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**TODAY and TOMORROW**

FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE

**PIONEERS . . . heroic stuff**

From my study window in my country home I look out as I write this and see Ed Miller and his two boys sawing two big maple trees into firewood. It has taken them a week to cut down, uproot and saw and split just those two trees.

What heroic stuff our pioneer ancestors were, who went out into the wilderness with their rifles, axes and crosscut saws, to clear the forests for their farms and build themselves houses out of the logs. Their labor, after observing how much it has taken to get rid of only two partly-decayed trees, seems all but incredible. No wonder that settlers rushed to take up land in the comparatively treeless prairie country as fast as it was safe from Indians—and even before it was safe.

Young folk who think life is hard in these days, ought to be taught more about the difficulties which the early settlers had to overcome, to make America an easier, pleasanter place to live in for this generation.

**POLITICS . . . and bosses**

The chief objection, as I see it, to the Government-run-everything scheme is that with us in this country "government" means "politics" and people are employed to run things, not because they are competent but because they are useful to a political party.

Everyone who has ever had to do business with any government office knows that the politician holding a government job assumes that he has been made a boss instead of a servant of the people, and acts as if he were the master, and a rather bad-mannered, arrogant master, of those who have business to transact in his bureau or department.

The postmaster general has lately had to issue an order to post office employees to be more courteous to the people who come to their offices. I don't know how much good it will do. On the whole, I have found postmasters and postal clerks far more obliging and good-natured than other kinds of government employees, most of whom have very bad manners indeed.

**TAXES . . . at the source**

I have just gone through the annual agony of making out my income-tax return. I have had to do it every year since the income tax law was enacted in 1913, and every year it becomes a more and more complicated operation.

I do not object to paying a reasonable tax, but it seems to me that the process ought to be made simpler. After studying the laws, rules and regulations to find out just what I am required to pay taxes on and what I can legally deduct from my income for tax purposes, I wonder how long any private business would last which required the immense amount of book-keeping detail which the assessment and collection of the income tax alone comes to.

I think the system under which income taxes are imposed in this country is all wrong. The new income tax under the Social Security Act is far better. One percent of every employee's wages or salary is deducted by his employer as an income tax and paid direct to the Federal government. That principle, of deducting the tax at the source of the income, is used everywhere else in the world.

**MEN . . . and brains**

Men last longer than the machines they make. The machine wears out from use; men increase their powers by using them. Even the man who does nothing but manual labor can keep on delivering a good day's work for years longer than a mowing machine or an automobile will continue to run.

The whole progress of our civilization is based on lightening the burden of physical effort by human beings. We make machines to do the heavy work, machines which enable every worker to do many times as much work as he could do by hand. The human body is not a very efficient machine for any



PASADENA, Calif. . . Here we have a worm's eye view from between the catcher's legs as Gale Wolfe, rookie pitcher for the Chicago White Sox, winds up for a practice throw across the plate.

special purpose, though it can do a greater variety of things than any machine ever built. And no machine has ever been built to think.

**MACHINES . . . scrap obsolete**

A railroad executive told me the other day that most of the locomotives on American railroads are out of date, being more than ten years old. "A machine that old is no longer efficient," he said. "It costs too much to keep it in repair, and it can't do the work of more modern machines."

Industry in general has learned that it pays to scrap obsolete machines whenever a new machine is

invented that will do the work better. The railroads are handicapped by having to ask permission of the Interstate Commerce Commission when they want to spend money for new equipment, and by government restrictions on their earnings which make it difficult for them to get the new capital they need with which to make improvements.

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