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Herbert Hoover

The country has spent a good deal of time recently weighing its President. His first year in office ended on March 4th and there was a general taking stock of his merits and demerits. It is right - we should do this - we made him - made him with much difficulty for it's an open secret that there were no small number in his own party that would have liked a more finished product in what they call practical politics.

A striking tendency of the appraisement of Mr. Hoover by his friends is to rate him as a magician - by his enemies to blame him for not having proved himself a magician. Honorable Senators arise and declare that if Mr. Hoover would say the word this or that great issue would be settled over night. Let him wave his wand and prohibition will be universally observed - let him wave his wand and the tariff will be at rest. Now, of course, this is the sheerest nonsense. I am inclined to think that there are a few women who are bringing up families and running houses that will take any stock in the idea that the head of this Government deals in any form of black art. They have learned too well the difficulty of keeping a group, even as small as a family of four industrious - orderly - happy, to believe it will be easy for the greatest of men to do that in a family of 120,000,000.

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The present President of the United States is not a sorcerer - in fact he is the very opposite of the medicine man. He is a hard working - straight thinking - friendly - interested man of affairs, doing his level best in the difficult position where he finds himself. That his position is difficult for him those who are watching him at Washington know full well. His hair is getting a little whiter around the temples, they tell you, there are more wrinkles in his face, but trials have not disturbed his temper. He remains smiling and steady. Mr. Hoover, himself, confesses that his first year in office has been difficult. Not long ago he wrote to a friend intimating that he was obliged to wear a very irritating hair shirt. The saints of older times used to put on hair shirts of their own free will to keep them reminded of their sins. The public pulls on Mr. Hoover's hair shirt - reminding him constantly that this or that is wrong in the country and that in their judgment it is his fault. They do their best to make him feel that when business is bad - people are out of work - the operators and operations in our coal industry at loggerheads - it is because he, Herbert Hoover, has not waved his wand. All this is unfair.

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Count up what Mr. Hoover has done in his first year. Perhaps his finest contribution has been the immediate way in which he has acted when there was a crisis or when there was a grave problem to be solved. He inherited a tough lot of problems. There was the farmer - of course the farmer's troubles are the oldest in the country. They suffer particularly from our high tariff - nearly prohibitary. How to square up the favors given to the manufacturer, give him equal favors, that is a hard problem. Mr. Hoover promptly tackled it, made a vigorous effort to do something about it. This plan is only in the first state of its testing. Whether or no you agree with what he is doing - let the plan have its chance. As a matter of fact that is all we can do but it certainly is our duty to watch its operation while we wait for results.

Then there was prohibition. It was not Mr. Hoover who passed the prohibition amendment or wrote the Volstead Act and yet there are people who talk as if he had brought the whole difficulty upon us. He did something about it and did it at once, but his plan is slow. It takes time for a commission to collect facts that they feel are all-embracing and trust worthy. It takes time to digest these facts and work out their meaning, come to a conclusion they feel they can defend, fight for. That is what the commission must do if it is going to give substantial help in solving the prohibition question. They will have to show us for it is not Mr. Hoover or his Cabinet that is going to settle the

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prohibition question. It is the people of the country as a whole. When all the people or even a large majority are willing to abstain totally from all drinking of all intoxicating liquors we will have prohibition. Just so long as there is a big group of people, as we have now, who will not abstain, for one or another reason, we will not have prohibition.

One of the great present difficulties is, that you can make a miserable kind of liquor in your wood shed - your bath tub and that hosts of people are doing it. The making of liquor has gone into the home and how are we to get it out? That is the grave question for women - for in spots all over this country women and their daughters are being ruined, body and soul, by the prevalence, of what we call, home brew.

Nobody deplores this more than Mr. Hoover. As a matter of fact anything that touches the home is particularly interesting to him. You might always call him the first President of the American Home. Remember how much he talked about it in the campaign - how it figured in his speech of acceptance. For many years of his active public life Mr. Hoover has had the American Home in mind, its health, its comfort. His natural interest must have been

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accentuated during the long years when he was feeding men and women in Europe in the War. When he came back to work, here in America, it was food which occupied him and he went down into the homes in his efforts to save food asking us to look after our sugar bowl, to cut out our bacon, to save wheat. He became a figure in the kitchen. What women at the head of the household did not post his portrait somewhere around the house? He was the womans own particular leader in the War.

Then he became Secretary of Commerce. There were various times during his service under President Harding and later under Coolidge, when Mr. Hoover might have had a more impressive position in the Cabinet, but he knew that in the Bureau of Commerce there was work to be done which reached down to the very foundations of the American home - put more order into its methods and practices - saved it money. It is he that set out to standardize so many of our common articles - to see what kind of specifications we ought to insist on when we bought this or that.

Last month I spoke of what this Bureau of Commerce is doing to figure out the best kind of sheets for a housewife to buy - those which will wear longest - will launder best. This service, a very genuine one, is a direct outgrowth of what Mr. Hoover started when he was Secretary of Commerce. And all of this he shows now in so many ways - not so obvious to the politicians perhaps, but which women will understand. They do not expect him to be a magician in

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furnishing their home with better equipment, more economical management. They know these things take time - that they are the product of effort - thought - steady change.

But it is not only to the material side of the home that Mr. Hoover gives thought. He is watchful of the development of children, is interested in their education, the building up of manly and womanly traits of character. Every woman ought to read and see that her boy reads and understands - a girl too, for that matter, something that Mr. Hoover said recently to the leaders of the Boy Scouts. It emphasizes what I said above that Mr. Hoover is the first President of the American Home. We must teach children something more than the three R's, says Mr. Hoover. There is a fourth R that must be added - the fourth R stands for responsibility - particularly responsibility to the community. The idea is very general these days that the Government must do everything for the citizen - must see that everybody has a job - that everybody is happy - everybody satisfied. The Boy Scout movement puts it straight up to the boy that if we are to have these things, they from youth up must feel their responsibility to do their part to bring them

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about, that they have a responsibility for order - for right thinking - for steady employment - for the happiness and the prosperity of those around them and that their first contribution towards bringing these things about is to make something good of themselves.

Everybody ought to put in his hat Mr. Hoover's remarks on personal responsibility in this republic. Here they are:

> "The conviction that every person in the Republic owes a service to the Republic; that the Republic rests solely upon the willingness of every one born in it to bear his part of the duties and obligations of citizenship is as important as the ability to read and write. That is the only patriotism of peace."
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> "The idea that the Republic was created for the benefit of the individual is a mockery that must be eradicated at the first dawn of understanding."

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