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CHARLES P. SQUIRES, Editor and Publisher

JAMES W. SQUIRES, Managing Editor

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THE ELECTRIC AGE

The use of electricity is today almost 25 times what it was 35 years ago, according to W. C. Mullendore, executive vice-president of the Southern California Edison Company. Its cost is only one-third what it was then. This remarkable reduction of cost has been achieved in spite of the fact that operating expenses of almost all kinds have risen, and the industry's tax bill is 94 times as great as it was in 1902.

Cold figures cannot adequately tell what this remarkable record of service means to the American people. Expressed in human terms, it means that where only a small proportion of homes enjoyed the blessings of electric power at the beginning of the century, more than 80 per cent of all homes have electricity today. It means that we can use power to operate radios, refrigerators, stoves and other labor-saving equipment for less than we used to pay for lighting alone. It means that the average family's electric bill is actually less than its tobacco bill, and a great deal less than its theatre and amusement bill. It means that hundreds of thousands of farmers have been provided with power that performs swiftly, efficiently and cheaply, tasks of back-breaking severity.

Private capital started the electric industry. Private initiative and energy developed it. Vision foresaw its magnificent potentialities. In other lands, where electric developments have been dominated by government, progress has been nowhere near as great. There the dampening hand of politics has deprived their peoples of electricity's maximum aids to a happier, more comfortable life.

We are still in the beginning of the electric age. If we make sure that the utility industry is left in the hands of private individuals, under suitable state regulations, and is kept free from politics and bureaucracy, the future will bring wonders now undreamed of.

THE NEW RAILWAY RETIREMENT ACT

"Final passage of the Railway Retirement Act writes finis to another chapter in the outstanding record of organized labor in the American railway industry," says the Salisbury, North Carolina, Post.

"The new retirement act is an effective compromise between differences of opinion among various groups. On the whole it seems to have the approval of every level of the railroad industry. It appears to be a fair reward all around for intelligent and tolerant dealings between all concerned."

The act constitutes the most comprehensive plan in existence in any industry for the retirement of employes because of age or disability. It affects about 1,500,000 workers, and was evolved by joint negotiations between representa-

tives of railway managements and the 21 standard railroad unions.

Under the terms of the act, any employe of a railroad is eligible to retire at the age of 65, or at 60 if he has completed 30 years of service. Employees may retire at any age after 30 years of service because of mental or physical disability. The act is financed by taxes on both employes and employers. Amount of the retirement pay is dependent upon years of service and compensation received. Benefits are extremely liberal.

The act is important in that it marks a milestone in assuring future security to the workers of our largest single industry. It is equally important in that it represents an amicable and fair settlement of differences between social-minded management and reputable, long-established unions. These unions didn't resort to violence and disorder to attain their ends—they sat down with the employers, and discussed and solved their problems. The result is that railroad labor — always highly paid — can look forward with equanimity to the future. The act is a towering monument to wise industrial relations, and sincere, honest dealings on the part of all concerned.

THE GIRLS CAN HELP

"Two young men and a girl, aged 17 and 19, were killed instantly late last night returning from a dance, when their car crashed into a tree at a high rate of speed. The fourth member of the party is in a critical condition in a local hospital."

This news item, differing only in minor details, has appeared a thousand times, and in papers in every state of the Union. It reflects one of the most tragic phases of the automobile accident problem—the reckless drivers in their teens and early twenties. Out for a good time, they careen about the highways and by-ways—and at regular intervals death follows in their tracks. Immature minds regard it as an act of enviable bravado to "see what the old bus will do." In many cases the cars they drive should have been sent to the junk pile long ago—brakes are gone, lights are bad, steering mechanisms are faulty, and tires are down to the fabric, ready for blowouts.

The larger part of the blame for accidents that kill and maim young people must be put squarely on the shoulders of their parents. The fathers and mothers who permit their children to endanger their lives with reckless driving, or are too lazy to find out the true state of affairs, are, to put it kindly, derelict in duty. Even worse are parents, who, when their children are arrested for dangerous driving practices, move heaven and earth to have them freed without punishment—thus, in effect, telling them to go out and do it again.

But youth itself, in the form of the young girls who go riding with their boy friends, can be of the greatest assistance in reducing this toll by bestowing a bit of praise and showing admiration for the safe driver and simply refusing to ride with the reckless one—make safe driving the price of a date and watch said boy friend slow down.

MASONIC ORDER IS NOT A POLITICO-RELIGIOUS CURE-ALL

The question has of en been raised as to why Masonry, as an organization, is not doing more to correct the political and religious ills that exist in this country today, especially in view of the Craft's large membership of influential men and the great potential force that could be exerted by the united effort of Craft leaders and members.

The answer must be made that Masonry is neither a sectarian organization nor a political machine, hence, it can have no direct bearing on these two important subjects. Masons are free to join any religious denomination that they may

care to, and subscribe to the tenets of the political party of their choice. While the individual Mason is allowed complete freedom in following the dictates of his conscience, he is admonished by his Masonic superiors to perform his just duty as a loyal, honest and upright citizen of the nation.

Masonry has been referred to by its enemies as a sinister power which threatens certain religious and secular institutions. There is absolutely no truth in that charge. The fraternity is rather an influence or spiritual guide to a higher and nobler concept of life. The Craft labors to improve men through enlightenment with a consequent betterment of their human endeavors.