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ARTHUR EDWARD POWELL
Editor and Proprietor

EDITORIALS

REGIMENTATION KILLS PRIDE?

"Real American citizens do not wish to be regimented on model farms, or in neatly arranged flats and apartments as if they were a pack of rabbits.

Dyed-in-the-wool Americans would rather live in a tin hut down by railroad tracks than to be encased in a barracks-like dwelling, the very completeness and detached coldness of which would sweep away the last vestiges of personality and individuality."

Commenting on the above quotation, the Scio, Oregon, Tribune says: "That is a fine sentiment and used to be the real condition. But we are not so sure about it now.

"Prior to the Federal dole system, both in the United States and in all other countries in which it has been practiced, people generally preferred to earn what they had.

"At the beginning of the policy in this country most unemployed needy people resented charity, protesting that it was lucrative employment and not dole they wanted. Work for all could not be provided under the universal economic and industrial depression that prevailed.

"Part-time work, the out-and-out dole, and other forms of Federal assistance were offered. Many were forced to accept, and with thousands it became a habit. It was no longer a humiliation to accept charity.

"The result in the United States, as elsewhere, has been that countless thousands have come to depend on charity or a dole, much to the discredit of such people and to the nation."

PROGRESS IN SAFETY LEGISLATION

During the 1937 legislative sessions, a number of states made material contributions to the vital cause of traffic safety.

Nine states adopted the standard drivers' license measure—considered by safety authorities to be an absolutely essential step in preventing accidents. Three other states adopted license measures which, though non-standard, are believed worthwhile. Two states revised and modernized their entire motor vehicle codes. A number of states worked toward achieving uniform traffic legislation. In several states traffic patrols were extended and reorganized, and improved systems of training officers established.

As the managing director of the National Safety Council points out: "The country must not make the grave mistake of expecting too much of these laws in too short a time. The license law passed today cannot save lives tomorrow. No one would expect an army of green recruits to rout a firmly entrenched enemy after the first drill period. Give it time. The long view must always prevail."

However, over a period of months and years, progress in safety legis-

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lation will save thousands of lives and millions of dollars worth of property.

The measure of success that has been achieved in perfecting traffic legislation must not be allowed to blind us to the many steps that must yet be taken if everything in the power of the law to curb accidents is to be done. Incredible as it seems, in three states only are chauffeurs required to have a motor vehicle operator's license—and in two states no license for anyone is required! We still have a long way to go before the highways are made safe—only public opinion can bring corrective action.

LAWS THAT HIT FARMER TWICE

The Department of Agriculture has issued a report on "Price Spreads Between the Farmer and the Consumer."

It shows that the farmers' share of the consumers' dollar has not exceeded 50 per cent since 1920, but rose to 44 per cent in 1936, as compared with a low of 33 per cent in 1932. Four causes for the year to year change in the spread, are given: 1. Changes in hourly wage rates and charges in other cost items; 2. Changes in profits of processors and dealers; 3. Changes in the efficiency of the marketing system; 4. Changes in the amounts of processing and in the amount of other kinds of service required to deliver goods to the ultimate consumer.

From this, it is apparent that the farmers' share of the final selling price of what he produces, is very

largely dependent on the economy or lack of it of the distributing and marketing machine. If a large number of middlemen are involved in moving goods, the farmer gets less. If retailers are wasteful, with high overheads which are reflected in big mark-ups, he gets less. If the costs of caring on distributor and retailer operations are increased for any reason, he gets less.

There could be no better illustration of the fallacies of laws and special taxes whose inevitable result is to coddle the middleman, whether necessary or inefficient, by law; to eliminate all or part of the economies that follow long-established mass-retailing practices; and to artificially increase the overhead costs of stores whose policy is to sell a maximum amount of goods at the lowest price.

Such laws and taxes hit the farmer twice—he is a consumer as well as a producer. They make him pay more for what he buys, while he gets less for what he sells.

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