

I'LL PAY MY OWN WAY

if the ginger is to be saved much longer. The pressure of the forces of listlessness and indifference is too great. That the will of three seasick passengers on a great steamer should be sufficient to condemn the whole vessel to indifferent food is but a lamentable milestone on the long road low tastes are taking to world supremacy.

The great bulk of our populace must continue to feed on frozen or preserved meats and vegetables. But both peoples and governments ought to insist that preserved food be of highest quality and that methods of preservation be the best possible. It is just as easy for the great purveyors of food to see that they can or freeze only lamb of the quality of Welsh lamb; cure

only hams of the quality that you can still get round Staunton, Virginia; ensure that all the flavor of the anchovies they take from the Mediterranean is not washed out of them in transit from Marseilles. They have only to order the farmers to feed or manure their products properly. These products may be a little more costly, but superior flavor makes for greater nourishment.

Few of us will dine in regular magnificence until we all have our own truck gardens, poultry runs, dairies. Indigestion now and then is probably the inevitable destiny of dwellers in huge towns. But remember that providence in giving you tastes and preferences has given you the only sure guide to stomachic health.

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Tolls Take the Strain off Taxes

by WILSON CHAMBERLAIN

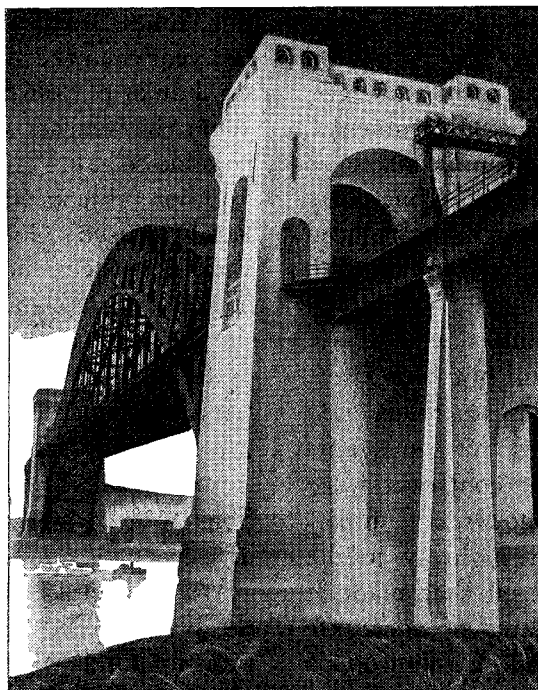
TOLL BRIDGES, tunnels, highways, and a dozen different kinds of pay-as-you-go public works are cropping up today — harking clear back to our early history, when travelers paid for new highways because there wasn't enough money to build them otherwise. Resentment of private monopolies brought the picturesque old tollgates to an ignominious end. But today public-service corporations prevent profiteering, offering a practical means for us to secure benefits we want without adding to the general burdens of government.

San Francisco's Golden Gate and Oakland Bay bridges — two of

the world's largest — are spectacular examples. City or State could never have financed their \$100,000,000 cost, though they had been dreams for years.

Floated as self-liquidating projects, with bonds issued against prospective tolls, they become immediate realities. Not only will they be free when the debt is amortized, but the bill will have been paid by the beneficiaries.

This toll idea has many applications. When you go to the famous Hayden Planetarium in New York City, you are getting this thrilling experience not because a philanthropist has made you a present of it (only the actual instruments



Lithograph by Louis Lozowick

Courtesy Downtown Gallery

THE FORUM

are the gift of Charles Hayden) or because the city is having a fling at astronomy with taxpayers' money. This \$650,000 spectacle is possible because you, from wherever you come, help pay for it with your quarter. And back of that is one private citizen's perspicacity.

For years the American Museum of Natural History had wanted a planetarium but had been unable to obtain either municipal or private backing for one. An architect, convinced that a planetarium designed with imagination would draw a steady, paying audience, suggested that the RFC might take a chance on it as a self-liquidating public project. And he was right. It was opened in 1935, and crowds flock to its half-dozen daily performances. Within 25 years this magnificent show, once rejected as not warranting public support, will have paid for itself.

Whiteface Mountain, in the Adirondacks, attracts visitors from all over the country. Two years ago, however, the view was only half there. Today a highway goes right to the top, the Adirondacks billowing out below in a glorious panorama. Yet the project has been no tax drain. One dollar, paid alike by New Yorkers, Kansans, Californians — by all thirsty enough for that beauty to think they'd like to pay something for it — makes it self-supporting. In the road's first year old Whiteface took in over \$60,000!

II

MEN HAVE always made progress when they have taken the bull by the horns and said, "We want this. We'll pay for it ourselves. We won't leave it up to the government." Some of the first toll records can be traced to Babylonian and Syrian travelers: Constantly set upon by bands of highwaymen, they placed patrols on the roads, levying a tribute on each traveler.

America's development would have been retarded by decades if tolls had not been used. Inland States refused to keep up roads used principally as thoroughfares for emigrants trekking west. It took bitter controversy for Henry Clay to put through the Great Cumberland Road, our first mighty highway to the Mississippi. And in the end all that made it possible was a series of tollgates at each State line, through which passed a continuous stream of covered wagons, coaches, and drays.

With the revival of the toll system an old word has cropped up with a new meaning: *Authority*. When you slow down to pay your 50 cents to shoot under the Hudson River in either the Holland or Lincoln tunnel, a big sign stares you in the face: PORT OF NEW YORK AUTHORITY. And as you sail through a dozen different cities — Philadelphia, St. Louis, Boston, San Francisco, New Orleans are among them — it will flash at you again and again: AUTHORITY.

It's a sort of trademark of public service. Suppose a public market for farmers is needed. The city or State sets up an authority, which acts as a nonprofit holding company, buys the land, does the building. Raising capital through selling bonds, it meets the interest by charging rents or admissions. To such a market (there are already several) come farmers who previously lacked this accommodation.

Naturally authorities are subject to normal business hazards. Jones Beach, on Long Island, one of the finest in the country and affording relief to hundreds of thousands of weary New Yorkers, is a delicate financial problem. It was acquired by the State in parcel lots deeded by the townships which owned them. Maintenance — and it is no small job to supervise that vast expanse and its many recreational facilities — comes from admissions, parking fees, and tolls on two approaching causeways. Last year several Sundays of the short season were ruined by rain. In spite of this, Jones Beach made twenty per cent more last year than the year before. But in two years big hunks of principal have to be returned. What the weather will be meanwhile, it is impossible to say.

Other projects have their financial hazards. San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge has such a long approach that many motorists prefer ferries. The Oakland Bridge suffers from such a simple, unpredictable human factor as the preference of truck drivers for loafing on a ferry, eating their lunch, feeding the gulls while crossing San Francisco's beautiful harbor. Actually these bridges are meeting their obligations; but it will take time to offset capital investment.

Washington's RFC has 50 engineers checking the practicability of the hundreds of applications for funds which come in from all over the country. A legal department checks further.

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This toll idea is no simple solution of the problems of ambitious municipalities. Before consenting to a loan, the RFC, for example, refers to traffic surveys embodying 10 and 15 years' experience. Its judicious approach has saved some expensive mistakes. Originally the new Richmond Bridge in Virginia was to have cost \$3,000,000. But RFC engineers, after "clocking" the traffic for a long period, submitted the opinion that such a debt could not be paid. Instead they advised the present bridge, which preserves the initial architectural beauty, for \$1,700,000. And this project is paying for itself.

A careful investigation must precede all these enterprises. New York's Henry Hudson Parkway was toyed with for 25 years by succeeding city administrations but was always put off for fear its cost would not be justified. It took yearly reports of increasing traffic, culminating in the incredible count of 69,000,000 cars per year entering New York from the north, to convince bankers that a speedway approach to the city could pay for itself through tolls. In the Parkway's first year, over 6,000,000 drivers gladly used it. In fact so successful has it been that a second deck is now being constructed on the approaching bridge which connects Manhattan Island with the rest of New York State.

III

WHAT HAPPENS when a public project is paid for? Will it be free? Eventually, yes. But authorities, being holding companies for money borrowed for public works, must operate toll projects to the best general advantage. After construction costs have been repaid, they may lift the toll entirely or reduce it to cover only maintenance. Or they may continue charging the full toll, utilizing the surplus income for other equally worthy public projects. For example, profits from New York's Holland Tunnel have been applied to easing the first and hardest five-year period of the great George Washington Bridge. Most toll projects are not expected to reach their normal earning power for five years.

Aside from making new projects possible, the self-liquidating idea may also provide for reconstruction after catastrophe. Down in windswept Florida the road from Florida City to Key West was washed out by storm two years ago. There simply wasn't money to rebuild the 40 miles that were completely destroyed. In fact, that portion of the Florida East Coast Railroad which was also wiped out has been officially abandoned. In a word, no direct communication with the keys was left. But into this situation came then the toll system. The previous road had cost \$15,000,000. Now it was sold for \$640,000. The purchaser? A State authority. This authority borrowed \$3,600,000 from the PWA, today has rebuilt the road, and by charging a \$1.50 toll is paying back the loan.

Not only does it bring concrete benefits and real operating efficiency; the toll system engenders civic pride. At those municipally owned beaches where you pay for the privilege not just of swimming but of being in beautiful surroundings, there is a marked spirit of responsibility. People take pride in keeping the beaches — *their* beaches — free from litter; they actually use the refuse receptacles.

Making people pay for what they want is a stimulus to good manners. When, for example, you drive on the Henry Hudson Parkway, and are ushered into the greatest city in the world on that superb six-mile scenic drive along the Hudson River, the Palisades rising on the other bank, the skyscrapers standing up in the sun like fairy castles, the transatlantic liners slowly moving in or out of their piers, while all the time you're coming nearer and nearer to the heart of the city — all for ten cents — you're not just saving half an hour of tedious cross streets and traffic lights; you're getting the finest show you'll ever see for a dime.

Thus the spirit which creates such developments in civilization seems to say: "I want this improvement — not just as a convenience but as something I respect and admire, as something I believe in so much that I'm not only willing but proud to be contributing toward it."

**In an early issue:
"The Hitch Hiker,"
by Chapman J. Milling**

Finishing Schools: a Defense



Drawing by Victor de Pauw

by **SVEN NILSON**

THIS REJOINDER is in response to Mrs. Marian Castle's highly provocative, if not exactly well-informed, attack in the January FORUM on that famous plutocratic institution, the American "finishing school." Though many alumnae doubtless have rushed to the defense of their alma maters, I hope it is permissible for a mere male and a rank outsider at that to point out the insubstantial foundations on which many of Mrs. Castle's criticisms really rest and also to remind readers that most of the true evils of the institutions under fire are evils which they, for good and ill, share with virtually every other institution of learning in America, colleges and graduate schools not excepted.

With the basic assumptions of Mrs. Castle I find myself in complete and hearty agreement, to wit, that the education of our citizens is a matter of common concern, that its social importance is all the greater where it has to do with the future leaders of our country, and that all education ought to be education for life, i.e., practical, in a broad philosophical sense. But, when these assumptions have been duly enumerated and noted, it is difficult to find a single statement in Mrs. Castle's article which does not rest on ignorance, misunderstanding, or haphazard, slovenly thinking.

Let us begin with the most important of Mrs. Castle's basic assumptions, that all education should be education for life. What are the inferences she draws from this (in itself quite sound) principle? I believe her position may be summed up about as follows:

Really to be educated for modern life, an

individual today must go through college, as most girls realize; and the finishing school that attempts to give college-preparatory work can neither do this as efficiently as a public high school or a "real" college preparatory school nor even do it at all without sacrificing any merits that it otherwise may have had. If it is assumed, however, that a girl does not want to go through college or lacks the ability to do so, she is entitled to the kind of education that will enable her to make a success of the only career then open to her, to wit, marriage. But the modern finishing school does not give her this kind of education; on the contrary, its all-feminine student body, its preponderantly feminine faculty, and its antiquated message and methods of teaching all combine to destroy or to threaten such chances of marital happiness as the girl once may have had. Indeed, says Mrs. Castle, when a girl leaves a finishing school she is quite ignorant of modern life; she knows nothing of modern politics or of modern financial problems; she does not know how to run her home or look after her personal finances. She has to face all the problems of twentieth-century America — and perhaps those of leadership — with the kind of training that perhaps might have been suitable for an English gentlewoman a century or two ago. This is all proved by facts like these — the finishing school tries to supervise the reading, friendships, and phone calls of its students; its teachers are all old maids, even *old* maids; and the sports it emphasizes are, inferentially, either antiquated or undemocratic.

Let us now look at these points one by one.