

EDITORIAL

What Is Communism?

The word communism has been used with reckless abandon by many of us and it is doubtful if more than a handful, so to speak, know the real meaning of the word, or term. The writer confesses an inability to give a definition, although harboring some remote ideas about it. It is a safe guess that the average American citizen is in the same class with us. Coming upon an editorial in an exchange dealing with the subject the thought occurred that our readers might appreciate a fuller knowledge of the meaning of communism, even if the article does not advance a trend of thought concurrent among some segments of our population.

"It has been a popular pastime for public officials of both major parties in the United States to condemn communism as a threat to our mode of life. They will shout to the high heavens to deport Harry Bridges, and then proceed to build as fine a foundation for a communistic economy in our own country as any 'five-year plan' ever devised in Russia.

"Under Russia's several five-year plans, American engineers were imported to build industrial plants. One of the outstanding projects was the Dneiper dam to produce hydro-electric power. It was merely a counterpart of modern electric systems which had been built by private enterprise in the United States years before.

"In the electric power field, we have for a decade, had a federal program that has been following the Russian pattern. We don't call it communism here—or socialism—but the net result from the standpoint of curbing individual opportunity, is the same.

"Our first 'five-year plan' was called the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). Under it, the federal government eliminated private enterprise in has a virtual monopoly of electric power production in the state of Tennessee. Thus we have adopted communism in the electric field as an established government policy. We have seen it extended from Tennessee to other states.

"At the present time, there is before Congress a proposal to establish seven 'authorities' similar to 'TVA'. They would form one great communized power system that would destroy future opportunity for private citizens to develop electric power. Furthermore, they would rapidly liquidate the existing investor-owned electric industry which is publicly regulated and highly taxed.

"Our representatives in Congress and public officials in every state, as well as private citizens who make such a show of condemning Russian communism, are the very ones who are promoting this American brand of communism which, while softer in its initial impact on our economy, is as deadly to private enterprise as is the Russian system.

"As we wonder about communism spreading to Greece, Italy, Spain, England and other nations of Europe, it would be well for us to take a look in our own back yard and see the way its roots are taking hold in our country. If we don't want it, let us tear the mask off the camouflaged plans we are being offered and save our private enterprise philosophy of government under which every individual has a chance to work out his own destiny without fearing government competition or bureaucratic oppression."

Seabees Pass Third Anniversary

The third anniversary of the "Workingest, fightingest bunch of men" in the nation's armed forces, the Navy Seabees, was observed on December 28 by 240,000 officers and men of the United States Naval Construction battalions.

Born just three weeks after the Pearl Harbor disaster, with an authorized strength of 3,000, the Seabees won their spurs at Guadalcanal and have been with the assault troops in every major American amphibious operation. They can now boast that they built the network of air and naval bases in the Pacific that pushed the Japs back 3,000 miles; that they developed amphibious equipment and technique that helped carry the day on the African, Sicilian, Italian and Normandy spearheads.

Every commissioned Construction Battalion is either currently overseas or has completed a tour.

of duty; many battalions are on their second tours. Seventy-six percent of the Seabees are now outside the continental limits of the United States; only 9000 essential men have never seen foreign service.

As General Douglas MacArthur wrote in a letter to Seabee chief Vice-Admiral Ben Moreell, "The only trouble with your Seabees is that you don't have half enough of them!"

Oregon's "Pearl Harbor"

Appraising the Tillamook Burn of 1933 as the "Pearl Harbor of timber conservation" the Dec. 30 Saturday Evening Post tells its millions of readers how the lumbermen of the Pacific Northwest are winning the battle of forest conservation. In "Big Timber Gets Religion", the author Robert Normand Case, says it was not the \$200,000,000 loss of this conflagration but the black thumbprint of desolation left in the wake of this burn that jolted thoughtful timbermen to their heels.

There had been ample previous warning that the industry was headed for disaster but this Oregon fire marked the turning point. The old buccannery cry of "Cut Out and Get Out" was abandoned and the author says, "What happened thereafter comprises a stirring chapter in the history of the most colorful of our basic industries. The battle for timber conservation has not yet been won, but in the eleven years since the burn, the pendulum has swung from a steady and ominous depletion of our reserves to a sustained-yield program which should make our forests adequately productive forever." Incidental light is also shed on the theory that only an unselfish government is capable of long range planning "in the public interest." Self-interest or not, the record shows that, at least in the Pacific Northwest, the struggle for fire control and reforestation is being won largely by the operators themselves, using their own money, on their own ground.

Mr. Case points out that a natural correlation to this conservation is maximum salvage of waste. Inevitably in the postwar picture will be the wider use of veneers, and the whole new world of plastics and resins. The great experiment long promoted by the West Coast Lumberman's Association and American Forest Products Industries, Inc. in the direct conversion of wood waste into ethyl alcohol has proven successful. The plant now being built at Springfield, Oregon, will use any wood material and turn out alcohol at an estimated twenty-two cents a gallon, a more than favorable competitive price. Moreover, it is confidently predicted the Springfield plant will usher in an entirely new field of postwar industries.

Public enthusiasm for the future of the conservation program is shown by the fact that cut-over lands, once a drug on the Northwest market, have doubled in price in the past five years. The Post article concludes, "In other words, we have reached the maximum net drain upon forest resources. Instead of a broadening gap between new growth and depletion, it is a narrowing gap. In an industry that is never static, victory begins where retreat ends."

Why Not Scan the Bureaus?

The state office of selective service states that there are 1500 young men in the 18-25 class subject to the draft under the order to scour the farms for new recruits. Has anyone taken the time to enumerate the number of eligibles holding white-collar jobs in the multitudinous bureaus of the federal government? Is it not as essential to retain the farm boys in agricultural pursuits as it is to continue to throw the smoke screen of government necessity around a bunch of softies whose jobs could well be taken over by girls and women? The election is over and job protection no longer is necessary. Let the white-collar boys line up first.

The farm boys have a pretty fair sized job to do at home.

Sprague Looks Into Crystal Ball

Admitting "the crystal ball is cloudy," Charles A. Sprague, former governor, predicts: "Big truck bill will lumber through; three-way industrial accident insurance to fail; more liberal provisions for unemployment compensation; universal pasteurization will fail; schools will not get extra \$5,000,000; 'Cocktail' bill will not become a law; Walker plan will be modified."

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