyone with memory long enough can relive his own thrills and trepidations on the occasion of this day of school finality.

And so, to the classes of 1949, may we extend hearty felicitations and Godspeed upon their graduation and commencement!

Readers Say

Letter Blasts At "Ghost" Writers In Statesmanship

To the Editor:

Winston Churchill sounded the tocsin, as usual, in his speech at Boston on the occasion of the mid-century convocation of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Churchill, sonorously eloquent, is the most gifted orator of his time. It can be said of him what Mark Twain wrote of Robert Ingersoll in a letter to his wife: "Lordy, Libby, how the molten silver flows from his tongue. What an organ is human speech when it is played by a master."

One reason Churchill's speeches are so effective and ring with such sincerity and authority is that they are his own. The last American statesman to write his own speeches was Woodrow Wilson, and the political demagogues called him a "superman." They finally crucified him.

Since Woodrow Wilson's time, it has become the custom for presidents to deliver canned speeches. Experts are employed—sometimes batteries of them—to concoct one speech. Ghost writers even generate ideas for the presidents impoverished in thought.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt was a past master at dramatizing the other fellow's thunder, but he was primarily the actor.

More often the oratorical efforts of our statesman resemble the whistle constructed by the captain of a dredge boat in his spare time to wake up the community. It was a gigantic thing, fashioned out of an automobile gas tank and other parts. When finished it was a colossal fizzle.

The whistle was so big the dredge couldn't generate enough steam to blow it.

Charles T. McPherson,
Box 8875, Zone 7,
Portland, Oregon.

EDITOR'S NOTE.

A "ghost" who writes speeches for another seems somehow condemned. But his place in the speech and letters of a modern day is assured by the tempo of public life.

It seems not vitally important that leading statesmen write their own speeches for delivery. Their crucial point is whether or not, regardless of who wrote the script, there is a message of enlightenment or intelligence.

The long-range significance too, of any speech, is whether it's just oratory or is backed up by affirmative action.

Melquist Learns Extreme Caution For Future Use

To The Editor:

Week before last I wrote you a letter which you kindly saw fit to publish. Nobody likes to admit it when he is wrong, but on one important point in my letter I was so far off that I hope you will let me straighten it out this week.

My letter complained that the present policy of production payments to farmers was lopsided, and that the consumer, including all the farm consumers, might get stuck if we didn't watch out. Now I find that this point has been recognized fully by the Department of Agriculture and the Administration.

Far from sitting idly by and letting trouble pile up, there is now before Congress a new program advanced by Secretary of Agriculture Charles F. Brannan to meet this situation.

As I see it, under the Brannan program, farmers will receive the now-familiar production payments to keep on producing to meet actual consumer need, so that production won't fall short. Farmers will be paid the difference in cash between the support prices and the actual market price, if the latter is below the support level.

Under this program retail prices can seek their own supply and demand level without ruining the farmer on the production end, thereby protecting both farmer and consumer. Furthermore, support prices will now be put on milk, eggs, meat, fruit, vegetables and other perishables not now protected, as well as on the storable grains, potatoes and fibres already protected.

I note that the Farmers Union, which is strong in Washington County, has already endorsed the Brannan program, and many Grangers have also OKed it. Several of my friends who were well informed in these matters let me know that I was a little off beat just as soon as my letter appeared last week, and hereafter, I shall be more careful to consult some of my farmer friends before I get myself into print.

Sincerely yours,
BOB MELQUIST,
Hillsboro, Oregon

District 21 Aux. Elects Officers At May 14 Meet

District No. 21 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary held their election of officers May 14th at the Beaverton Grade School.

Named were president Mabelle Stone (re-elected) McMinnville vice president Emma Lanctot, Beaverton; jr. vice president Sally Edmiston, Willamina; secretary Francis Hunger, Forest Grove; treasurer Marion Murdock, Tualatin; chaplain Mildred Hoover, (re-elected) Hillsboro; guard Ruth Moffit, Beaverton; conductress Ida Smith, Hillsboro; patriotic instructor Eva Overland, Tigard; color bearers Mrs. Berhard, Willamina, and Nancy Nye, Jennie Anderson, and Irene McCoy all of Newberg, musician Alice Muliken; McMinnville.

State Payrolls Pace \$1 Billion Set New Record

Oregon's covered pay rolls for last half of 1948 were running at well over a billion-dollar pace, setting new records and a gain of 12 per cent over the previous high in 1947.

Reports from 18,091 of the state's largest firms, just compiled by the Unemployment Compensation Commission, show fourth quarter pay rolls of \$252,135,272, slightly below the all-time high of \$260 millions for the third quarter—mainly because of an employment decline of 30,000 between September and December.

The 1948 wage total of \$972 millions exceeded the previous high by more than a hundred million and was nearly 22 per cent greater than the war-time peak of \$799 million in 1944. Preliminary figures for the first quarter of 1949 show a 10 per cent drop as compared with last year—always the lowest three-months period.

Lumber and logging pay rolls gained \$42 millions, 18 per cent over 1947, to reach \$272,000,000, an all-time high. With related lines of machinery, trucking and other manufacturing, this leading industry accounted for half of the increase in pay rolls last year.

Construction and trade made gains of about 12 per cent in 1948 as compared with the previous year, while food processing with annual pay rolls, just under \$50,000,000 held its own. Construction totalled \$75 millions, and wholesale and retail trade \$255 millions for the year.

Covered employment hit the year's peak in August at 340,000—barely over the war-time high in June, 1943—but declined to 303,000 in December. Figures for the bottom of the seasonal slump in February are not yet available, but preliminary estimates show a drop of nearly 70,000 from last summer's high.

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