

The Sentinel

A GOOD PAPER IN A GOOD TOWN

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Timely Topics

By R. T. Moore

It should be made known to the tax paying public that one-fifth of all the land in the United States proper, is now under Government ownership and pays no taxes.

In addition to the land there is about twelve billion dollars worth of business property owned by the Government directly or by its many agencies.

The danger in this situation is recognized by conservative leaders in both major parties and discussion is under way to plan for the return of much of this property to private ownership and public tax rolls as an economic post-war measure.

Coos county has had a taste of what Government ownership means to local school districts and other tax levying bodies. The increasing of Federal land acquisition correspondingly increases the local real property tax burden. As real property in our entire State is taxed about to the limit we are vitally interested in keeping the Federal ownership at a minimum and the private property on the tax rolls at a maximum. The developments in these matters are worth watching.

A peculiar inconsistency in the management policy of one of the strongest and most reliable of the labor unions is shown in a statement made by its president concerning an assessment against all its members for a war fund to relieve certain distressed peoples in Europe.

The head of this union, whom I will not name, has a high place in labor ranks in the nation. His union is well managed and has assisted employers in building up their business. It is well considered by its members, its employers, and the general public. It prides itself on the democratic manner in which its affairs are conducted and particularly in its system for election of officers.

Yet its Policy Board, consisting of a few top officers, has assessed these arbitrary payments against their members without permitting the membership any direct voice in the manner. If any member does not see fit to pay the assessment he is liable for expulsion from the union with resulting loss of job, and blacklisting that will prevent him from obtaining employment in his line anywhere in the United States.

The leaders evidently see nothing inconsistent with Democracy in the levying of such assessments. And it must be conceded that the money raised will go to a very noble and worthy cause. Yet it would seem to be sailing on a dangerous course if this policy of forcing union membership to contribute to various political and charitable projects be continued. It can hardly result in anything other than ultimate disintegration of the Union with disastrous effects both as to its membership and to the employers who hire them.

This evil can easily be remedied by the taking of votes in the Locals and the publishing of the results. It will be slower and more cumbersome to handle assessments in this fashion but it will be safer.

An interesting discussion with a prominent Portland attorney reveals the uncertainty and lack of confidence now general in the legal profession on questions of constitutional and statutory law. The constantly changing policies of the Federal Courts and bureaus have nullified long-established legal codes based on the inviolability of the Constitution. As this lawyer states it, Federal law is applicable only from Tuesday until Tuesday. One never knows whether the law will be the same next week as it is this. It is like playing a game of poker with all the cards wild, instead of merely the deuces.

It is this state of affairs that would have any other source I would have considered it merely the personal opinion of the speaker. But coming from such a one, it indicates a general attitude in the profession.

One of the Administrations most dangerous weaknesses has been the lust for power which has forced the removal of the obstacles of opposite-minded courts opposing the Adminis-

TWENTY YEARS AGO

(Taken from The Sentinel of Friday, July 6, 1923)

The Cadmean program for this year's Chautauqua will start tomorrow afternoon and will continue for five days. It is an attraction of unusual quality and will be unique in Coos county in that admission will be free. Arthur Ellingson and Henry Lorenz who have been collecting the thousand dollars in subscriptions the past week, say that it has been a pleasure to work on that committee, for everyone has come through gladly and some have even offered to give more if it is needed.

R. T. Newton, a former Coquille boy, was here the first of the week for a visit with relatives. He is engaged near Klamath Falls in logging operation and left for there on Wednesday.

Mrs. Roy Watson suffered a broken arm and other minor injuries about ten o'clock here Tuesday morning when their Ford roadster was hit by another car.

Chas. E. Schroeder, who drove out to Roseburg Wednesday, where Mrs.

tration's measures.

The Court obstacles were removed by the simple expedient of appointing judges who were believed to be in sympathy with the general program of the Administration. The long tenure of office by the President has afforded ample opportunity in this direction. The cost to the country has been the general distrust and even contempt with which the legal profession regards many of the Federal Courts.

There is some indication that the appointed judges, being human and fully aware of this attitude on the part of their brothers-in-trade, are showing a tendency toward independence of thinking and action that may lead to better relations in the future. The legal profession does not ask these courts to have a fixed attitude of mind. It only asks that the judges be fair and honest and free from any political or social obligation that would influence their thinking. The profession also feels that it is entitled to certain definite and positive policies which it can rely upon to be the law until publicly changed by Act of Congress. These opinions are not my own and I pass them on for what they are worth. There is much food for thought in this conversation.

One of the casualties of bureaucratic control that will seriously affect the general public for some time to come is the wild cat oil well.

Wild-catters, squeezed between high wages on the one hand and ceiling prices for oil on the other, have simply quit business. Not enough new wells have been drilled to keep pace with the tremendous consumption of war time. We are fast using up our gasoline reserves and the time is not far off when even essential driving will have to be drastically curtailed if the Armed Services are to have adequate oil supplies.

This dangerous condition is now recognized belatedly and something may be done to induce wild-catters to go back to work. But the hour is late and distress to the public probably cannot be wholly avoided.

The astonishing and powerful re-

Schroeder took the train for Anaheim, Calif., says that leaving Roseburg on the return trip at five o'clock, he met 187 autos before reaching Myrtle Point at eight.

There were about 500 fans out at the ball park last Sunday to see the North Bend team receive a trimming at the hands of the local club, the receipts being \$200.

Mr. and Mrs. John A. Martin left Wednesday morning for a two months' trip, on which they will visit in northern Idaho, in Wyoming, and also see Yellowstone Park.

The city council held a short session Monday evening and after disposing of other business went into executive session to consider who should be appointed to succeed Frank Dungey as marshal, he being named to succeed E. O. Faustman as water superintendent. There were several applications for the job but after hearing the views of several members of the council, Mayor Nosler named Jack A. Leach for marshal and both appointments were promptly confirmed by the council.

It is now the talk of the town, is merely the outward expression of a growing lack of confidence in bureaucratic control. The resignation of Chester C. Davis as Food Administrator, the sharp and spicy letter written by Mr. Baruch when he accepted the appointment to assist Justice Byrnes, the several statements by other bureaucratic czars such as Mr. Jeffers, all call attention to the same thing. No one has any definite authority and there is no exact demarcation of assignments in the various fields. The resulting chaos is growing very dangerous to the prosecution of the war and the public is demanding that something be done, and quickly. Hence the revolt by the politically sensitive Congress.

The City of Bandon had a bitter experience with bureaucracy after the fire in 1936. We were led on to draw up an excellent plan for a compact, attractive, little town, easily served by utilities and potentially a pleasant place in which to live. At the cost of a great deal of time and effort property owners were induced to deed their property into a common pool in the hands of a Board of Trustees, who would in turn deed back to the property owner a plot or plots of land substantially equal in area and location to the plots which he originally owned. This required a great deal of confidence on the part of property owners in the Board of Trustees and a faith in the future of the City.

To finance the rebuilding of the streets and the general rearrangement of facilities, and to refinance the existing city debt, a loan of about \$400,000.00 was solicited from the RFC. Repayment was to be made partly from taxes and partly from the receipts of the utilities.

After the entire scheme was set up and in working condition we were told that the RFC had turned us down, that the scheme was not workable because the City would be unable to meet the payments which stretched over some 20 years. They further pointed out that local industry was of uncertain tenure of life and that the town was so thoroughly

destroyed that its survival was highly improbable.

To show you how far the bankers who composed the Board of RFC missed the mark, the City of Bandon has paid off over \$250,000.00 on its debt since the fire. Its industries are far stronger than ever before and the town is definitely on the upgrade. The bankers were right in no particular. Their batting average was exactly zero. And I have felt that the depression of the 30's was caused very largely by the fact that RFC was staffed by bureaucrats rather than by business men or farmers.

This is not intended to be a reflection on the banking profession because a successful banker must be a pessimist. Our savings are not safe in the hands of any banker who isn't. But in an agency intended to build up public confidence in the midst of a general depression, one should have only those with the most optimistic frame of mind and the greatest confidence in American business. In the case of the City of Bandon, if such men had passed on the loan application we would have been living today in a much nicer town.

The County and State would have been better off because of the existence of an attractive town. The RFC would have been repaid more than half of the loan inside of the first seven years of its existence.

One must assume there are many such incidents all over the United States and that the original purpose of the RFC was innocently betrayed by the very men who were chosen to administer it. And now it seems to be used merely to circumvent Congress by passing out funds to agencies who would have difficulty in persuading hard-boiled finance committees to let them have funds.

Being a resident of Bandon and considerably soured on the RFC for their missing the boat in our case, I am probably too prejudiced to be permitted a fair analysis of the RFC. But the facts speak for themselves and the reading public may draw their own conclusions.

Senator Langer of South Dakota called attention of the Senate to an action by the Post Office Department arbitrarily depriving about seventy magazines of mailing privileges.

The grounds for imposing this penalty were obscenity and danger to the public morals. One of the periodicals was the Police Gazette which had been published since 1845.

Senator Langer outlined the history of this well-known publication and told of how it was given an order for a large number of copies by the Democratic Central Committee in 1936 when it supported President Roosevelt's candidacy. Later, when it swung to Willkie in 1940 it got into difficulty with the Post Office Department. The Senator examined the copies objected to by the Post Office Department and the only obscenity he could find in it was an article supporting Mr. Willkie.

He went on to state that four of the seventy periodicals had their privileges restored after a high-priced attorney, who was formerly a Democratic committee chairman, had interceded for the publishers. Incidentally, these four magazines were published by a wealthy concern. The Police Gazette is not wealthy.

All of this implies rather a nasty bit of politics on the part of the Post Office Department and is not in keeping with character of the Postmaster General. If there is any truth in the contention that these periodicals

were grossly discriminated against, the actual suspension must have come from the Palace Guard and not from Mr. Walker.

However, in this power to thus suspend American magazines or periodicals lies a grave danger to the freedom of the press. Any act of suspension of mailing privileges so vital to the life of any publishing business should be carefully scrutinized by Congress and thoroughly justified by the Post Office Department. There is a question whether this power should be left in the hands of the Postmaster General or whether a joint committee of Congress handling Post Office matters should not be given the final say. It certainly does not square up with American ideals to have one's business arbitrarily destroyed by the act of a single Federal official and without being permitted a day in court. And this latter expression means that the day in court should be within the financial reach of every citizen and not merely the rich. Even tho, the present law does specify that the publisher may seek redress or relief in court from the action by the Post Office Department, the procedure is so costly that only the rich can take advantage of it.

The people's Congress should take immediate steps to protect this right. And any suggestion of dirty politics in the handling of these cases should be summarily removed thru the pitiless publicity of a public hearing before the proper committee of the Congress.

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The very idea of the power and right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government. —Washington.

Patriotism is a blind and irrational impulse unless it is founded on a knowledge of the blessings we are called to secure and the privileges we propose to defend. —Robert Hall.

We must accept the disciplines of democracy as well as its freedoms. Discipline from without flourishes when discipline from within grows weak. —Harry Woodburn Chase.

Only free people can hold their purpose and their honor steady to a common end, and prefer the interest of mankind to any narrow interest of their own. —Woodrow Wilson.

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