

# AMONG OURSELVES

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## PRIZES AWARDED AT COURSE FOR EDITORS

The prizes offered for the two contests of the Editors' Short Course of the Department of Agriculture of the University of Minnesota, May 8-10, were awarded as follows:

Contest for best statement of reasons for maintaining a column of editorial opinion in the country weekly:

First: C. C. Campbell, The Ellendale Eagle. \$15.

Second: Will Curtis, The St. James Plaindealer. \$10.

Contest for front-page make-up:

First: The Milaca Tribune. \$10.

Second: The Alexandria Citizen News. \$5.

The judge on the first mentioned contest was Paul W. Kieser, head of the department of journalism of South Dakota State College, Brookings. The judge in the other contest was T. E. Steward, in charge of the news service of the University of Minnesota.

The fund for the prizes was provided again this year by the publicity bureau of the Minnesota State Fair, of which Ray P. Speer is chief.

The winning papers in the editorial column contest, together with that which received honorable mention—by M. J. McGowan, editor of The Appleton Press, and president of the Minnesota Editorial association, are given in full herewith.

### First Prize Paper

"Why have an editorial column in a country weekly?

"The answer depends upon what may be called an editorial column.

"If it is a collection of clippings carelessly chosen; a column of general news in brief, with an occasional comment; a congeries of scolding observations; a gathering together of curious odds and ends of information of more or less general interest, a presentation of canned thought, or syndicated matter, then it might well be said:

"There's no urgent need.' Plate is cheaper, and, if well selected, offers a range of matter fully as interesting and edifying.

"The effective editorial column must be original. It is not a thing to be cut out of a common pattern by the hundred and sold like a custom-made suit of clothing. Neither is it to be imported, borrowed or stolen. It should be a home product. General thought furnishes the material, the editor cuts the pattern and his publication finishes the garment and offers it to the public.

"The editorial that attracts and holds public interest is the one that gathers and crystalizes all that is good in public sentiment. One that attempts to propagandize for selfish interest may be classed as a failure before the ink dries in the writing. The persistent belief that a newspaper can manufacture public sentiment through

the instrumentality of its editorial column is without foundation in fact. Opinions are formed by the individual's personal contact with the world in general and by the information which he derives from various sources, chief among which is the published news. The editorial writer's job is to sense the essential principle of immature beliefs, correlate the points of agreement, harmonize the points of difference, and present the thought in acceptable concrete form. That is the work that justifies his continued employment and the existence of the medium through which he labors—the editorial column.

"The public is singularly helpless in the matter of putting its convictions into

### NOTE TO EDITORS

The Division of Publications of the University Department of Agriculture has just sent to the editors of papers throughout the state a pamphlet bearing the title,

#### Questions and Answers on Marketing.

The pamphlet is a compendium on the subject of marketing, now so much in the mind of the farmer and the business man.

It should, therefore, be valuable as a reference book in the editor's library.

The answers to the questions are by men who have made special study of their several fields.

language sufficiently lucid, forceful and appropriate. It has its beliefs and asks for no assistance in forming them except a disinterested statement of facts. It is constantly irritated and peeved by those who seek to thrust ready-made conclusions upon it. It turns to the specialist in rhetoric for service just as it employs any other expert, reserving the right to make the major decisions and leaving to him the technical procedure and the responsibility for the final result.

"Left to itself the mass of mankind would progress with painful slowness and needless toil because of inability to rapidly crystalize the thought upon which concerted action is based. The individual pursues his way hazily and with a lack of comprehension or realization as to what he really does believe until some time he happens upon 'a piece in the paper' and he nods his head with vigorous approval as he says to himself: 'Why, I've thought just that way for a long time, only I never thought just how to say it.'

"That is the reason for an editorial column:

"Putting the best thoughts of considerable groups of men into words.

"Continuing your work as a spe-

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## MUNDER'S ADDRESSES STIR UP ENTHUSIASM

It is impossible to outline the two addresses given by Norman T. A. Munder, the Baltimore printer who is one of the country's greatest printers, at the editors' short course at University Farm last month. The reason is that Mr. Munder's exhibits made up such a large part of his talks. The man would flash on his audience a few words, crammed with meaning and suggestion, and then, pausing, would pick up from the table behind him some piece of printing to re-enforce his point. A story about the printing in hand would be followed with more pregnant comment, a flash of wit or kindly humor or philosophy; and then would come another item from the exhibit—which, if one was an enthusiast over good printing, would make him catch his breath with delight. Mr. Munder revealed himself an artist and a genius in his art, and, more than that, a man with a winning and wholesome philosophy of life. He won the liking of every one who heard him, as with words and exhibits, humor and sound philosophy, he appealed to his hearers' artistic sense on the one hand and common business sense on the other.

Mr. Munder had sent on to University Farm from Baltimore a wonderful exhibit of printing, each item carefully and attractively framed. It is not too much to say, that it was, perhaps, the finest printing exhibit ever shown in the twin cities. With the efficient help of Arnett W. Leslie of the John Leslie Paper company, this exhibit was mounted in the lecture room used for the short course, where it could be studied by those attending. Added to this was an exhibit furnished by the printers of the two cities, mounted and arranged by Mr. Leslie. Besides, when Mr. Munder arrived, he had with him additional choice specimens of printing in book and pamphlet form, including a page from the original Gutenberg Bible. With this material about him, he gave his address on "What Constitutes Good Printing."

He exhibited specimens of what every one had to admit was wonderful printing. He gave proof of a thing he said in his lecture: "It takes years to reach a million ears; it takes minutes to reach a million eyes." His address, in other words was as much an appeal to the eye as to the ear,—an appeal for a quickened interest in good printing.

If one were to try to sum up Mr. Munder's talk on what constitutes good printing, he might say it was an exposition of beauty and utility in printing. He said:

Is it going to be profit or loss as we go through life? All we have is our record. The thought is here—service. I know I have come to St. Paul to serve. Perhaps I shall make

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## AMONG OURSELVES

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of the State of Minnesota

by  
The Division of Extension, Department of  
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Edited by W. P. Kirkwood, E. C. Torrey  
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### WHY AN EDITORIAL COLUMN?

You have in this issue the winning papers submitted in the editors' short course contest for the best statement of reasons for maintaining a column of editorial opinion in the country weekly. They are worth reading—well worth reading, particularly by those inclined to neglect the editorial column. They are reprinted here, because they are contributions of value to the discussions which arise as to the need of an editorial column.

But the other papers submitted are of value, too. It will not do to let them be lost in the dusty files of the editor of this sheet. For that reason, it is hereby announced that future issues of *Among Ourselves* will contain some, if not all, of the rest. They should prove an interesting feature. If *Among Ourselves* were seeking subscriptions, it would advertise the feature as an inducement to non-subscribers to enlist.

### SHORT COURSE PRAISED

The editors' short course of last month won praise from those who attended. John E. Casey, secretary of the Minnesota Editorial association, sent three of his force to University Farm for the Thursday afternoon session at the farm and at the university's printing plant. He himself came up for the Friday and Saturday sessions. After he returned to Jordan he wrote: "The short course was splendid. . . . I think it was, all in all, the best I ever attended."

The program attracted attention among other institutions. N. A. Crawford, head of the department of industrial journalism and printing, Kansas State College, one of the successful departments of journalism among the institutions of the middle west, wrote: "Congratulations on the brilliant program that you have arranged for your eighth annual editors' short course. It ought to do a lot of good to Minnesota journalism. The booklet, also, is a beautiful piece of printing." M. L. Spencer, head of the department of journalism of the University of Washington, Seattle, wrote: "Your program is immensely interesting, and the printing is the most attractive of any state gathering I have seen in years."

Frankly, the program cost a lot of effort, but it was worth all it cost in the interest it aroused among those who took advantage of the course and for the attention it drew from the outside.

It was the intention to give in this issue of *Among Ourselves* a complete resume of the course, but that is found to be impossible. Consequently some of

the material will have to be held over until the July issue. But it is live stuff and will be "live stuff" then as well as now.

To those who did not attend the course, we can but say: We missed you, and are sorry you could not be with us. We're hoping for better things next time.

### "FOR THIS, ALL THANKS"

*Among Ourselves* wishes to express for the Department of Agriculture of the University of Minnesota its very great appreciation of the assistance given by the printers' supply men of Minneapolis and St. Paul, by the printers, and by the John Leslie Paper company, in making the department's eighth annual editors' short course one of the best of the entire series, and one which sets a high mark for future courses.

The printers' supply men of St. Paul and Minneapolis contributed the annual dinner this year, as a compliment to Norman T. A. Munder of Baltimore and to the visiting editors. The printers of the two cities took a keen interest in Mr. Munder's coming, spread the news of his visit, and attended in considerable numbers the two sessions at which he spoke. Arnett W. Leslie, for the John Leslie Paper company, was tireless in his co-operative effort. He spent a great deal of time in planning the program, for which his company furnished the stock; he provided a valuable exhibit of good printing, supplied by twin city printers, and aided in mounting the wonderful exhibit sent on from Baltimore by Mr. Munder. He assisted, further, with many valuable suggestions which added interest for those who came to the course.

The co-operation from these sources, with suggestions made at the meeting of the executive committee of the Minnesota Editorial association following the course, indicate possibilities of future co-operation which should add immensely to the value of future courses.

For all of the help received, thanks are hereby returned.

### Books on News Writing

D. C. Heath and company, New York, announce three books on writing for the press, useful as texts in journalism:

News Writing, by M. Lyle Spencer, director of the School of Journalism, University of Washington.

Writing for Print, by H. F. Harrington, director of the Joseph Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.

Practical Exercises in News Writing and Editing, by Douglass W. Miller, Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio.

In the same connection, reference may again be made to Norman J. Radder's new book, *Newspaper Make-up and Headlines*, published by the McGraw-Hill Book company, New York. Mr. Radder was formerly head of the work in journalism in the University of Minnesota, but is now in the department of journalism of Indiana university.

Fire in the plant of the Little Falls Herald Saturday night, April 26, caused damage, chiefly by water and smoke, to the equipment and stock.

## HOW TO VALUE A NEWSPAPER PLANT

What is the basis for determining the value of any county newspaper plant.

That is one of the questions which was submitted by a Minnesota publisher for consideration at the Thursday afternoon round-table discussion of the recent editors' short course. It was too much for the editor of *Among Ourselves*, so the "buck was passed." It went to E. K. Whiting of the *Owatonna Journal-Chronicle*, who, the editor of *Among Ourselves* thought, would give an answer "right off the reel." Mr. Whiting, however, answered that the question was too much for him, but that he was passing the buck along to others who ought to know. Out of much letter-writing came the following, which is the view of a newspaper broker, who, if anyone, ought to have some method of getting at such a problem:

"Dear Mr. Whiting:—Replying to your favor as to basis for determining value of a newspaper property, will say first consideration is net profits, plant, and field. As a rule the gross business from advertising, job printing and subscriptions, for one year, total amount property is actually worth, plant and field being desirable. Of course there are many exceptions to this rule. For instance, any newspaper that goes into a campaign to get subscribers through prize contests, makes a false showing, and has practically "milked the list" for several years ahead. No one wants a paper that has to be forced upon the public. Some newspapers are conducted as advertising sheets, and do a nice business, but have little value

"The newspaper property that shows an even, well balanced business in advertising, job-printing, and subscriptions, and does not get it through contests or boom editions, is valuable, no matter where located.

"Nothing can make money faster than a good newspaper property, and no business can lose money faster than a poor newspaper property.

"So you see it is not easy to get the value of any newspaper property by any set rule.

"Field is of first importance, plant next, and in the hands of an experienced newspaper man, success is assured.

"Good newspaper properties are valuable, and their service as public benefactors is measured in more ways than mere money value."

This seemed about the best suggestion offered in answer to the problem proposed.

### Why Herman Didn't Come

A card just received from the home of Herman Roe of the Northfield News tells why Mr. Roe did not attend the editors' short course at University Farm, May 8-10—the first of the eight short courses he has missed. The card reads:

Eleanor, Kirk, Gertrude  
and Borgny Roe  
announce the arrival of a sister  
Anna Katheryn  
Born Friday, May 9, 1924  
Northfield, Minnesota

**McGOWAN ANNOUNCES  
A SERVICE PROGRAM**

The further development of the use of the country newspaper as a means of business promotion among the retail dealers in all lines of merchandise in the state of Minnesota has been selected as the chief item in the program of service to the newspaper profession this year by the officers of the Minnesota Editorial association.

As a step in this direction the association is now prepared to supply a speaker, representing the association, for any local gathering, group meeting or state convention of retailers held anywhere within the state, to talk on country newspaper advertising.

Speakers have already been supplied for a series of six group meetings of retail hardware dealers throughout Southern Minnesota and there is every indication of much material benefit to the cause of the country newspaper in consequence.

"If this work is to be valuable," says M. J. McGowan, president of the state association, "it should be thorough and the officers of the association ask the co-operation of the newspaper men of the state in securing places on programs where this message can be delivered.

"If you would like to have an outside man talk country newspaper advertising before your Commercial club, Kiwanis club or any other organization that includes retail dealers and will secure permission for him to appear, the association will supply the man. If there is a group meeting or state meeting scheduled for your town during the coming year, will you advise us of the fact and let us try to secure a place on the program for a talk on our business.

"We will need further co-operation, too, if the demand for speakers becomes general. We are securing them from among the members of our profession in the state and we have a good list of men who volunteer their services for this purpose within striking distance of their homes. We will perhaps need all we can secure. If you can and will serve as a speaker, the president or secretary will be glad to hear from you to that effect.

"This is a service to the country newspaper industry. Take advantage of it whether or not you are a member of the state association. We want to justify the existence of the association from the point of service to you, and if you happen not to be a member at this time, we know you will be before the end of the year."

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our business a little better known. But you've got to render a real service to your community. You must sell yourself to somebody, and you must sell the product of your community in some way. You are a walking advertisement—good or bad. The only selling is serving, serving well—being practical. We must fit into life.

Pretty printing, fancy printing, sentimentality, doesn't get you very far. You get an exchange for being efficient not sentimental. Our work must be appropriate for an occasion.

Everything must be suited to the occasion or need.

\* \* \*

But what we do in printing must be complete—a good message in an appropriate dress. If a man comes to you from a certain institution, you judge the institution by that man. If printing comes from an institution,—There was a scholar. I think he had been a teacher. He got drunk, and was taken by a policeman before a judge. The judge asked: "Have you anything to say for yourself?" The scholar answered: "There have been many like me, your honor; there was Shakespeare, Robert Burns, and—" The judge to the policeman, interrupting the scholar: "Go round up those fellows he's named; they're as bad as he is."

You take up a booklet in an attractive cover. You say, "This is a beautiful thing; it must contain an interesting message; I can not discard this." Even good things are discarded, what happens to the trash?

Beauty with utility was thus the thought running all through Mr. Munder's talk, and his position was made emphatic by illustration after illustration. It was idea plus example throughout.

Mr. Munder's evening address, at the dinner given by the printers' supply men of the twin cities, was of the same character. The subject was "The Art Preservative of All Arts." Here, again, he exhibited his page from the Gutenberg Bible. "Gutenberg made this paper; he made the type; he made the ink. That was nearly 500 years," said Mr. Munder, "and here is this piece of work today. He took good copy—Jehovah's truths. Good copy. He put it on paper that we know has lasted. He printed his message to last a thousand years. We have every possible means for improvement. We have no excuse for not developing—not perfecting. What we do in printing must be complete—a good message in an appropriate dress."

In short, this second address was an appeal for idealism in one's business. It did not contain a suggestion that the country printshop could, or should attempt to, do such work as that exhibited, but it did imply that one would find immensely more joy in the job by working for an ideal. That is the kind of thing he has done for nearly fifty years, and he was full of enthusiasm for it as a way to get joy out of life and to put service into life.

Dr. L. D. Coffman, president of the University of Minnesota, spoke after Mr. Munder, urging the point Mr. Munder had made, as to idealism in business. He said that that spirit was doing much for the promotion of human welfare and should be encouraged in every way possible.

The after-dinner speaking was begun by W. C. Coffey, dean of the University Department of Agriculture, who extended a cordial welcome to the visiting editors and printers. M. J. McGowan, president of the Minnesota Editorial association, responded with a statement of the importance of the country weekly as a social and business factor and expressing appreciation of the entertainment offered.

**HERMAN ROE TALKS TO  
MISSOURI'S EDITORS**

Herman Roe of the Northfield News, president of Country Newspapers Association, Inc., on May 15 addressed the editors of Missouri attending the Journalism Week of the School of Journalism, University of Missouri. He told the Missouri men of the origin and growth of Country Newspapers Association, Inc. He said that the association was the outgrowth of a feeling which was expressed by the Service Sheet of the New York State College of Agriculture: "When will the publishers of country newspapers get together as have the citrus growers of the west and the dairymen of the east to make their several businesses one co-operative business, big enough to make itself heard and felt? The association, however, had its inception before the New York Service Sheet voiced its question.

**Membership Growing**

According to Mr. Roe's address, the association now represents a very considerable number of states with an increasing number of papers in each. Here are the figures as given by Mr. Roe:

	No. of Country Newspapers	Members in Co-operative Assn.
Illinois .....	645	92
Iowa .....	573	245
Minnesota .....	531	216
Missouri .....	526	116
Kansas .....	482	110
Ohio .....	470	69
Nebraska .....	441	96
Wisconsin .....	387	106
Michigan .....	360	97
Indiana .....	351	61
Oklahoma .....	350	58
South Dakota .....	304	82
North Dakota .....	156	54
Colorado .....	144	55
	5720	1457

**Fears Prove Groundless**

The speaker said that there was nothing to the "bogey" that to line up with the association would mean the loss of business already on a publisher's books. He said that his own paper had not lost a single account by transacting all of its business through the association's New York office. On the contrary, in 1923 its national advertising gross receipts had increased \$500 over those of 1922.

He recited the case of an Illinois publisher who three months ago sent a list of all of his current national advertising contracts to the New York office of the association, with instructions that hereafter all his national advertising should be cleared through that office at the usual special representative's commission. Mr. Roe said that if 200 publishers of weeklies which have an annual gross revenue of \$1,500 from national advertising would follow this man's example, the association would have an income which would pay all expenses, give it a fund for development work, and leave a surplus.

## N. E. A. COMMITTEE FOR HIGHER RATES

The advertising committee of the National Editorial association, of which Herman Roe of the Northfield News is chairman, in its report at the recent annual meeting in Oklahoma City urges upon country publishers the adoption of advertising rates which will assure a profit to the publisher in each case.

Calling attention to the fact that the cost of advertising composition (machine and hand) increased from 6 cents an inch in 1913 to 11.8 cents an inch in 1923, and that advertising on the average is the source of about four-fifths of the income of the country newspaper, the report says:

Advertising produces about 80 per cent of the paper's revenue.

Subscription rates are constant, \$2.00 per year being the accepted and prevailing rate.

To meet increased costs and to make money so that you can serve your community effectively you must look to your advertising revenue.

Adopt an advertising rate that will not only absorb a composition cost of 10 cents an inch but also the many other items of cost, editorial and mechanical, and in addition provide a profit for the publisher.

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cialist in rhetoric and compiler of information to its logical conclusion.

"Lending your assistance as a language expert to clothe the thought of those who exercise the most benign influence in human affairs in the most appropriate and attractive raiment.

"It's part of the job, without which the service of publishing a newspaper is incomplete; and in attending to its requirements the editor moulds and imparts form, even though he gives but an atom of substance, and therein resides the great influence which he undoubtedly wields through the medium of the editorial column.

"Summed up briefly, the best reason for an editorial column is that without it a newspaper fails to perform one of its most important functions—that of interpreting public sentiment, changing it from a nebulous to a concrete state and guiding it along the most hopeful paths to beneficent action"

### Second Prize Paper

"The Journalist that does nothing but paddle along with public opinion, without breasting the current of popular error, is of no value—none whatever."

"Thus wrote James M. Goodhue, the versatile and gifted editor of the first newspaper published in this state. Without an editorial page how can a newspaper do anything but paddle along with public opinion. A newspaper without editorials is like a man without a good strong back. It can exert but little influence in its community. It is spineless. It is almost a nonentity. It can convey news but it can do little in molding or directing public opinion. It cannot perform its full function as a newspaper. It cannot live up to its high calling.

"Every newspaper worthy the name should aspire to be of the utmost service and help to its community. It can only do this as it directs the thought of the community and helps to crystalize public sentiment on worthy objects. It must have a voice and that voice must be the voice of the editor speaking through the editorial column.

"The editor cannot make himself a force for good in the community unless he expresses his convictions through his paper. His is a wonderful opportunity. His influence can be greater than that of any other one person in the community, for he speaks every week to a far larger audience than it is possible for any other individual to speak.

"It is through the editorial column that he gives character to the paper.

"It is through the editorial column that he can not only influence the thought of his own community, but he can exert an influence as far as his paper goes on his exchange list. His fellow publishers read his paper for its editorials first and for its news items second. If the other editor lives some miles away he is rarely interested in anything but the editorials.

"Papers with an outstanding editorial policy, that are fair in their editorials, clear and able on the issues before the people do wield an influence over other editors and in that way multiply their power for good.

"The paper whose editor's personality dominates it has the greatest influence. If he is personally known and respected by his readers his words have great weight with them.

"In the days of Joseph Wheelock, James Gordon Bennett, Charles A. Dana, and Henry W. Watterson, those great dailies which they edited had a greater influence over their readers than do the daily papers of today, where the editor is unknown and where no personality dominates the paper.

"The editor of the country weekly because he is known to a great majority of his readers, has the rare opportunity to be a leader and a booster for all that is good in his community. If he would measure up to what is expected of him, if he would be the power for good that he should be in his community he will make his impress every week in the editorial column of his paper."

### Honorable Mention

"Strewn over the face of the globe are numerous men and women, the meeting of whom leaves no impression, favorable or otherwise, upon your mind. No matter how gaily bedecked may be their bodies, no matter what physical perfections may mark them, in their eyes there is something that proves them uninteresting, and in their cold, clammy handclasp there is a guarantee that pursuing an acquaintance with them further offers no pleasant prospect.

"Strewn over the nation in like manner are country weekly newspapers, issued regularly without editorial columns.

"The reading of these newspapers leaves no impression, favorable or otherwise, upon your mind. No matter how typographically perfect their dress, no matter how complete their news records, there is no eye into which you can look, and in their cold, clammy method of exclusive news-purveying there is a guar-

antee that pursuing an acquaintance with them further offers no pleasant prospect.

"The editorial column is the newspaper's personality. It offers something to like or to dislike and it puts the human trait into a thing that is otherwise the product of purely mechanical operation.

"Personality it is that builds life-long friendships and bitter enemies that are an equal asset. Personality it is that commands public respect and breeds self-respect. Personality it is that forces progress where progress is otherwise impossible.

"The editorial column is the newspaper's personality."

Mr. Kieser, in making the awards, wrote the following letter:

"When I accepted the responsibility of judging your contest, I realized that had you asked someone else to act as judge, the results might be entirely different. In other words, I have just expressed my personal preference for two papers out of the nine submitted. You may differ with me, and so may seven of the Minnesota editors submitting these splendid papers. Two, I think, will agree, but my preference still would remain as expressed.

"The paper marked for first award, to my mind is very clearly the outstanding one of the nine. Here is a man who has a vocabulary to express his ideas so that he who runs may read. (And some one has said, that, of all things, the editorial writer must have a good vocabulary; if he has a thought it will help him to express it, if he has not, it will help him to cover up the fact.) I'd like to see this man's newspaper often and follow his editorial column. This editor shows in his entry that he knows the purpose of the editorial and believes in a regular column or department of the right sort. He covers the field quite thoroughly, discusses very briefly the kind of editorials which the country newspaper should run and also the effect of the editorial on the reader. I have no hesitancy whatever in giving first prize to the writer of this article.

"The paper marked for second award is also a most creditable production. A clear understanding of the purpose of the editorial in the country weekly was in the mind of this writer, and he makes a good case for the column of opinion and comment and guidance.

"I do not mean to pass up the other seven papers entirely. I think you have reason to be proud of them all. Some mighty good ideas are presented in them. I had a particular liking for the paper which you marked number 2, but after thinking the matter over in the light of your announcement of the contest (in the program of your editors' course) it was eliminated from the papers for final award.

"The editorial in the country weekly, I feel, is very important. The readers of the paper may not agree with the editorial—oftentimes they won't. But it does formulate the arguments, if thoughtfully and carefully written, and enables the readers to see more clearly the two sides. The editor has more sources of information than the average person of the community. He owes it to his readers to furnish this comment on, and interpretation of, the current news."