

Bad Roads Kill Expansion

Good roads are a productive investment. Where roads are bad, development of adjacent territory is slow, if, indeed, there is not retrogression. Good roads enhance land values and promote business generally. They mean improved transportation facilities and the means for getting about quickly and conveniently. "Economic Management of a County Highway System" will be discussed by W. S. Hawkins, County Engineer, Gulpport, Mississippi, at the sixth annual Asphalt Paving Conference to be held

in Atlanta, Georgia, November 28 to December 2 inclusive.

Prominent men from all parts of the country will address the convention on practically every phase of road building and maintenance. Particular stress will be laid on the salvaging of old roads and worn-out pavements with a suitable wearing course of asphaltic material.

As a plea for rain the natives of Angola, on the west coast of Africa, cut off a man's arm at the shoulder and plant it in the ground with the hand sticking up.

Destroying Its Children

Current events cause one to ponder over what would happen if basic lines of industry and production were government owned.

The City, a publication devoted to the promotion and application of scientific principles of government, and published in San Francisco, analyzes the financial statement of the San Francisco municipal railway for 1926-27.

The railway fell short \$55,873 of earning interest on its outstanding bonds. It has not for several years earned an equivalent for taxes paid by the privately owned street railway with which it competes. If the municipal railway had been required to pay taxes plus its \$55,873 deficit, it would have shown a deficit of \$332,913. Of course the taxpayers, either directly or indirectly, must make up such losses.

One reads that the Shipping Board reports an operating profit for the past year but no account is taken of the tremendous capital investment of the taxpayers in the ships, on which investment there has been a loss of some three billion dollars.

We are told by public ownership enthusiasts that the government owned hydroelectric plant of the province of Ontario, Canada, sells household current at 2 cents per kilowatt-hour and that for that reason our own federal government or states should go into the business of producing and selling electric current. No mention is made of the fact that rates for industrial power in Ontario are exorbitantly high, to make up for the low domestic rates. Reliable figures show that the average cost of current for all purposes in Ontario is .97 of a cent per kilowatt-hour and in northern and western New York state, a corresponding territory, it is .96 of a cent, produced by private companies which pay taxes to the state and federal government.

It is estimated that government ownership of utilities in the United States would add 6,000,000 more voters to the federal payroll, and that such a total of votes would give perpetual power to the political party in control, and thus endanger democracy.

The country is familiar with the manner in which Colonel Mitchell of our air force was punished for his criticism of and suggestions for bettering the nation's military airplane resources. It is now reading how Admiral Magruder is being disciplined after 42 years service, because of an article given by him, claiming extravagant and inefficient management of our naval forces. Are not higher officials muzzling lower officials because they criticize the policy of the officials in power? Is not the public which hires all the officials left in the dark as to the actual truth of statements made?

The question arises in the private citizen's mind: What would happen if government control were extended to basic lines of private endeavor, as now proposed in Congress for numerous projects? Under such a system would any public official or employee dare criticize methods which he believed to be detrimental to the taxpayer? Probably not, unless he was prepared to lose his position by official edict from those higher in power. A startling statement recently ap-

peared in the Federation News of Mount Morris, Illinois. It said: "Government which enters upon the policy of absorbing into itself its private industries is like the gloomy Saturn devouring his own children—it ultimately finds itself overthrown and powerless."

And so we say current events, particularly in the field of politics, cause the average citizen to consider how much further he dares sanction the entry of government into business. If officialism gains unbridled control, what protection remains for the private individual?

Unexpected Results

From an alleged monopoly in the hands of a few men 25 years ago the oil industry has developed until today it is owned by so many persons that unrestrained competition has brought about a production of crude oil such as was never dreamed of.

Our nation passed antitrust laws to prevent combinations which might control the industry to the detriment of small producers. In one way these laws have helped bring about a condition more serious than they attempted to remedy, namely, overproduction of an exhaustible natural resource.

It would be folly to suggest the repeal of laws which stand as a bulwark against unregulated combinations seeking to control any great industry, whether it be oil or something else. But between the extremes of wasteful competition and combinations in restraint of trade, there must be a middle ground on which a satisfactory solution of the oil question can be worked out.

What the oil industry particularly needs at this time is cooperation between the producers, refiners and marketers, and immunity from legislative meddling.

The government is primarily concerned in two things: First, in preventing violations of the antitrust laws; second, in reducing and preventing waste. While constantly striving for these two objectives, it should lend its assistance in every legitimate manner to aid the individual oil producers in settling their production and marketing problems within the industry itself.

Fighting Inferno on Earth

A minister at Dallas, Oregon, invited the whole town to a special sermon on "Fire Prevention." He might have likened it to the fire-and-brimstone of Calvinism; but he didn't—he told it just as it is, with the fire of life running to 15,000 or more a year, mostly women and children and hospital inmates. It's almost as bad in America as the world war; and infinitely less defensible, for there is in the fire loss no plea of national honor, no protest against outside assault, but only personal greed and carelessness and bravado. It is a moral and spiritual question that the Church might well take up and handle without gloves.

It would have cost George Washington ten dollars to have afforded as much illumination at Mt. Vernon as is furnished with seventy-five cents worth of electricity today.

War Tax on Auto Sales

The Oregon State Motor Association estimates that the 3 per cent war excise tax on passenger automobiles will cost the motorist of Oregon \$692,240.57.

This tax will be paid by more people than pay taxes on personal income or individuals who would figure in reductions on the corporation tax.

The benefits from the repeal of the Federal excise tax on automobiles will be passed on to approximately 3,300,000 persons. The benefits from reduction in a corporation tax will be passed on to approximately 3,000,000 persons. The benefits from the cut in the lowest rate on personal incomes will be felt by 2,500,000 persons. These figures can be explained as follows:

In 1926 there were 3,380,000 new automobiles sold on each of which was paid an excise tax; 3,000,000 persons owned corporation stock during the year 1926 and in the same year 2,501,116 persons paid a personal income tax. The figures often used to indicate the total number of stockholders in corporations, viz 15,000,000, is misleading for the reason that it does not take into consideration the fact that most of the stockholders in the country own stock in more than one corporation. From the above it is evident that to remove the war excise tax from passenger automobiles would benefit the greatest number of individual tax payers possible, and that this reduction would be spread equitably between the different classes but that the greater number of persons benefiting by such reduction would be of the poorer classes because the greater number of cars sold are in the lower price cars.

Even the Lowly "Baitworm" Causes Grief at Times

The plow is man's most ancient and valuable agricultural invention, but long before it existed the land was regularly plowed and still continues to be plowed by earthworms. Although earthworms are almost indispensable to agriculture, they are to a certain extent injurious to vegetation. Not only do they eat certain tender seedlings and roots, but they are known to injure plants in pots and flower beds, by their habits of tunneling through the fine roots of the plants, according to specialists at the Oregon State Experiment Station.

One recommended control measure where they become troublesome is the application of bichloride of mercury to the infested soil. The solution is prepared by dissolving one-half ounce in three to four gallons of water. This chemical is deadly poison and caution is needed in its preparation and handling. It corrodes metals and is preferably mixed in a glass or glazed vessel which is thoroughly cleaned immediately after use.

In recent tests with a saturated solution of lime water applied to the soil freely, a good control of earth worms results. About two cupfuls of unslacked lime placed in a two-gallon bucket of water thoroughly agitated and allowed to settle will furnish the desired clear liquid. Tobacco dust thoroughly worked into the soil is also said to be effective.

License Fees and Gas Tax

Oregon's tax on motorists compares very favorably with the taxes of other states according to Frank Reusswig, engineer of the Oregon State Motor Association, who compiled statistics on automobile and gasoline taxes in the 48 states of the Union.

Mr. Reusswig reports that the gasoline tax originated in Oregon and that all states save New York and Massachusetts have this tax, which ranges from 2 to 5 cents per gallon.

This year two states—Illinois and New Jersey—heretofore without a gas tax, authorized it, while eight states made the following increases: Arkansas, from 4 to 5 cents; California, from 2 to 3 cents; Iowa, from 2 to 3 cents; Maine, from 3 to 4 cents; Ohio, from 2 to 3 cents; Pennsylvania, from 2 to 3 cents; South Dakota, from 3 to 4 cents; and West Virginia, from 3 1/2 to 4 cents.

The 3 cent tax, in vogue in Oregon, is the most common, 17 states having it. One state has a 3 1/2 cent tax, 13

states have 2 cents, 10 states have 4 cents, and four states—New Mexico, Arkansas, Kentucky, and South Carolina—have 5 cents.

The average gasoline tax throughout the Union is slightly over 3 cents. Reusswig reports, with the average annual revenue for the nation per car at about \$10.75. The average gas tax revenue per year per car in Oregon is given as \$14.27. The average combined gasoline and license fee per car for the country is given as \$23.89.

Reusswig found that the average license fee ranges from \$5.30 in California to \$25.76 in Oregon, with the following states approximating Oregon: Connecticut, \$23.63; North Carolina, \$24.41; Vermont, \$22.91; and New Hampshire, \$19.22.

However, with the combined license plate and gasoline tax fee, Florida with \$45.32 and North Carolina at \$44.63, lead Oregon whose combined fee is given as \$40.03, while Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Kentucky, Maine, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia and West Virginia are all above the combined average of \$30.

"With the exception of Vermont in

this group, all these states pay in addition a personal property tax, which brings the average annual motor vehicle tax of at least 10 states considerably higher than that of Oregon," Reusswig continued. "Several of these states are not noted for their roads."

"Six states—Colorado, Idaho, Minnesota, North Dakota, Oklahoma and Wisconsin—have a graduated downward scale, according to the age of the car. Summarized, their regulations are: Colorado, 30 per cent reduction after the fifth year and 50 per cent after the eighth year. Idaho: One dollar less for third year and one dollar for fourth year and after, or a maximum reduction of \$2 per car. Minnesota: Ten per cent reduction each year to seven years. North Dakota: Ten per cent reduction after first year, or second registration, 25 per cent on third registration; maximum reduction, 40 per cent. Oklahoma: Twenty per cent reduction on second registration, 20 per cent on third, 20 per cent on fourth, 60 per cent maximum. Wisconsin: After five years, 25 per cent reduction only."

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