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THE HENRY FORD CRAZE

FOR PRESIDENT OF THE U. S.

(Philadelphia Ledger)

There is a strange figure on the political horizon of the country. Nothing quite like it has ever appeared in our party annals or political history.

Henry Ford is a man of little education. History means nothing to him. He has had no experience whatever in public life. He has had no more interest in government than a hermit. His sole achievement has been in the hooking up of human muscle with steel and turning out millions of cheap motorcars.

And yet this eccentric individual is being seriously talked of by a good many people as a presidential possibility! This Ford talk has not grown to the proportions of a boom. There is, in fact, a good deal of mystery about the whole affair. Henry Ford is silent about it, and there are baffling half-denials every time it is mentioned. On the face of it, the Ford talk is so ridiculous it is hard to take seriously.

Yet it persists, worrying the Democrats and giving even the Republicans uneasy hours. Ford car agencies seem to be the centres of it; but whether this is to sell more cars or "sell" the carmaker to the Nation as its next President is uncertain.

The whole business is weird. Here is a curious genius of gasoline and sheet steel, an apostle of some sort of pulpy money and lunatic currency who is taking hold on the imagination of certain Americans.

Ford talk is most clamorous out in the regions where the dancing derbies whirled fastest last November. Out in the great, more or less, open spaces the family rides in a Ford, the plowman hooks his plowshare to a Fordson and the Ford trucks move in a cloud of dust on summer highways. It is out there that the voter is more likely to get the notion in his head that because Ford makes a good cheap car he can go to the White House and make a good cheap Government.

Yet he is the richest man in the world; and it has been our habit and custom to damn utterly any rich man who so much as looked at an office high or low. There is a sort of mass hypnosis about the Ford craze.

Why is it? Well, Ford pays a minimum wage of \$6 a day. That is enough to capture one group. He licked the tar out of Wall Street; that is enough for another crowd. He wants Muscle Shoals to make cheap fertilizer; that's plenty for the plowman. He fights the Jews; that pleases the prejudiced.

He is making a railway pay; nobody stops or cares to ask how. He has grabbed a waterpower site in Minneapolis that was ideal for a public plant. Everybody applauded; but had it been anybody other than Ford he would have been pilloried. He can "get away with murder" because it is Ford.

Somehow he appeals to the imagination of the little man, to the under-dog, to the man who has just failed to make the grade. To them all his money is good clean money. His political faith is uncertain. So is theirs, and they are weary of parties, anyway. He knows little history. No matter; they know as little. He falls for "soft money"; they also have an ingrained weakness for inflation and greenbackery.

Henry Ford as President would be a national disaster. He was born with a one-alley mind. Somehow the very averageness of him has hypnotized many average American brains. To the restless, uneasy and uncertain souls he is a child of fortune; the man who broke the bank by a lucky throw; the man they might have been; one of themselves with the miracle touch. They feel rather than reason that somehow he might work more miracles in the White House.

The "dancing mice" and the political moron are "hipped" on Henry Ford. They want a new and different kind of a "boss". In a day of crazes Henry Ford is a new mania, and always the insidious, strange, unrelenting, unremitting Ford publicity flows on as smooth as oil. It is easy to under-estimate the effect of that smooth and purring flow.

MUSICIANS OPPOSED TO RADIO

Paris, June 1.—Paris musicians have taken up a firm attitude against the present system of wireless broadcasting music, which, they declare, is becoming a serious menace to their means of livelihood.

The musicians' grievances were effectively expressed at the Salle Gaveau on the occasion of a performance of Massenet's oratorio, "Marie Madeleine," by the Paris Orchestra. Just before the performance was due to begin the conductor Georges de Launay protested against the arrangement made for transmitting the concert by wireless, and declared that his musicians would only go on with it on condition that it should not be broadcast.

The ground of the musicians' objection to broadcasting is that as more and more sets are installed in private houses the concert halls, once crowded, are being drained of their audiences, who naturally will no longer attend to hear a performance which they can hear equally well in their own homes. The effect is, they say, that the musicians are working for nothing so far as the great majority of their audience is concerned.

This point can probably be overcome by the broadcasting company paying special fees to musicians whenever a public concert is to be broadcast, but there is another aspect of the problem which presents a greater difficulty. The musicians point out that the broadcasting company, employing perhaps fifty performers for its own concerts, satisfies the musical needs of so many people that thousands of musicians who might otherwise be giving public concerts find their services no longer needed.

Some of the best known singers and instrumentalists also contend that broadcasting is considerably reducing their income from royalties on gramophone records, as well as keeping music lovers away from concerts. The broadcasting interests on the other hand, maintain that the musicians have everything to gain by the growing popularity of wireless telephony, since this distribution of music to all parts of France is creating a taste for music among thousands of people who previously had no interest in it and who are now much more likely to wish to attend good concerts than they were before their artistic appetite had been cultivated.

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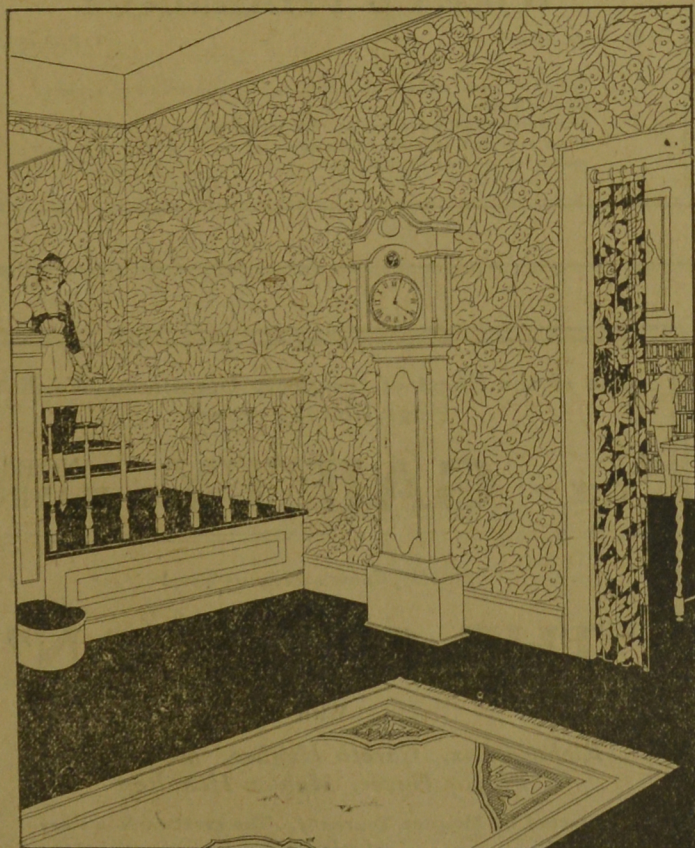
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