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"Give Light and the People Will Find Their Own Way."

The Real Problem

The citizens of the state, in all probability, will have an opportunity to pass on the question of whether they wish to raise a part of the cost of government by an income tax.

The legislature, largely through the pressure of the farmers of the state, seem likely to approve such an amendment to the constitution.

Against the proposal are the so-called business interests of the state who do not believe that such a tax is desirable.

Whatever any one may think on the subject of income taxes, there can be no argument against permitting the people of the state to pass directly upon the problem.

If we have any faith in the theory that the people of this state are capable of managing their own affairs and do not need either a guardian or a dictator, then no public question is too great for them to solve.

Any opposition to this measure should be made at the polls when the amendment is brought forward for ratification and not in a legislature which merely passes along to the people a proposal which has the support of a very large portion of the citizens.

It would be fine if there could be direct action on many other measures which are pending and about which there is controversy.

Whether the income tax is a way to get more money from the people, a costly and inefficient way, or a fine method of distributing burdens in accordance with the protection received is an argument for the voters, not for the legislature.

It may be said, however, with no fear of denial, that the problem is not so much as to the manner in which taxes are to be collected, as long as laws are general in application, as to the way in which they are spent.

The farmers complain that they are overburdened and rapidly becoming bankrupt through heavy imposts. They may be right. So are men in cities, who are staggering under heavy costs. So are workers, who pay those same taxes in the form of rents, high costs of living, high rates on utilities and other necessities of life, each one of which indirectly carries a part of the tax burden.

The real problem is to see whether it is not possible to spend less and still get all the necessities of government.

The proposal to raise another five or six millions of dollars a year for highways is a case in point.

This expense, whether collected by a higher gasoline tax or a raise in license fees, is as much a direct tax as would be a tax on incomes.

The real problem is not one of method in raising taxes, but in the total cost of government and the problem of getting it at cost.

Plug the leaks and there will not be so much outcry.

Penny-Wise, Pound-Foolish

The federal power commission, after years of begging for sufficient personnel to enable it to carry out the work for which it was created, seems about to get a measure of help from congress.

The appropriation bill now being considered allows the commission an increase of \$57,000 to hire a chief counsel, an attorney, a valuation engineer and a few auditors. Presumably this was all the budget bureau would approve.

When the commission was created in 1920, congress intended that it should hasten the development of latent water power resources. Equally important was protection of the public interest through perpetual retention by the government of power sites, and regulation of rates in certain instances.

Leases were to be granted for fifty years, and at the end of that time the government could recover the property through payment of amounts actually and legitimately invested.

There has been much water power development, but the public interest has been neglected.

The commission obviously must keep account of expenditures in development if the government is to have a fair basis for possible exercise of its recovery right, if it is proper to exercise its control over rates. This it has not been able to do, because of its inadequate staff.

The commission is four or five years behind in its work. It has been able to audit and settle the claims of only a small fraction of the cases pending.

The total of claims in projects already under license eventually will be a billion dollars. It is no exaggeration to say that literally hundreds of millions of public property is involved, to say nothing of the danger of establishing fantastic bases for rate-making, which would operate as a tax on consumers for all time to come.

It is penny-wise and pound-foolish for the budget bureau—or congress—to quibble over expenditure of a few thousand dollars in such a situation. The increase under consideration will help, but it is insufficient to enable the commission to bring its work quickly up to date and to function as it was intended.

More Dry Funds Not Needed

Secretary Mellon offers convincing arguments against the appropriation of an additional \$25,000,000 for the bureau of prohibition, as proposed in the senate.

Other bureaus and departments are concerned in enforcement, Mellon points out. He believes that part of any increase voted well might go to the department of justice for relief of court congestion, or for enlargement of the coast guard and customs border patrol, which have been unable to cope with smuggling.

In short, he wants any increased funds used where they will do the most good, and he questions whether suddenly dumping \$25,000,000 in the lap of the bureau of prohibition will accomplish what congress intends. He proposes "a thorough-going survey of the entire field" before appropriations are increased.

Mellon might have added that the additional funds probably would have increased the force of prohibition agents from 4,000 to perhaps 15,000, and that the wisdom of this is open to question. Almost all persons who have been connected with prohibition enforcement have said that state and local co-operation is essential.

Creation of a vastly larger organization of federal agents would lead in the direction of federal policing, and away from the policy of having the federal government devote itself to diversions and major violations. This should be the federal government's job, not the detection of pinto transactions and the suppression of speakeasies. These are matters for local police.

The treasury already is taking steps to ascertain

the needs of its enforcement agencies, says Mellon. It is probable that this job better can be left to Hoover's projected commission of inquiry, which it is expected will make a thorough study of the entire prohibition question. Its recommendation should enable congress to vote larger funds, if they are needed, with intelligence and not blindly.

The Wrong Time

The trouble with the cruiser bill is that it is poorly timed. From almost every angle this is about the worst time the United States could pick to start another naval building program.

For seven years we have been trying unsuccessfully to persuade Great Britain to agree to cruiser limitation on the basis of equality. The British admiralty has blocked such agreement. Now for the first time the British people are rising against this admiralty rule and demanding in a general election campaign a more friendly policy toward America.

If some one rises to remark that conditions are bad, whether publicly or privately, the first thought is to discredit that some one, to prove that he knows far less than he claims to expose his source of information and throw up such a smoke screen as blinds every one to the original issue.

Why should we be so anxious to play into the hands of the rapidly slipping British admiralty? Why should we enter a disastrous armament race, when a little more patience may avoid that danger?

Anyway, why tie the hands of the Hoover administration, which has to conduct our foreign and naval policy for the next four years? How much wiser it would be to give Hoover time to get squared away in office before taking a step which will affect all our international relations.

The argument used by the farmers for postponement of farm relief until the new administration is in applies with even greater force to the cruiser bill.

There also are technical and economy reasons for postponing this naval program.

But the major reason is that the strongest nation in the world does not have to resort to threats, however provoked, until it has exhausted the method of friendly agreement.

They call them speakeasies, and after a few hours there some men have been known to speak hard, and others to become speechless.

A robber was arrested after holding up a crowd entering a night club. Still, you'd hardly expect him to wait until they came out.

They use machine guns against wolf packs in Russia, but don't let the police see you carrying a machine gun down Wall street.

Now Mr. Durant might offer another \$25,000 prize for the best criticism of the prize-winning prohibition enforcement plan.

A Montreal schoolboy placed a stick of dynamite under his teacher's chair. Don't be alarmed. Just another "expression of personality."

David Dietz on Science

Modern Peck's Bad Boy

No. 263

NEW YORK, Jan. 17.—Professor Harry Elmer Barnes, sociologist and historian of Smith college, made himself the Peck's bad boy of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

He put soap on the front steps and salt in the sugar bowl, so far as most of the scientists at the convention were concerned, when he chose the convention to launch an attack on conventional theology.

Dr. Barnes insisted that a new religion had to be organized on the facts of astronomy and biology, which would consider God not as a Father in Heaven, but only as a

force behind the universe. He insisted that mankind must ignore the idea of Heaven and concentrate all efforts on making this the happiest place on earth.

The opinion which a half dozen of the most eminent scientists at the convention expressed in an after-dinner conversation in which I was privileged to join might be summed up somewhat as follows:

"There has been altogether too much talk about a conflict between science and religion. It isn't science that does it to stick to science."

"A great many people didn't want to believe that the earth revolved around the sun when Copernicus and Galileo and some of the other early astronomers insisted that it did. But eventually everybody has come around to believe that the earth does revolve around the sun."

"In the same way, other facts of science can be expected to spread."

"Many people with a strong religious belief, nevertheless hold many of the same beliefs which Barnes outlined."

Many of the scientists felt that the convention was not the place for Barnes to launch his attack.

Several thousand papers were presented at the convention, which was attended by 5,000 delegates.

Practically all these papers dealt with new advances in specialized fields of science—new advances in astronomy, physics, chemistry and so on.

The scientists felt that it was unfortunate if any large group of people got the idea that the convention was held chiefly to launch an attack on conventional religions.

On the other hand, it should be said that many scientists have felt for a long time that many of the things which Barnes enunciated were so.

For example, they agree with him when he says that every effort should be made to make this earth the best possible place in which to live.

In other respects, we have learned how to do things quicker and better.

Only in the law have we slowed up, put on the brakes and settled down to the idea that there is no room for improvement.

In fact, they would point out that science is doing exactly that. The scientist who discovers a cure for a dread disease, the scientist who discovers a new use for electricity, the scientist who makes a discovery about the human mind, has done just that.

Most of them would agree that this earth should not be considered a mere training place for the world to come, but they would add that most liberals in the churches of the world hold that idea also.

Most of them would agree that God is not the anthropomorphic God which ancient peoples postulated, but they would probably add that they have no scientific way of knowing and that neither has Barnes.

In fact, most scientists regard Barnes' papers as poor tactics. They feel that he has antagonized many people to science who otherwise might look at it with a friendly eye.

They feel sure that the facts of science will survive and they feel sure that the highest type of religion will find room for the facts of science.

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the needs of its enforcement agencies, says Mellon. It is probable that this job better can be left to Hoover's projected commission of inquiry, which it is expected will make a thorough study of the entire prohibition question. Its recommendation should enable congress to vote larger funds, if they are needed, with intelligence and not blindly.

M. E. TRACY SAYS:

"There Is Not Only Too Much Politics but Too Much Argument in Our System of Justice."

CLEVELAND, O., Jan. 18.—"Prosecutor bares names in vice quiz," reads a headline in the Cleveland Press, not the names of those charged with anything, as one might suspect, but of those from whom a local clergyman says he obtained information.

Figuratively speaking, a Mr. Wallace, a Mr. Foote and a Miss Sill have been "put on the spot," for Cleveland's underworld. With that accomplished, they will be paraded before the grand jury to tell what they know, which is all right, except that no matter how interesting or enlightening the grand jury may find it, the underworld already has discounted it.

If some one rises to remark that conditions are bad, whether publicly or privately, the first thought is to discredit that some one, to prove that he knows far less than he claims to expose his source of information and throw up such a smoke screen as blinds every one to the original issue.

They seem to have been vastly more concerned over the sources of Mr. Debow's information than over the idea of acting on it before the dive keepers and craps shooters had time to put up the shutters. Who tattled, appears to be what they were most anxious to find out.

It frightens witnesses, warns the underworld and vindicates the authorities. You can't beat it as a method of proving everything is "jake." Nothing has come to interfere with law enforcement more than the scared witness. Average people are actually growing afraid to tell what they know. They are afraid not only of the gangster and his bullets, but of the way they are likely to be manhandled by those very officials whom they would like to help.

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