

Interest of Masses is Need of the Hour

Dr. J. S. Livingston in Able Address Before the Local Rotary Club Discusses 1931 Problems

In a very fine address before the Plattsmouth club of the International Rotary, Dr. J. S. Livingston, past president of the club, discussed some of the problems of the world today and particularly those of our own country where so many of the consumers are at present unable to maintain their part in the national economic life. The address which was highly praised by all who heard it delivered, is given below. Dr. Livingston having consented to its publication:

"In order that I may not be misunderstood, let me assure you by way of preamble and explanation, strange as it may seem after you have heard what I am about to say, I am an optimist, in favor of America and its future. I believe I can see and certainly do deplore some of its failings. It is because of my sincere devotion to my country I dare venture the criticism I am about to express.

"Personally I realize the endeavor of Rotary International in keeping political discussions out of club meetings. No doubt you all are aware of my strong personal convictions. It is my intention to tell you of the foundation for my prejudices and strive to keep this paper free from personalities.

Sometime ago this club heard a very able dissertation upon the Cyclic Recurrences of Economic Depressions. Again later our program was given over to the speaker's viewpoint upon the workings of the Farm Board and his opinion of the ultimate outcome of these operations. Because so many Rotarians are members of the Chamber of Commerce, I can hardly refrain from mentioning the rather polished talk of Mr. Akee of Lincoln upon the causes leading up to the present depression, delivered before that body at one of its recent luncheons. Mentioning the highly perfected and automatic machinery as supplanting the human element in production and suggesting shorter hours for labor as a possible panacea. He went deeply into his subject and closed by comparing the cyclic ebb and flow of prosperity with the graph so frequently used by economists in illustrating commodity price range over a given period of time.

"Human life upon this planet dates back about 79 centuries. Our authentic historical records state the Warm Valley of the Euphrates river as the birthplace of the human family. Living in this environment food, clothing, and shelter were their only requirements. Under the pressure of necessity, spurred by curiosity and rewarded by benefits, men came to seek new fields. Spreading from these rich valleys into distant parts, strange surroundings, climatic differences, and food requirements stimulated new ideas. Exigencies were met and civilization progressed.

"It is not within the purview of this paper to go into the philosophy of civilization nor the philosophy of man's desire to change his place of residence. Suffice it to say that from the very earliest times up until nearly the beginning of the 19th century A. D. civilization progressed and spread to many parts of the earth. The lives of our ancestors and their modes of existence remained primitive. However we must not only admit but we must admire the massiveness of their architecture, the beauties of their art, the harmony of their music, the profundity of their literature, the profundity of their philosophies. Still with all this evidence of culture they tilled the soil, wore their cloth, transported themselves from place to place and in fact their daily lives were lived with few modifications in very much the same manner all through the centuries.

"Late in the 18th century, a great change began to manifest itself first in the textile industry, then in the generation of power, then in means of transportation, and then in the development of natural resources. A peaceful revolution was in progress. Industrialism was being born. As new necessities evolved, inventive genius met these requirements with improvements. Home spinning and weaving were relegated and the factory system developed. With the factory came the call for investments and wealth began to exercise its influence.

"About this time the theory of the divine rights of kings began to melt before a rising democracy and civil equality asserted its influence. The United States of America came into being. Born with a righteous vision, stimulated with a patriotic zeal, and blessed with illimitable resources, country became the cynosure of the world. And with all of its possibilities the new republic soon developed a visible factor in the world of commerce.

"During the formative period of the new government and while the adoption of the constitution was under discussion, two schools of economy were formed; for convenience we will call the one materialism and the other liberalism.

"Realizing the necessity for funds to carry on the government and groping for an equal method of taxation, our forefathers in 1789 adopted a revenue law levying a general tax of 5% upon all articles imported into this country adding a 15% additional ad valorem duty upon luxuries and a specific tax upon a few articles. This tariff was for revenue only and proved redundant to its purpose. However during the time it was in force industries, particularly cotton, woolen, glass, and iron developed

rapidly. In 1816 these industries had risen to such an influence they could force favors and a high protective tariff was adopted. At each Congressional session the proponents of protection argued their cause and in 1818 all levies were raised to much higher levels, continuing thus until 1833. At this time a strong liberal element managed to effect a compromise whereby all duties exceeding 20% were to be reduced 1-10 each two years until 1840 and in 1842 all excess was to be taken off. However by sharp practice industrial influence and political strategy a new high level was again secured. This was short lived for soon the Liberal element began a gradual reduction in the taxes until 1861 they were the lowest than they ever had been. This period is the nearest approach to free trade this country has ever experienced. Under the need of revenue during the Civil war high tariffs were again adopted. In 1864 an unexpected and extravagant application of protection was made. Private interests secured great favors, the foundations for great fortunes were laid, the average rate on dutiable goods was 47.6%. The low of 1864 is the basis of our present law.

"During the period up until 1893 an occasional reduction was made and a few articles were put on the free list but no general reduction has been made since before 1861. Of course it is obvious that this short resume of 150 years of tax history can only touch the high places and in no manner go into the technical, scientific, or schedule sides. I can find no record of this country ever having been upon a free trade basis.

"As the industrial revolution progressed, it invaded every field of endeavor. By virtue of the precision, economy, and rapidity with which the machine was doing its work, it became apparent to the wage earner that the time would soon be coming when curtailment in employment would occur. Knowing that in 1850 the relative share of his product was 25% and that this share was slowly dwindling, made demands upon his employer for shorter hours without reduction in pay. He knew, too, that many of the goods that America were sold in foreign countries at a less price than they were sold here at home; and he also knew that the living standard in America is higher than in any other country. Never doubting the plea of the materialist his American wage earner distated with the wind. Today his relative share in his productiveness has dwindled to 16.6%. Something has worked otherwise with the leaders of materialism for today 85% of the wealth of this great nation of free men is in the hands of 1% of its people. This unequal distribution of wealth has placed such a power in the hands of the few that this few can almost bend the will of the people.

"By a system of carefully prepared sophistries skillfully played on the public has been brought to believe that tariff is the foundation source of all happiness, the panacea of all ill. Eighteen ninety-three was the beginning of a depression similar to the present one. However his graph shows neither the depth nor the width of valley. A liberal element was in control and while no very great reduction in tariff was made by the Wilson bill in August 1894, some few things were placed upon the free list. The tenuous hold the Liberals had in the Senate was shattered by the death of Senator Sherman and ad valorem duties were speciously added, really negating the efforts of the Liberals.

"In 1896 Materialist again got into the saddle and capital became master of the country. Economic centralization became the order of the day. The big industries began to absorb the smaller ones. The doors were being closed upon competition. Great trusts were hobbling the prospects of small business. To arouse the people from the lethargy into which capitalistic materialism had lulled their consciences, a series of appealing stories were published: 'Frenzied Finance', 'The Jungle Rex', 'Breach Stories' and many others showing the deleterious effect of political influence, watered stock, and great combination of wealth was having upon our economic life. Great reputations were smirched and many large corporations were laid under indictment. Plutocracy feeling the ill effects of this wide spread dissemination of the inner truths of their operations began to lay plans to bring what they termed muck raking to an end, and by capitalistic pressure upon some newspapers, by purchasing others by judicious instruction the American public was made to understand that it was not so much the muck that was harmful but the indiscretion of those who publicly commented upon its bad results that was hurting business. However, the substantial result of the movement was the instruction it afforded the people in the close relationship between big business and politics and revealed the hidden hand that was pulling the strings of the political puppets. Materialism has not always been careful of the character of the men they have chosen to occupy high political positions and in recent years it has devolved upon committees from the legislative branch of the government to do the muck raking.

"Having carried you from the ox cart to the palatial passenger train from the galley ship to the Levithan, from the treadmill to the million horsepower plant, from the foot messenger to the aeroplane, from the carrier pigeon to the telegraph, telephone, and radio, and in fact from chaos to the wonderful comforts we have today, and with the remarkable research of our laboratories, what tomorrow may bring forth can only be surmised. Still men were gainfully employed however overproduction was having its effect by an occasional reduction in labor in widely diversified interests.

"In 1914 came the beginning of the greatest cataclysm our history had ever experienced. Twenty million men were taken out of the fields of production and thrown into a

great maelstrom of destruction and for four years our present civilization was in the balance. During these days of stress and anguish, feverish production had to be maintained. Science and art soon had the mechanical offspring of the brain, of inventive genius doing the work of the absent warrior so that when the soldiers returned to their peacetime pursuits they found a mechanical man doing their work. The robot had been born, labor was feeling the effect of our machine devilled age and the grasping selfishness of Materialism.

"I am not an economist in the sense that I might suggest, however, I do believe that a man employed is a consumer in much greater quantity than one who is not employed, and I further believe that had the relative share of the earner's production been maintained shorter hours with equable pay would have made room for one fifth more men in gainful occupation, increasing consumption to the extent that unemployment would have been a myth.

"Let me quote B. C. Forbes, the well known financial writer. Mr. Forbes name appears in America's 'Who's Who.' It would be sheer hypocrisy to claim that the great body of America's capitalists and industrialists have been actuated by the broadest social motives. They have been dominated by balance sheet considerations rather than by considerations of human betterment. Their primary goal has been the building up of profits rather than the building up of the people. Improving net earnings has concerned them more than improving the nation. Their yard stick of success has been dividends. Industry has accounted the bringing in of dollars of more moment than the casting out of dependents. Infinitely more attention has been paid to creating better machinery than to create better men. The pockets of the stockholders have been more in mind than social conditions produced. What would it profit our money wasters, what would it profit our billion dollar corporations, what would it profit our millionaires and multimillionaire security owners were industrial America's profits increased a hundred fold if in the progress so many millions of bread winners, so many millions of families were crushed and sacrificed until in their desperation they overthrew the whole capital order?"

"I am not a republican and I am I a nullificationist. I am an American citizen, but I stand here to tell you Materialism, capitalism, concentrated wealth or whatever you may wish to call the money power. By its insidious sophistries, and well-placed controls has pulled the veil of obscurity over its own overt and unpatriotic acts and by confusing issues has led a great army of true Americans away from the government their forefathers bequeathed to them.

"As we read the newspapers of the day and follow the political wasters, we marvel at the mental gymnastic gyrations they practice in their efforts to mollify their readers and are impressed with the skill with which they use the literary salve of ambiguity to calm the fears of their credulous followers.

"America really needs a simple message to be cried out in one simple word, 'toleration.' That one simple word should be a strong white light to pour a flood of illumination over the complex wretched tangle of logan's platforms, and prejudices that confuse and completely overwhelm the American mind. The awful load of formulas of little narrow catch phrases that are easily learned and roll trippingly under the tongue are burdening us to the death of all honest thought and cluttering up the paths of knowledge with shallowness of their interpretations.

"In the course of this paper I have placed before you my own personal ideas of the causes leading up to this and similar depressions which have come to us. I have intimated possibly graver dangers than those to which we are really exposed. We are still traveling the road and the difficulties of the journey are unnecessarily increased by the mazes with which sophistry has beset the way. Down in my heart I sincerely hope that neither ambition, avarice, nor misrepresentation will ever loose the tie that binds the people of this great nation together."

DISCUSSION OF RAIL RATES

New York—A number of bankers, brokers and railroad heads met at the Bankers' club to discuss what one termed the "distressing condition of railroad rates." The discussion, presided by Milton W. Harrison, president of the National Association of Owners of Railroad and Public Utility Securities, Inc., was private and no statement was made public. Fairman R. Dick, of Roosevelt & Son, said later the discussion was a preliminary one toward arousing interest in the proposed increase in freight rates.

SENATOR ASKING DAMAGES

Washington—Senator Schull of Minnesota filed a suit for \$80,000 against the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey on behalf of his son, Thomas D. Schull, Jr. The Minnesota senator asked damages for injuries to his son in an automobile accident in nearby Maryland. He asserted an oil truck crashed into the machine in which young Schull was riding, seriously injuring him.

NORTH PLATTE MAN IS DEAD OF GUN WOUNDS

North Platte—The body of George McQueen, fifty-two, employe of the Union Pacific railroad here, was found in the basement of his home Monday, a bullet hole thru the head.

Mr. McQueen and their daughter were away, and the remains were found by neighbors. Members of the family could advance no reasons why McQueen should have taken his life.

The premier had outlined the government's position, insisted the president's proposal would be a mortal blow to the Young plan.

"I should hate to admit," he said, "that negotiations as sweeping as those involved in the Hoover plan have gone on since June 5 without the United States having the courtesy necessary to the normal play of diplomatic relations between free peoples to advise the interested nations."

Late tonight Ambassador Edge called on Premier Laval and informed him that there had been no preliminary discussion of President Hoover's plan with any other country before the president announced it. Mr. Hoover, he said, found himself obliged to act when the German financial crisis of the last two days of last week indicated that disaster was imminent.

France was the first foreign power to be informed of his proposal. Mr. Edge said, and France would be quite mistaken if it believed that it had been intentionally left out of a plan prepared in advance.

The premier thanked the ambas-

France to Give U. S. Indication of Debt Attitude

No Definite Stand., However, Until Parliament Consulted—Goes to the Cabinet

Paris, June 23.—Washington will have an official indication of the French attitude toward President Hoover's proposal for a one-year debt holiday by tomorrow night, Premier Laval told the chamber of deputies this evening, but the government will not take a definite stand until it has consulted the parliament.

No change in the Young plan will be accepted, the premier said, but tomorrow the cabinet will discuss the situation in detail and on Friday the government will submit the issue to the chamber of deputies.

This afternoon a belief that France was working out a plan of its own for the extension of relief to Germany received some support in a statement issued by the finance ministry, explaining that application of the Hoover proposal, in the mind of the French government, would make it difficult to resume the Young plan at the end of the year during which Mr. Hoover's moratorium would be effective.

Difficulty Cited. The Young plan is part of the law of France and is in continuous operation, the statement said. To cut out a solid year and then go on without loss is regarded as impossible.

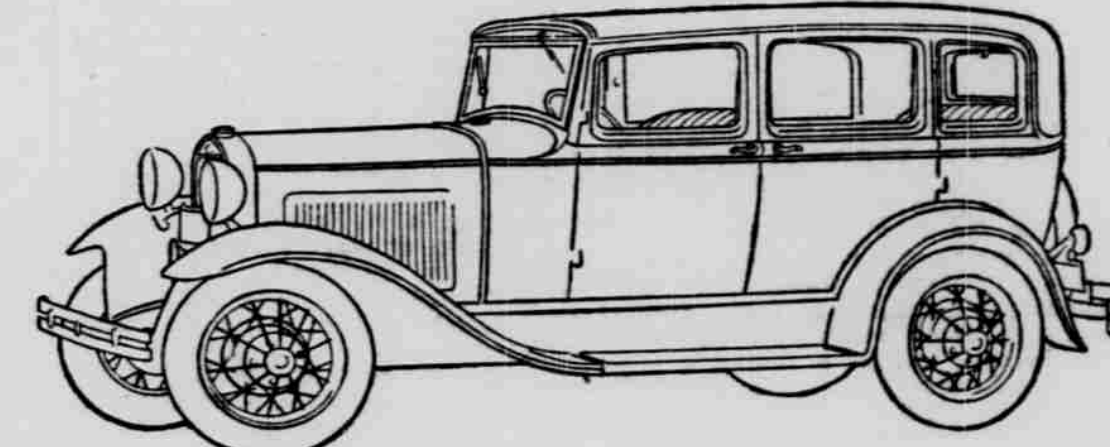
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MUST REDUCE ARMAMENTS

Boise, Ida.—The Idaho Statesman, in a copyright story, quotes Senator Borah, chairman of the senate foreign relations committee, as saying unless armaments in Europe are drastically reduced and reparations readjusted, a moratorium "would simply postpone the day of disaster."

Borah's statement: "It has been clear to me from the beginning that Germany could not pay the reparations assessed against her. They will have to be readjusted. If a moratorium is granted it will

ONCE WILSON AIDE, NOW DEPUTY SHERIFF

Keenebunk, Me., June 22.—John C. Breckenridge of New York, who served as assistant secretary of the treasury in the administration of Woodrow Wilson, today was appointed a deputy sheriff by Sheriff Ernest L. Jones of York county. Breckenridge, who maintains an estate here, has his own airplane which he has offered for use in combating the operations of rum runners in this section of the Maine coast. Jones said the craft would be of value in spotting the landing places of liquor runners.

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