

BILLBOARD FIGHT IN MASSACHUSETTS

MAY GO TO HIGH COURT

State Regulations of This Type of Advertising Opposed by Interests Affected; Details

Massachusetts is today the focal point in the United States of a complicated billboard situation...

Two Things Decided "Two things will be clearly decided," he declared. "With the final settlement of the case it will be definitely known whether or not any regulation of billboards by police power is constitutional and also whether the Massachusetts regulations of outdoor advertising are reasonable."

Explaining the regulations against which, the billboard interests are fighting, Mr. Gale said "In 1918 the Massachusetts constitution was amended so as to permit the legal control of advertising on private lands. Later a law was enacted giving cities and towns, as well as the State, the right to regulate billboards. While not prohibitive, these regulations limit signs as to size and distance from the highway—permitting outdoor advertising, but robbing it of its offense."

The state regulations, as published by the Department of Public Works, declare no billboard may be placed nearer than 50 feet to a public highway, or within 100 feet if its area exceeds 32 square feet, or nearer than 300 feet if the billboard is longer than 25 feet or higher than 12 feet. Nor may one sign be located within

50 feet of another unless they are back to back.

Regulation Suggestions

These rules, however, do not apply in those districts that are designated as being of a business character, it is indicated. The regulations suggested for adoption by towns and cities, that are included, are even within 100 feet of a public way or more stringent, prohibiting boards within 100 feet of a public way if they are more than eight feet long or four feet high.

"These regulations took full effect in 1925," declared Mr. Gale, "and most of the billboards in Massachusetts now stand in defiance of the law. Nor can they be removed until the case reaches its final decision, and the temporary injunction obtained by the General Outdoor Advertising company is lifted."

"It is the claim of the advertising interests that to tear down these billboards, in compliance with the law, would be to deprive them of property without just compensation, and would thus violate the Federal Constitution."

The case of the State was indicated as resting upon the claim the billboards derive much of their value from the fact that a road built by the people runs near them, and as the final question is one of widespread civic betterment, capital assets may rightfully be taken away without compensation, as was done in the abolishment of slavery and in the enforcement of prohibition.

As an indication of the almost universal interest in the question, characterized as whether or not American roads will be allowed to become "automobile slums," it was pointed out the Massachusetts Billboards Law Defense committee has received money for carrying on the case from as far away as California and Paris, France.

"In any event a long and expensive legal contest has been started," Mr. Gale concluded, "the issue of which will either establish legal regulation of billboard advertising in this country, or will destroy all hope of effective restraint of this growing evil."

The Bureau of Standards at Washington has hit upon a process which will make paper money wear longer. What we would like to have is a system which will make it last longer.

NEW FASHIONS IN BUSINESS LETTERS

BOTH STYLE & CONTENTS

Less Formal and Fewer Words Wasted in Modern Getting Epistles, Says Expert

"Dear Sir" has been thrown on the scrap heap, "Yours truly" is just hanging to its position by a thread, and "Your favor of the 10th instant" is little more than a quaint relic of a wonder age.

How business letter styles have changed was told in an interview by William Bethke, Chicago, chairman of the better letters section of the Direct Mail Advertising association convention in Chicago.

Instead of the formal "Dear Sir" the modern letter writer chooses the friendlier form, "Dear Mr. Brown," even though the person addressed is only a name on a mailing list. Exceptions would no doubt be made in the case of high dignitaries, but for ordinary correspondence there is no need of the formality.

Verbiage, even if it be literary verbiage, is taboo in the modern letter, Mr. Bethke declared, according to the Christian Science Monitor. It is not simply a question of saving time, but of being natural. The man who would in ordinary conversation say, "Thanks for sending me that price list," need not stiffen himself when putting the thought on paper and say "Your favor of the 18th ult. at hand and contents noted." If he can speak when he dictates he has achieved the first step in becoming a modern letter writer.

"Yours very truly" is still the approved ending of a business letter, but it holds its place merely for want of something better, Mr. Bethke added. While virtually it means nothing, it does give a look of completeness to the letter and its absence is likely to be noticed. However, some writers omit the phrase entirely and close on a constructive note, such as "If you can do this, we shall certainly appreciate it."

"It takes a lot of training and discipline to learn to write naturally, and in a human vein," said Mr. Bethke. "All the speakers at this convention have emphasized the value of simplicity."

"Too often people have a tendency to regard letter writing as a language feat. This is a mistake in emphasis. If the letter does not reflect the enthusiasm of the writer for his subject, no amount of literary finish will make the letter effective."

Enormous Saving An enormous saving in the use of commas has been effected in recent years by eliminating these small marks of punctuation from addresses, both in the letter and on the envelope, Mr. Bethke noted. Commas after the name, street and state were found to add nothing to the ease of reading and so fell into a limbo. With them went the period formerly used after the date of a letter. As for the conclusion of the letter there has been much careful pruning to eliminate such useless and meaningless phrases as "and oblige" and "beg to remain."

SAYS BANANA SPLIT CAUSE OF ALL WOES OF PRESENT GENERATION

First New Concoction to Raise Price of Feminine Entertainment, Says Editorial Writer

The younger generation is merely following in the footsteps of its elders who started all the trouble by first buying "banana split." This is the opinion of Tom Elrod, expressed in the Christmas Scribner's Magazine. Mr. Elrod, who is an editorial writer for the Indianapolis News, asserts that the introduction of "banana split" to his home town was the most important moment in the town's history.

In Midwest "Perhaps you lived in a town like Midwestia and had similar experiences," he writes. "If so, dear brother, you know. You understand the heartaches and the empty purses. You know all about what started the revolution, and you must be assured that if you, and you, and all of you—yes, and all of us—had been willing to fight for the old order in those days things might have been different now."

We surrendered because we feared that somebody would laugh at us, that we would be wholly uncomfortable battling for a principal or a cause. We bought banana splits to maintain our social position. We rode in rubber-tired cars because society demanded it. We poured ourselves into a soup-and-fish and suffered the tortures and agonies that went with a boiled shirt, because we wished to march in the procession and sit with the elect.

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Candy by Box We bought candy by the box when a sack would have sufficed. It is no wonder in these days that the generation we call our sons and daughters is going ahead where we left off, is struggling with the problem of a sport roadster or a closed car, with plus-fours, golf shoes, English trousers, step-ins, slip-ons, full-fashioned all-silk chiffon stockings, twenty-dollar dancing pumps, permanent waves, cover-charges, fifty-cent sandwiches, blowouts, white linen knickers, cigarette-lighters, and fraternity houses that cost \$100,000 each. The frat that has a \$75,000 house in the quadrangle is going to start a building campaign next fall and has plans in the making for a house that will cost \$150,000. Not because the Phi Slappa Thigs need a new home, but because the Gammier Gammier Delters are just moving into a mansion that cost \$101,463.75. You have to keep up with competition and be a little better than the fellow next door.

Pete's Reward "Pete, the Greek, will go to his reward some day. He's not a bad fellow as such fellows go. Perhaps he had a right to be the author of the banana split, the most important event in the history of Midwestia. But there is one thing about Pete for which we entertain a secret yearning. We hope when he reaches the gate St. Peter will ask him to wait a moment. Then we sincerely trust that St. Peter will bring out a pair of perfectly good wings, dust them off with grated nuts, dab some fruit juices on them, add a lump of celestial ice-cream, and charge Pete just twice as much for wings as he ordinarily charges anybody else."

The Italian government has prohibited the dancing of the Charleston and the black-bottom over there. Maybe the Italians think Europe is shaky enough as it is. The way the Soviet chiefs have spurned Mr. Trotsky leads to the suspicion that M. Trotsky may be suffering with halitosis. There is a Central African tribe which has a peculiar custom. In debates the speaker is required to stand on one leg only and is permitted to speak only so long as he can stand on one leg. We don't know which tribe this is but it is our opinion that we ought to know a little more about its customs.

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