

THE GAB BAG

By ALAN BROWNING, JR.



COLUMN WITH A HEADACHE

If we were a drinking man and had the taste of sour liquor in our mouth, we'd swear we have a hangover. But being that type of citizen to whom the temperance league points with pride, it can't be a hangover.

It's not an ordinary headache we have, but a super special de luxe job. One of those kind which spreads out and exerts a steady push.

There are headaches and headaches. One type may make itself felt at a certain point, concentrating all its energy in a particular spot. Another type is of the hammer and chisel variety, as if some little demon was inside trying to chisel himself out with throbbing blows. But the kind we have feels as if someone had inserted a shoe stretcher inside our dome and was steadily tightening the screw.

Perhaps we could relieve the situation with a large and tasty dose of castor oil. Some may take issue with us when we refer to castor oil as tasty, but we maintain we are right. The trouble with it is it's too tasty. And personally we'd rather worry along with the headache than take the stuff.

To make our headache worse, Blaine Warren, super super salesman for old and new automobiles, comes in and insults the memory of our gone but never to be forgotten model T Ford, Calamity. Blaine said it was lined with fertilizer sacks. It wasn't no such! All we did was to cover the seat with green burlap. We like green burlap, and if our wife

truck that frequently had to be pushed from its little tin shanty in the back alley, and which couldn't generate any water pressure when it finally reached the scene of a blaze.

Elkin is sort of growing up these days and it's only right that her fire department should keep pace. And we'll say for the benefit of town officials that they realize the fact and are cooperating with the firemen in every way possible. Fact is, we haven't seen the town run along smoother and with less friction in a long time. Seems like there's not anything even for us to find fault with anymore. Why, we are actually on speaking terms with all the town commissioners.

But there is one thing we feel is needed, even though we hesitate to mention it. It's this: the commissioners should add a portable grandstand to their fire fighting equipment which could be hauled to the scene of every fire for the benefit of Elkin's many sideline firemen. Hard as these sideline firemen work, what with giving advice and finding fault with the way the fire fighting firemen work, they need a place to sit down. We believe the commissioners will agree that advice giving in time of a blaze is hard work, and Elkin's advice givers are entitled to every consideration. And please see that one seat is upholstered for us.

Speaking of fires and firemen, no matter how good a fire department is, once a really big fire

gets started, it's hard as all get-out to get under control. And no one, not even the most expert expert, can tell just how a fire is going to act once it gets started. No one can tell how fast it will spread, or in what direction. That is why all public buildings should be provided with every safeguard.

Take, for instance, the recent fire which gutted a large apartment house in Charlotte. Despite that city's crack fire department, the death toll from that blaze now rests at eight. And it might be mentioned, in case you are interested, that the building had no outside fire escapes. It did have so-called fire escapes on the inside. Trapped by smoke, several were killed when they jumped from upper floor windows. Had outside fire escapes been provided, these lives perhaps would have been saved.

Someone, whom we gather is opposed to outside fire escapes on school buildings, and who would rely on the "many little noses" to give adequate warning of any blaze, told us about a woman who went to school in a building that had fire escapes. This woman, as a girl, was so afraid to go down the fire escapes when fire drill was sounded, that she always hid in a closet.

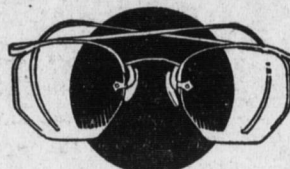
We couldn't help but wonder, in case an actual fire had broken out, if she would have run and hid in the closet then?

And if so, how she would have arranged to keep cool?

But maybe it was a refrigerated closet.

Ex-Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany has 52 grandsons in the present war.

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Oh well, that's what comes of being in the public eye—like a cinder.

THIS AND THAT

From here it looks like Elkin has a pretty doggone good fire department, what with good firemen, a good truck and a good place to keep it.

Quite a far cry from the old

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