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## INDIANA'S MAGNIFICENT McNUTT

*Washington news dispatches label High Commissioner Paul V. McNutt in the biggest question-mark in today's American national politics. Commissioner McNutt is wearing well here, so far as we learn, and the following American Mercury story about him in Indiana written by James Stevens will no doubt be widely appreciated.*

January, 1933, and the inaugural of Paul V. McNutt as the Hoosier governor. The State was ripe for one-man rule. Public and private finances were crashing under the burden of huge deficits, and a tornado of tax delinquencies and busting banks. Schools were closing, unpaid teachers were organizing hunger marches, the jobless in the industrial cities were roaring for bread and beer, hell was smoldering in the steel mills and already exploding in the coal mines. McNutt went after dictatorial powers, and got them. Within sixty days the new Governor jammed through a reorganization measure that reduced 169 administrative bureaus to eight departments under his control. He machine-gunned on, with a sales-tax law that was soothingly labeled a "gross-income tax"; a bill that revolutionized the State banking system; a law that was to reduce Indiana property taxes \$50,000,000 in four years; a law that gave the State an actual police force instead of a pack of political choreboys; an enactment that buried the State's Ku-Klux bone-dry law and cleared the way for Modification and Repeal; and a slew of measures which knocked down and rebuilt the major State commissions, the system of municipal elections, and the State set-ups for dealing with Depression emergencies.

So much, and much more, before March 4th. Every measure had been in secret preparation for months and was heaved at a flabbergasted Legislature without warning. The

Republicans yelled, and a few Farley-Peters Democrats took walks, but the surprise attacks scuttled all opposition.

Yet McNutt the Magnificent is a product of plain Hoosier earth, and so fits the need of democratic legend. His father was an appellate judge, but the country town of Franklin, Indiana, was his birthplace and he grew among barefoot boys. No stories of moment have come out of his youth. Then, it seems, he was only handsome. At Indiana University the hero's powers unfolded, and he achieved the presidency of his class. A year at Harvard, and he came home with a Bachelor of Laws degree and to an assistant-professorship in the Law School of the State university. There McNutt first demonstrated his abilities as a political strategist, a master of patient self-advancement.

The facts of young McNutt's coming to power over William Low Bryan, then and now president of Indiana University, have never been told. The McNutt enemies relate a melodramatic story of black intrigue against the then-aged Dean Hepburn of the Law School; the McNutt loyalists give a poetic recitation about ability and virtue meeting a just reward; the truth probably lies betwixt and between. In any case, Hepburn was retired and McNutt was installed in his chair before a thunderstruck faculty could raise a whisper of protest. The appointment stuck.

Concurrently rose McNutt's World War career. Wonderfully made for military regalia, incomparably voiced for patriotic oratory, Soldier McNutt was kept at home to inflame the recruits of the Wilson crusade. At Camp Stanley, Leon Springs, Texas, he fairly bounced from a captaincy in the Field Artillery to brigade command, and finally returned to Bloomington with sufficient, if bloodless, glory.

But to get back to his story, in 1930, the Indiana Democracy had real hope, for the first time in fourteen years, of driving the Republicans from the lush political feed-runs. . . . McNutt, in plumes and shining armor that bore no smear of politics, was anointed by State Chairman Peters as key-noter for the State Convention.

. . . Many of the delegates there saw McNutt for the first time. He knew it was his fateful hour. Inspired, he struck all present as a Great Light leaning downward. He held silence until not a breath issued from his audience. Then the golden voice clanged a battle cry:

"We have met to prepare for a change in government and for its restoration to the people!"

As the echo rang, McNutt was made. Patriot Democrats who had schemed and sweated through years of famine for places at the head of the Hoosier trough were forced to stand at attention in the ranks while Boss Peters escorted the Magnificent McNutt to the front of the feed-line parade.

For two years the Hero seemed compliant in the role of drum-major. Then, at Chicago, in a day, he stripped his baton of its gilt, and revealed a leaded big stick.

In 1934, with one Democratic faction supporting Peters for the U. S. Senatorial nomination, and the Van Nuys faction boosting another, McNutt easily nominated his benchman, Sherman Minton. In 1936, the gubernatorial nomination was the State Convention prize. Minton, by now a roaring New Dealer, was bold enough to advance a candidate of his own. Van Nuys tried again. McNutt did not even trouble to endorse officially his candidate, Mr. Clifford Townsend, then lieutenant-governor. One ballot was enough. The Magnificent One remained the master of all the Hoosiers.

Then, the '36 campaign. The Republicans, hugely heartened by Democratic factional fights, revived the 1934 cry of "Stop McNutt!" So again in Indiana the Rooseveltian New Deal played second fiddle to the McNutt Dictatorship in an election. The hero himself was not a candidate because the Indiana Constitution denies a second term to a governor. Nevertheless, the retiring governor was the central figure of the campaign.

By this time he had perfected his public-forum method of campaigning. Every conceivable question and argument that might be fired at him from an audience had been carefully considered, and answers were stored up for all. Now McNutt the Magnificent was at his best. Standing alone on a vast stage, with lamps flaring upon his towering silver mane, classic features, and pine-like form, his smile as ever a

light leaning downward, the muted horn of his voice gently sounding a theme of oracular authority, the Hoosier Hitler silenced all comers. In the final week of October, not three questions a meeting were bawled at him. The crowds but gaped, their ears yawning, while they heaved with wonder and awe.

McNutt was aboard the Roosevelt Special when it stopped at Gary during the '36 campaign. In the forefront of the station crowd bulged Mayor Barney Clayton, local chief of a Democratic faction that had opposed McNutt two years before. This year he was yet on trial. Fearfully he awaited a sign from the Magnificent One, yielding the President of the United States hardly a glance. At last McNutt leaned from the observation platform and shook the Mayor's hand.

"A nice turnout, Barney," was all he said.

But it was enough for the Mayor. Sweating with relief and pride, he panted to his henchmen: "Did yah hear him, boys? He called me Barney! Paul V. McNutt called me Barney, by God!"

Thus the Hoosier Hitler bestows familiarity as a badge of honor.

McNutt, as I have sketched him, is well known to the conservative Democrats of the Old South, and to the boys of Tammany as well, if not to the blithe spirits writing politics out of Washington, D. C. So does he shine as a shape of hope for Old Democrats everywhere, as they bide their time in the outer shadows, beyond the celestial circle of the New Order. He is adored by the schoolmarms of a thousand institutes and he is revered in as many posts of Legionaires. For nine years, McNutt has been preparing a drive for the Presidency. If his past performances as a strategist, a master of surprise attack, an organizer and dictator mean anything at all, Paul Vories McNutt of Indiana will either lead or break the Democratic Party in 1940.

His acceptance of the Philippines appointment was unquestionably a part of his strategy. With an ocean separating him from the increasing misadventures of the Administration, he may remain unsinged by such hell as that which rages about Frank Murphy and menaces George Earle. When

the fateful year approaches, or when the party factions begin to yell for a leader who may unite them, the McNutt will come home and place himself in the spotlight. Meanwhile, now that he has learned the trick, he may be depended upon to make news. He will be head man or nothing in Manila. In any event, he will remain magnificent until the earth receives him, and even then the grass will doubtless stand at attention about his grave.

## The Islands' 17,000 Kilometers . . .

(Continued from page 6)

have been provided with good roads and every barrio has highway communication with the main roads.

The road classification mentioned above is based on the following definition:

First-class roads are well graded and surfaced, thoroughly drained, and constantly maintained; the bridges and culverts are usually complete and permanent. Where bridges are missing, ferries capable of carrying automobiles weighing two tons or more take their places. These roads are continuously passable at all times, with the possible exception of brief interruptions during typhoon seasons. As of December 31, 1936, 9,555.7 kilometers of first class roads were in existence in these Islands.

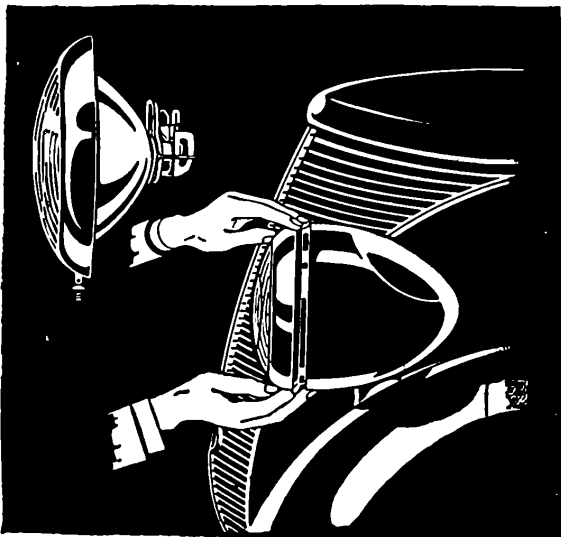
Second-class roads are fairly graded, partially surfaced, and intermittently maintained; bridges and culverts are usually complete, but, in part, are temporary structures. These roads are continuously passable for vehicular traffic during the dry season, and more or less passable in rainy seasons. The country had 5,105 kilometers of second class roads as of December 31, 1936.

Third-class roads are all the traffic routes for carts not included in the first and second classifications, such roads are usually narrow, poorly graded, or not graded at all, and are generally impassable in the rainy season. The kilometerage of this class of roads as of December 31, 1936, was 2,083.2.

As early as 1910, the Chief Executive of the country real-

(Please turn to page 15)

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