

*The  
Minnesota  
Merry-Go-Round  
or  
A Diary of the Legislature  
of the Age*

THE BEST THAT MONEY COULD BUY

By  
ROME ROBERTS

# Introduction

By

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In 1935, Rome Roberts published a 210 page diary of the 49th Minnesota Legislature titled *The Minnesota Merry-Go-Round*. The title was derived from “The Washington Merry-Go-Round,” a popular column by Washington journalist Drew Pearson that was published in newspapers around the country from 1932 to 1969. Roberts’s book was profusely illustrated with drawings and portraits of legislators that made it an easy if not compulsive read.

It is an understatement to say that Roberts was an irreverent observer of the legislature. Here are two paragraphs of his account of activities on January 21, 1935, the opening day of the session (page 3):

As soon as the members had taken their seats in leather padded chairs, arranged in semi-circle, both houses promptly passed bills paying part of their salaries in advance, as usual.

Some attention was given to parking problems and two men were hired to clear the way for the solons' automobiles as they arrive at the Capitol to open the session at 10 A. M., which is generally followed by a recess. This is effected in order that senators and representatives have time to complete crossword puzzles started the night before. Those who do not work puzzles spend the time reading back-home newspapers, carefully scanning the pages for notes of criticism.

Roberts’s book was copyrighted, which prevents us from posting it; however, the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library acquired the right to publish it online, and a link to that edition is here:

<https://www.leg.state.mn.us/docs/nonmnpub/oclc04049167.pdf>