

Sundry Reflections

By Samuel Rosinger

Jefferson County has never taken a more progressive step towards making its highways safe for travel than the recent passage of its stock law, which removes the dumb, roving bovines from the road and thus eliminates a serious menace and aggravating nuisance to automobile traffic. Backwoods farmers, who are contesting this law, ought to be treated like their brainless cattle, and removed from the highway into some hinterland of a prairie, where both they, as well as their cattle, could enjoy all the unrestricted freedom of movement they crave. By right, the enactment of a stock law should not be left to the sweet will of a county, but made compulsory by the state and federal governments that ought to withhold financial grants for roadbuilding, from all those political divisions that refuse to guarantee safe travel on their highways.

Since the professional criminals have been concentrating their efforts upon kidnapping the rich, I have changed my attitude towards the hitchhikers, and made up my mind to give them a lift. O, if I were to travel in a swanky sixteen cylinder Cadillac, I might be apprehensive of them, but since my car is as antiquated as a battleship used for target practice, I fear no trouble. In a recent trip to a neighboring state I picked up three. One, an oil field worker, who had a job, praised the N. R. A. for increasing his wages. The other, a road worker, who hoped to get a job, opined that though the N. R. A. may have helped many things, it had not done away with the red tape delaying highway construction, on which he depended for a living. The third, a waitress past her prime, told me she was jobless because of the N. R. A. Formerly, she could work for tips only, and get by, but since the N.R.A. had stipulated definite wages for waitresses, she had not been able to get a job even in a beer joint. Thus one gets a slant on life from the knights of the upturned thumb that cannot be obtained from other channels, not to speak of the profuse thanks with which they shower one, and the inner satisfaction one feels after helping a few down-and-outers.

President Roosevelt's decision to supply the unemployed this winter not only with food, but also with fuel, will receive the commendation of all those whose heart goes out in sympathy to suffering humanity. Having had my extremities, including nose and ears, nibbled by frost in my childhood, I know from personal experience that the pain induced by cold is as intense as the pangs of hunger.

ROTARYGRAMS

OF BEAUMONT



WEEKLY BULLETIN

Membership Secretary, Phone 932

Vol. IX Beaumont, Texas, October 11, 1933 No. 14

Slants at the Meeting

It serves you absentees right. Last week was a corking good program and what we mean by that is it had all the ingredients of splendid entertainment bottled up.

The Introduction was good, the Induction was better and the Instruction was best.

Tom Minyard with that stentorian voice, dripping with piety, told who the visitors were and whence. No obscurity. No ambiguity.

Capitalized Perk, suave in manner and handsome in person, snatched out of Mr. Webster's old compilation some fitting epithets and bestowed them with prodigality on the incoming Rotarians. Warmth permeated the remarks and fellowship stood out like a beacon. He hung cordiality around them like tinsel on a Christmas tree.

Young G. Hardy (must be Hale N Hearty) is riding the crest of the waves on the former mill pond of one Kingfish, and judging from the admonitions of the barrister some of the voters had adopted that old cajun custom of crawfishing. We have heard the mayor of Bayou Pom-pom and the mayor of Shreveport, but of the former we prefer the latter. The speaker gave us about as good political advice as we have listened to. Without insinuations of an evasive nature he said we could not expect the other fellow to stand up when we were lying down in the thick of battle. In other words, if you pay for bath-tub gin don't hope to get bonded rye. His advice was timely but ticklish to some of you fence-straddlers and as the writer gazes thru the crystal ball on the political horizon he can see more double-crossing, two-timing, side-stepping office holders in Texas than any decent state ought to tolerate. Too, it looks like we might have a few patronage trading politicians in our own county who have sold their birthright and if the horoscope doesn't belie the signs next year will find them as clean of a job as that proverbial 'hound's tooth'.

—Check.

OFFICERS

KEITH HOTCHKISS President
KELSEY LAMB Vice-President
PRESTON B. DOTY Treasurer
IRWIN J. FERAY Secretary

DIRECTORS

KEITH HOTCHKISS—Pipkin & Brulin Co.
KELSEY LAMB—Lamb Printing & Stationery Co.
IRWIN J. FERAY—T. H. Mastin & Co.
P. P. BUTLER—American National Bank
B. A. STEINHAGEN—Steinhagen Rice Milling Co.
ED STEDMAN, JR.—The Stedman Co.
MILLARD McMASTER—Petroleum Iron Works Co.
TOM P. WALKER—Gulf States Utilities Co.
R. D. CHASTAIN—Imperial Shoe Store
C. A. EASLEY—Seaport Coal Co.

—R—

The French Embassy

In East Austin on Eighth Street, where automobiles rarely venture and tourists would never think of looking, is a low, rambling, white house, the former American home of Count Seligny, French ambassador to the Republic of Texas. The count may have been a bachelor given to gay parties, but he must have possessed a keen appreciation of comfort and a home. Otherwise, how could he have selected the restful, one-story colonial house that became the French Embassy? With its serene dignity it was destined to be no ordinary house. It has witnessed four-hour dinners where masculine voices discussed politics; it has been a refuge during Indian raids; and now it still stands, the only building in Texas that was ever owned by a foreign power.

When Texas joined the United States, Count Seligny returned to France, and the Robertsons from Tennessee bought the property. Undoubtedly the embassy liked the count and his stag parties, but it must have sighed contentedly when it settled down to mother a family. There was probably the usual run of measles, whooping cough, and spankings, but even this failed to place the embassy in the ranks of the commonplace. From the heights of a wooded hill, the house gazed protectingly down on its neighbors. When the Indians alarmed the town, the people fled to the embassy. Men placed themselves at vantage points, and women sipped coffee while they chatted fearfully.

Once the Indians paid a call while the Robertsons were in town. They explored the house, tried on the garments, and probably made faces at the aus-

tere family portraits. One took the bowls of thick cream and emptied them into the drawers of a desk and a machine. The wood was damaged nicely when one of the Robertson family opened the drawers a day or two later and discovered where the milk had been poured.

The aging embassy's fame spread with the growth of Texas. Recognizing the historical value of the house, Miss Lillie Robertson started allowing people to visit the embassy.

"Many of the tourists fail to realize that it is still a private residence," she said. They demand to be let in at all hours, and some have tried to pry open the doors and windows in order to glimpse the interior. It is a common occurrence to have strangers peering in the windows."

Students of The University of Texas have found the embassy an ideal spot for initiations. One night they tied up two pledges and left them in the front yard. Next morning Miss Robertson was obliged to untie them while they apologized profusely.

The massive lock and key to the front double doors never fail to draw comment. The key itself is almost a foot long.

Growing Austin has never touched the embassy. Houses have been built to the foot of the hill, but they have never dared to venture up the slopes. The embassy is just as it was originally. The same trees screen it from modern civilization. The big rooms and hall are furnished with old, heavy furniture. There are the desk and machine which suffered from the bowls of cream. The parlor is clothed in the stern, Sunday manner of a half century ago, but the bedrooms lack nothing in a welcoming air. In each there is a big four-poster bed; a wash stand holds a white bowl and pitcher; and around the fireplace deep, comfortable chairs are placed.

In summer when the yellow roses twine over the porch trellis and flowers make a gay riot in the yard, one gazes at this old house with the thought that grandmother had one just like it and that behind those wide doors there are cookies and someone who tells delightful stories.

When the noise and laughter of Paris became monotonous, Count Seligny's mind probably turned to that far-away America and the little embassy shadowed by gaunt trees.