

Wilbur, the Office Grouch, Wistful; Says Children Losing Individuality

By DOC QUIGG
United Press Correspondent
New York—“At this time of the year, just about this week, when I was young, one-third of the population began indulging in wish-making and dream-manufacturing.”

Thus spoke Wilbur, our office grouch. Only this time he didn't seem so much grouch as just plain wistful.

Which third is that, old boy? “The little children, lame brain,” said Wilbur. “We used

to get stars in our little eyes and begin thinking about what the world owed us for Christmas.”

You mean visions of sugar plums danced in your head, the way it says in the old poem about the night before Christmas?

“Never heard of a sugar plum,” said Wilbur. “What danced in our heads were things like Flexible Fliers and model trains, skates and toys and baseball bats, and we wished and wished and wished so hard that some of the

washing sometimes came true. What's the matter with kids today, anyhow?”

Why nothing, Wilbur. What do you mean, what's the matter with them? They wish and dream just the way you did.

“I will bet you a pretty penny (he talks that way at times) that if you took a kid-in-the-street poll you'd find that today's organization child, if he dreams at all before Christmas, dreams not in terms of himself as an individual but . . .”

Wilbur, you had better halt right there, in mid sermon, because you are getting a bit hard to digest. Organization child? Himself as an individual. Do you have to carry on that way in the middle of a busy office?

“What I am trying to thrust

through your skull,” said Wilbur, “is that in my day as a moppet we wished in terms of ourselves and what we—me, little Wilbur—was going to get for Christmas.”

Selfish little rascal, weren't you?

“Completely,” said Wilbur. “And here's the thing. Today, what with the sprawl of television across the country, kids are conscious of the group, of the organization of society, of their identification with family—and what's good for the group is good for them.”

Just what are you getting at, if anything?

Kids Different Today

“Simply this,” said Wilbur. “Kids are losing their individuality. When I was a kid, each other kid was an individual.”

Yeah, and one of them was a

real character—namely, you.

“That I was,” said Wilbur proudly. “Now, all the kids are beginning to merge into one mewing blah, a sort of pack, you know what I mean?”

I know what you mean and I also know you're crazy. You got any kids of your own, or in your family?

“No, but I got eyes,” said Wilbur. Well, you better get 'em changed, old man. You ain't been so far off base since you laughed at the rocket-to-the-moon boys. You get one child—just

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